University of Groningen

Intercultural competence development during study abroad

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DOI:
[10.33612/diss.119789093](https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.119789093)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2020

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
van der Poel, M. (2020). *Intercultural competence development during study abroad*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. <https://doi.org/10.33612/diss.119789093>

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Intercultural Competence Development during Study Abroad

Marcel van der Poel

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Cover design: Nico van de Bunt, Amersfoort
Printing: GVO drukkers & vormgevers, Ede
Paper: 100% recycled

ISBN: 978-94-034-2427-9
ISBN digital: 978-94-034-2426-2

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rijksuniversiteit
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Intercultural Competence Development during Study Abroad

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
op gezag van de
rector magnificus prof. dr. C. Wijmenga
en volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties.

De openbare verdediging zal plaatsvinden op

donderdag 9 juli 2020 om 12:45 uur

door

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geboren op 27 maart 1962
te Hoogeveen

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Introduction

The ongoing internationalization of higher education is largely based on a belief that graduates of degree programmes should be prepared for a 'global world' (Sandström & Hudson, 2018). A relatively common understanding is further that residing in a foreign educational environment, for instance via educational mobility, will help students develop an international mind-set (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Engel, Sandstrom, Van der Aa, & Glass, 2015). Some studies appear to support that skills gained while studying abroad are the same skills that employers value, or that are needed for being competitive in the international marketplace (NAFSA, n.d.). Moreover, students with an international study or work experience seem to be offered greater professional responsibility (European Commission, 2014). The rationale for many educational mobility programmes is therefore that students, while abroad, develop attitudes, knowledge and behaviours that may otherwise not develop in a comparable manner 'at home'.

Such an 'exposure equates competence' assumption meets support, other studies however cast doubt on the assumed relationship between mobility and developing an international mind-set (Brinkmann & Van Weerdenburg, 2014). As mobility is often only an episode in a much longer learning trajectory, it is receiving arguably too much credit for producing something as fundamental as an international mind-set (Hudzik, 2014). A sojourn in a foreign environment can be helpful for developing more cosmopolitan ideas, but is not necessarily, and not automatically, doing so (Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012; Lilley, 2014). In addition, study abroad and educational mobility come in various forms. Degree mobility and credit mobility are the two main forms; other forms include certificate mobility such as language and summer courses for specific skill development, placements or internships abroad, etc. (Banks & Bhandari, 2012; Carroll, 2015). Accordingly, the impact of an episode of mobility may – among other – differ by its form. In the present study the focus will be on the effects of study abroad as a form of credit mobility.

The vast majority of students do however not take part in any kind of mobility experience (Jones, 2013, 2016). More scholars in the field of internationalization of higher education therefore indicate that, for most of the students, the ability to shift perspectives and to consider shifting behaviour will need to be developed through so-called *internationalization at home* initiatives (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Teekens, 2007). Internationalization at home (IaH) aims at achieving intended international learning outcomes, like having an international mind-set, through the delivery of domestic educational programmes. Internationalization at home is thus rooted in a more fundamental notion that 21st century education has the (moral) obligation to prepare

students for an internationalized world in whatever context, not solely when being exposed to a foreign environment (Carroll, 2015; De Wit & Leask, 2019; Killick, 2015).

Being somewhat cautious about the outcomes of (educational) mobility resonates with my personal educational experiences, as it eventually became one of the key drivers for this dissertation. In line with a suggested refined definition of internationalization of higher education, i.e. with a focus on the purpose of internationalization rather than on the process per se (De Wit, Hunter, Howard, Egron-Polak, 2015), I wonder how the means of internationalization indeed produce the intended outcomes.

For example, at the International Business (IB) programme that I am involved with, the (desired) international attitudes, knowledge and behaviours relate to what is categorized as *intercultural competence*. Intercultural competence refers to the ability to enact intercultural sensitivity in an (increasingly) effective and appropriate manner in various cultural contexts (Deardorff, 2006). This definition informs the intended learning outcomes that are aimed at when the students are abroad, typically in their third year of study. Box 1 below shows the four learning outcomes of the 2017 Dutch National International Business (IB) Profile that are explicitly, albeit not exclusively, attached to the study abroad semester of the programme.

• Mitigate the pitfalls of cultural differences in business and social contexts.   • Display willingness to work with people from other cultures and to work in countries with different cultural backgrounds.   • Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication in an intercultural setting.   • Assess the effect of cultural differences upon organizational behaviour and strategic choices.

Box 1. Programme Learning Outcomes of the Dutch Bachelor International Business Profile, Theme: Intercultural Proficiency, Domain: Living in the World (IB Profile, 2017).

As a member of the academic staff at an International Business School I find it hard to affirm that the means (i.e. mobility) leads to the articulated intended outcomes (see Box 1). I generally fail to identify a clear relationship between, for instance, an episode of studying abroad and how students perceive cultural differences. In line with research stating that learning from exposure to differences is not happening unconditionally (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), I thus question both the causality and the positive direction of the relationship between exposure to differences and higher levels of understanding culture. In my discussions with students, reading their reflection reports, as well as in a pilot assessment of intercultural competence among students after an episode of study abroad (Van der Poel, n.d.), I all too often come across relatively shallow understanding of cultural differences, or only reinforced stereotypical thinking about people who are 'different'.

My personal observations further resonate with what I read in academic literature concerning intercultural competence development. Various studies (e.g. the ones listed by Vande Berg et al., 2012) inform us that some facilitation of the student's cultural learning is required in order to see significant effects on intercultural competence in relation to the experiences abroad. What such interventions should ideally consist of is however less clear.

Apart from a professional and an academic interest, this dissertation is also triggered by personal curiosity. As a former expatriate, having lived and worked abroad for over ten years, I witnessed that a foreign environment apparently has the potential to affect people's behaviour in multiple ways. Some embrace and absorb the opportunities of novelty, while others prefer to safely stay in their 'home culture bubble'. This thesis is thus also provoked by curiosity about the very diverse human reactions to an environment that is unfamiliar, and by the question why educators seem to have not taken this (sufficiently) into account when designing their exchange and mobility programmes.

Development of Main Research Question

In this dissertation I develop a number of research questions that are aimed at advancing an understanding of the relationships between exposure to a foreign environment and intercultural competence development. More specifically, I focus on study abroad as a targeted educational credit mobility instrument for intercultural competence development in the context of internationalization of higher education.

Conceptually it has been argued that exposure to a foreign environment would encourage reflections on routine understandings of the behaviours of others, and of self (e.g. Mezirow, 2000). Yet, studies also reveal that mere exposure is often not enough (e.g. Vande Berg, Paige & Lou, 2012). In this dissertation I seek to investigate whether a stay abroad in itself leads to a higher level of intercultural competence. Hence the main research question of this dissertation is: does an episode of study abroad have an impact on levels of intercultural competence?

Based on studies of the impact of mobility on cultural learning (e.g. Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Engel, Sandström, Van der Aa & Glass, 2015; Sandström & Hudson, 2018; see also chapter 1), I first of all assume that the levels of intercultural competence after a study abroad are higher than before. I further argue that intercultural competence development can be facilitated by intervening in cultural learning during study abroad (e.g. Hammer, 2012; Weber Bosley, 2015). My second assumption therefore is that although an episode of study abroad, in general, would have an effect on levels of intercultural competence, this effect should be larger when students are, in addition, actively assisted in cultural learning during study abroad. The second research question

thus refers to supporting cultural learning while abroad in comparison to not supporting cultural learning while abroad, hence: how does intervention in cultural learning during study abroad have an impact on levels of intercultural competence?

Apart from previous levels of intercultural competence, and the presence or absence of facilitation of cultural learning during study abroad, certain personal attributes, previous experiences with, and an openness for cultural differences, may also influence intercultural competence development. For instance, Van der Zee and Brinkmann (2004) argued that an ability to manage uncertainty and to build relationships relate positively with levels of intercultural competence. Other scholars, among which Vande Berg, Paige and Lou (2012) argued that provision of cultural content, e.g. in the form of education or training, relates positively with levels of intercultural competence. Literature thus seems to support the expectation that students who show higher levels of certain personal attributes, and higher levels of previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences, may also develop higher levels of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). This assumption will be discussed (chapter 2) and checked (chapter 4) in this dissertation.

Finally, the empirical part of this dissertation also considers variations in the qualification of study abroad supervisors who may assist the students in their process of cultural learning. The assumption here is that there may be a positive supervisor effect on top of an intervention effect. Or more specifically, I assume that a trained supervisor during intervention, compared with a non-trained supervisor, will positively affect students' increase in levels of intercultural competence.

Outline of the Thesis

In order to investigate whether intercultural competence is positively affected by staying abroad, a necessary step is to ask whether there is a consensual understanding of what intercultural competence is, and how to measure it. Prior to that the (assumed) relevance of intercultural competence for internationalized higher education will need to be discussed.

Chapter 1 therefore starts with a review of the concepts of exposure to, and learning about, cultural diversity in the context of internationalization of higher education. I explore how an objective of developing intercultural competence relates to the general objectives of internationalization of higher education; to what extent mobility could be the instrument for it, and what other relevant determinants could affect it. Study abroad is discussed as an example of an educational (mobility) instrument of internationalization of higher education, predominantly aimed at preparing students for a globalized world.

What follows, in chapter 2, is an exploration of the current concepts and theories of intercultural competence, and of intercultural competence development. I investigate and review what scholars identify as the (key) elements of intercultural competence, and which factors may foster intercultural competence development. Based on this review, I arrive at an interpretation of intercultural competence, and of intercultural competence development for the present work.

Then, referring to intercultural competence as a 'construct' that can be developed, presupposes that it can be measured. In chapter 3, prior to introducing the empirical section, I therefore first review a frequently used underlying concept and instrument for understanding and measuring intercultural competence. I further discuss the experiences with the selected instrument in other studies, and critically review using the instrument for measuring intercultural competence development. I will conclude chapter 3 by discussing two related test instruments that aim to profile personal attributes that may affect a person's receptiveness to developing intercultural competence, and that may provide for control variables when empirically measuring intercultural competence development.

Chapter 4 provides the empirical evidence collected as part of this dissertation. In four studies the intercultural competence of students who participated in four different episodes of study abroad were measured, and comparisons were made between an intervention and a control group. The findings of the four empirical studies, as well as of the additional analysis of the pooled data from the four studies, are presented. The results of the various statistical tests are described and briefly discussed, followed by a discussion of the findings and the limitations of the empirical part of this dissertation

In chapter 5 the main findings of the empirical section of this dissertation are briefly summarized. From this point, the discussion is further broadened to include reflections on the empirical data and the concepts and theories on intercultural competence development discussed in this dissertation, on the methods to capture intercultural competence, and on the role of intercultural competence (development) in internationalizing higher education. This last chapter of the dissertation ends with sharing my thoughts on possible implications for the professional field.

Chapter 1

Concepts and Theories on Internationalization of Higher Education

This dissertation explores intercultural competence development in the context of higher education. The context itself is worth a brief exploration as well since higher education is increasingly international or actively being internationalized. The literature review in this first chapter starts with discussing how Internationalization of higher education is defined and what it aims to achieve.

Subsequently, I will look into a number of aspects of internationalization of higher education that are frequently discussed in literature and that are related to the main research questions as described in the introduction. I will first discuss *mobility* as an important aspect of an internationalized curriculum, after which I will also discuss the concept of an *international curriculum* as a separate aspect. Next, I will look into *language*, *cultural diversity*, and the *educator's competences*, predominantly as three influential factors affecting the effectiveness of an internationalized curriculum.

Definitions and Aims of Internationalization of Higher Education

When reviewing internationalization of higher education, it is worthwhile realizing that the ideas about its needs have shifted during the past decades. A relatively popular definition stems from Knight (2004, p. 11), who described the concept as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education”. This definition originated from a desire to articulate a sufficiently neutral definition, and to offer an alternative for the, until then, common definitions that mostly came with a particular national or cultural perspective. According to Knight (2012a), by nature of the term, internationalization must be universal, and must therefore encompass the enormous global variety of motivations, benefits, actions and outcomes that come with it.

The term *internationalization* started to be used more frequently in the higher education sector in the 1980s, predominantly when referring to international studies, educational exchange, and technical assistance. Overlooking a period of roughly 30 years, Knight (2012b) acknowledged that internationalization is now associated with a widening range of issues, including academic mobility, international partnerships, delivering education abroad, branch campuses, curriculum adjustment, learning and teaching process adjustment, commercial cross-border education, regional education hubs, and has finally stretched into international league, branding, ranking and PR. Recently, De Wit and collaborators (De Wit et al., 2015, p. 29) suggested to extend Knight's definition by

adding the word 'intentional' and the rationales 'on enhancing the quality of education and research for all students and staff' and 'to make a meaningful contribution to society':

The *intentional* process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, *in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society* (italics added).

The above revised definition was the outcome of reflections on two surveys (by the International Association of Universities – IAU, 2014, and the European Association for International Education – EAIE, 2015), followed by a Delphi Panel exercise (i.e. structured interviews with groups of experts in the field), carried out in 2015 as part of a review done for the EU Directorate-General for internal policies. It reflected the increased awareness among scholars and practitioners that internationalization would need to become “more inclusive and less elitist” by focusing on curriculum and outcomes rather than on mobility per se (De Wit & Hunter, 2015, p. 3).

Knight's (2012a) desire to be sufficiently universal in defining the term is still maintained in the definition by De Wit and collaborators. Yet, by incorporating the key drivers for internationalization, the definition became less neutral. For instance, one rationale for adjusting the definition by Knight (2004) was that internationalization of higher education is not a goal in itself; it needs to be purposeful. Apart from being a process, internationalization must lead to a product or an outcome, like an internationalized curriculum, that in itself is a means for preparing global professionals and global citizens (De Wit & Leask, 2015; Leask, 2009; Leask & Bridge, 2013). The new definition thus assumes a (moral) need for such purposefulness.

Other academic and institutional objectives for changing the definition of *internationalization* concerned the desire for an integral process-based approach aiming at improved competences of *all* staff and students (De Wit, 2011; De Wit et al., 2015). Indeed, the Bologna Declaration of 1999 already included the objective of mobility of students *and* staff (Huisman, Adelman, Hsieh, Shans & Wilkins, 2012). However, over time, tension between the aim and the ability to deliver was being observed; students were being taught to learn to think and act from a global perspective by educators whom arguably could not do so themselves. So far, the fact that internationalization policies and objectives will need to be enacted predominantly by educational staff has often been neglected but has gained serious attention in the recent years (Beelen, 2016; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Leask, 2016).

A third justification for adjusting the definition was the desired meaningful contribution of the process to society at large. Knight (2012b) identified various rationales

for internationalization, including concepts like regional identity and citizenship development. Looking at the Bologna Declaration (Huisman et al., 2012) once more, by putting various policies and programmes in place the EU aimed at reducing inequality and enhancing cross-border responsibility. Internationalization of higher education was thus seen as a catalyst for cohesion in an otherwise relatively diverse EU society.

Aspects of Internationalization in Practice

The above aspiration to achieve (learning) outcomes that instil meaningful contributions to a globalized community has also manifested in educational practice. In line with the above development in defining internationalization of higher education, institutes of higher education now start including in their programme descriptions terms like '21st century skills', 'futures literacy' or 'global competences' (Green, 2012; Rhodes, 2010), or use descriptions of graduate attributes like 'world knowledge', or 'global perspectives' (Leask, 2013), thus expressing the (intended) curricular contributions to the internationalization objectives.

However, taking a more critical approach, in practice, dealing with (cultural) diversity is often just as much experienced as a nuisance (Hofstede, n.d.), or as seriously hindering working and living together. The multiple accounts from students not being happy with the composition of their international classroom or workgroup often relate to not knowing how to deal with the various work attitudes and habits of its culturally diverse members. Their cognitive styles differ, their scholarly approaches differ, their ideas of good communication differ, and so forth.

From the perspective of the educator, while the multicultural classroom may provide added value due to its (cultural) diversity (e.g. by comparing viewpoints on the applicability of a certain theory in various cultural environments), benefitting from it requires extra expertise, extra effort and extra time (Killick, 2015). Clifford and Montgomery (2015) concluded that many staff members may feel a lack of power to initiate transformative learning in the context of internationalizing the curriculum. The Erasmus Impact Study (EIS), on the other hand, showed that staff mobility contributed positively to internationalizing the curriculum (European Commission, 2014). In brief, internationalization of higher education may be both a laudable objective as much as a tedious process.

Returning to the definition of internationalization and its assumed purposefulness, increasing the international awareness of students was among the top ranked expected benefits in pursuing internationalization of higher education. The International Association of Universities (IAU) came to this conclusion in its 4th global survey, which was a similar conclusion as in their previous two surveys in 2005 and 2009 (Egron-Polak & Hudson,

2014). From the same survey, the highest priority of internationalization activities was given to mobility (29% of all respondents) and international research collaboration (24%). Even though international awareness does not equate intercultural competence, the IAU studies do justify assuming a connection between mobility as the most common activity of internationalization and the, in the IAU survey, top-ranked assumed cognitive benefit of internationalization; attentiveness to diversity.

In a similar vein, the second edition of the EAIE Barometer (Sandström & Hudson, 2018) showed that 2317 respondents spread over 1292 higher educational institutes in 45 predominantly EU countries picked 'preparing students for a global world' as the main goal for internationalization (76% on average and even 87% when singled out for institutes of applied sciences). Compared to the survey done in spring 2014 (first edition) this score was more than 30 percent-points higher (Engel et al., 2015). Asked for internationalization activities, both prioritized and undertaken, international mobility of home students scored highest, 68% and 90% respectively (Sandström & Hudson 2018, p.16).

In brief, the theoretical and empirical evidence summarized above provides a relatively clear picture when it comes to the (expected) role of mobility – as a main aspect of internationalization, see below – in trying to achieve the objectives of internationalization of higher education. This dissertation aims at identifying how study abroad, as a form of (credit) mobility, contributes to intercultural competence that may be taken as an indication of 'preparedness for a global world'. Below I therefore first have a closer look at mobility as an important aspect of an internationalized curriculum, which will be discussed immediately after.

Enhanced Mobility and Internationalized Curriculum as Relevant Aspects of Internationalization of Higher Education

Mobility

Mobility as part of internationalization of higher education comes in multiple forms and is predominantly about the international (educational) movements of students and staff. These movements may relate to exchange programmes, partnership agreements, international research collaboration, internships, or study abroad. Historically and geographically there are differences; credit mobility is common in many European countries, as it is for many US students, while degree mobility is more common in Australia, the UK and Japan (Brewer & Leask, 2012).

Mobility further concerns the 'movements of the institute' providing services off campus, such as offering educational modules abroad, or offering a degree programme abroad, again with multiple historical and geographical differences. The Johns Hopkins University in Italy for instance is considered one of the oldest so-called international branch campuses, thus offering a form of transnational education where home students

'undertake learning activities in a different country from that of the awarding institution' (O'Mahony, 2014, cited in Brandenburg, Taboadela & Vancea, 2015). In contrast, for example, the School for International Training in the USA (SIT, 2019) offers a range of (credit) modules across the world that can be incorporated into the home country degree programme.

According to the OECD (2018) the number of foreign students enrolled in higher education programmes worldwide increased from 2 million in 1999 to close to 5 million in 2016. The project ATLAS (2018) of the Institute of International Education estimated the number of higher education students studying abroad in the year 2018 at over 5 million. For a good interpretation of the figures, it is however important to distinguish between study abroad activities (e.g. credit mobility), degree seeking enrolment (degree mobility), non-credit bearing study activities, and other forms of learning across borders; in the official statistics there is often not a uniform way of counting (Hudzik, 2016). According to Teichler and Ferencz (2011), the uncertainty about the validity of data in EURODATA, UNESCO and OECD databases is high; the estimations of mobility can differ by as much as 25%.

When narrowing the scope to the EU, the 'Bologna ambition' was that by 2020 20% of those graduating in European Higher Education have had an episode of study or training abroad, hence a mix of credit- and degree mobility (European Higher Education Area, 2015). The EU supports mobility currently through the Erasmus+ programme (until 2020), and previously through the Socrates-Erasmus programme (until 2007) and the Life Long Learning Programme (until 2014). Evaluation of the Erasmus programme revealed that by 2015 close to 300.000 students in the EU went for study abroad (i.e. credit mobility), exchanging between 33 different countries (European Commission, 2017)

To put the above figures into perspective, based on the IAU 4th global survey (Egrom-Polak & Hudson, 2014), global student access to mobility programmes does not reach beyond 5%, and in other estimates not even beyond 2% (Teekens, 2016). Hence, while there are an estimated 7.2 million mobile students by 2025 (Hudzik, 2016), this number would still represent a relatively small portion of the total number of students enrolled in higher education worldwide, and its growth in percentage is not higher than the overall growth in percentage of the total student body globally.

Relatedly, some studies show that internationally mobile students tend to be a self-selecting and socio-economically privileged group (Wiers-Jenssen, 2003). Studying degree mobility, not credit mobility, Wiers-Jenssen (2012) found empirical support for Murphy-Lejeune's (2002) concept of 'mobile capital', namely that 'contemporary mobile individuals' tend to have both family- and personal previous experience with travel.

Furthermore, instead of growth, perhaps the number of mobile students may even decrease in the future. UNESCO (2014a), with reference to the IAU 4th global survey,

highlighted that international opportunities being available only to students with financial resources, constituted the biggest risk for (a growth of) internationalization. From a different perspective, the British Council (2018) predicted outbound mobility to slow from 5.7 percent annually in the period 2000-2015 to 1.7 annual average growth to 2027, mainly due to the improvement of educational facilities in many countries that currently are among the depots of outbound students, e.g. South-Korea and Singapore.

Apart from socio-economic changes we may also witness socio-political changes that may affect international mobility. For the traditionally high inbound mobility countries like the UK and the US the socio-political situation seems to have changed abruptly in comparison to the past few decades; as a result, the “limits of internationalization” are becoming visible mainly due to an “unwelcoming atmosphere for foreigners” (Altbach & Wit, 2018). Comparable remarks can be found in the EAIE Barometer (Sandström & Hudson, 2018) pointing at recent developments in Turkey (limitation of academic freedom after an attempted coup in July 2016), and Hungary (threatening to close the Central European University after changing the National Higher Education Law in April 2017). In brief, the expected growth in mobility is yet to be seen.

Credit mobility thus refers to just one form of the many possible forms of mobility, and it concerns a relatively small portion of students enrolled in higher education; this portion will probably remain relatively small, also in the future (e.g. Choudaha & De Wit; 2014). Even though mobility scored as the highest prioritized instrument for internationalization (see above), as a strategy for intercultural competence development it would therefore still reach out to a limited number of students. For the vast majority of students, the intended international awareness or intercultural competence development objectives will need to be achieved through so-called Internationalization at Home initiatives (IaH) (Carroll, 2015; Crowther et al., 2001; Jones, 2013; Leask, 2009; Teekens, 2013). Internationalization at home aims at achieving intended international learning outcomes through the delivery of *domestic* educational programmes.

In the meantime, new developments also call for some caution. Pointing at internationalization at home as an alternative for mobility may sound well-defined, but what it entails is becoming increasingly unclear. Blended learning, MOOCs, and virtual classrooms may blur what happens at home and what happens abroad, while what exactly constitutes ‘home’ also depends on whose perspective one takes (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Coelen, 2016). Moreover, De Wit and Leask (2019), overlooking current global political and socio-cultural developments, conclude that there is a growing need to align internationalization of education with upholding global human values. This may require challenging long-held views on what constitutes ‘being international’, with ‘at home’ and ‘abroad’ increasingly becoming an artificial distinction.

Internationalization of the curriculum

A second relevant aspect of internationalization of higher education is the realization of an internationalized curriculum, representing the design and the delivery of a learning intervention, which may compose mobility as an integral part. Taking the suggested revised definition of internationalization of higher education by De Wit and collaborators (2015) into account (see above), then the design and delivery of the curriculum should ultimately produce transformative learning experiences; it must lead to making (new) meaning (Killick, 2015), or to deep learning and new ways of thinking (Brewer & Leask, 2012; Morais & Ogden, 2011). Internationalization of higher education has been coined as the answer to globalization (Beerkens, 2003; Coelen, 2016). Hence, the key intention of the process of internationalizing the curriculum is that teaching, and learning, is not isolated from its social context, which increasingly means not isolated from its *global* social context.

For a meaningful internationalized learning environment, the content, the pedagogy and didactics, the learning outcomes of the curriculum and the assessments of it, as well as the support services, will need to be internationalized (Green & Whitsed, 2015). The degree to which this aim of a meaningful internationalized learning environment is felt as intrinsic, unavoidable, or rather a nice add-on may depend on the academic discipline and the professional profile. Yet, renouncing internationalization of the curriculum increasingly means depriving students from being ready for an evolving world order of greater interconnectedness. In whatever discipline or workplace, students must learn that what they (plan to) do and decide locally is related to effects globally (Lilley, 2014).

A widely used definition of internationalization of the curriculum is offered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD: "A curriculum with an international orientation in content and/or form, aimed at preparing students for performing professionally and socially in an international and multicultural context and designed for domestic and/or foreign students" (Brewer & Leask, 2012, p. 246). More recently, Leask (2015, p. 9) defined internationalization of the curriculum as "the incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a programme of studies". Leask's definition is obviously very much in line with the definition of Internationalization at Home (IaH, see above), namely, also aiming at integration of international and intercultural dimensions in the formal and informal learning environments.

In order to operationalize the concepts of internationalization of the curriculum, Brewer and Leask (2012) identified at least four challenges: 1) building sufficient faculty capacity, 2) providing access to all students, 3) integrating and documenting international

learning practices and outcomes, and 4) enacting the institutional policies and mission concerning internationalization. A framework for internationalization of the curriculum thus includes the elements that constitute the design on the one hand, and the context on the other hand (Leask, 2015). Killick (2015, p. 24) added to this that internationalization of the curriculum is not solely driven by rationales like the ones above, but just as much by institutional ethos and related activities, i.e. by “exhibiting behaviour that espouses its objectives”, by proverbially walking-the-talk.

What constitutes the curriculum can be divided in to what is formally included in the teaching and learning programme (e.g. the syllabus, the courses), what is part of the informal and/or extra-curricular activities (e.g. the non-assessed activities), and the hidden components (e.g. the tacit expectations of classroom behaviour, like asking critical questions) (Condon, 1986). It is worthwhile to note that much of the effects of mobility may not be directly connected to the formal curriculum, but rather to the informal or even to the hidden curriculum. More often than not, there are no formally articulated intended *intercultural* learning outcomes connected to episodes of mobility. Credits earned during mobility often predominantly concern the formal discipline content and less the ‘preparedness for a global world’ (Sandström & Hudson, 2018). Likewise, the effects of engaging with culturally different others is often not formally assessed, often due to the difficulty in assessing it in a reliable manner.

The above illustrates that it is worthwhile to investigate and evaluate mobility as a learning intervention in the light of the internationalization objectives, and even more so when mobility is part of the formal curriculum. Herein, a highly relevant question is whether intercultural competence, as an intended learning outcome, will develop due to mobility. It is plausible to assume that the success of internationalization of higher education, and of mobility in particular, is not just relying on getting into contact with cultural differences per se, but will be determined by additional factors. Below I will continue with discussing three factors that may influence the effectiveness of an internationalized curriculum, including mobility: 1) language as the key medium of engagement and instruction; 2) (the degree of) perception of cultural diversity as a resource for exploring multiple perspectives; 3) the educator’s competences as an important aspect of the delivery of an internationalized curriculum.

Relevant Determinants of Successful Internationalization of Higher Education

Language

An important aspect of effective internationalization of higher education is the language (of instruction), the chosen lingua franca often being English. In Anglophone areas this may come across as rather natural, but for many mobile learners the English language

forms a (sometimes unexpected) challenging part of the international learning experience (Carroll, 2015). Lack of language proficiency can hinder making contributions in class. The need to frequently look up words in order to understand a lecture or text can be very time consuming, distracting and tiring.

Then again, not making contributions in class may relate to not being used to doing so, or to not being part of the educational upbringing of learners. Also, misunderstandings by the student may just as well be due to insufficient language ability of the educator. Peacock and Harrison (2009) observed that language proficiency seems to act as a broad proxy for cultural proximity, meaning that proficiency levels are – whether justified or not – used as reference points for further engagement.

Much like the mobile student, the domestic student and educator alike may be equally challenged when they take part in a multicultural classroom where the language of instruction is English, or different from their mother tongue. A negative impact on the quality of education, often argued as due to the institute's ill-considered commercial objectives to attract foreign students by offering English taught programmes, is currently being debated in Dutch newspapers and popularly coined as the 'English disease' (DVHN, 2018; NRC, 2018). Accordingly, the Minister of Education is seriously considering changing the Dutch law on education (Rijksoverheid, 2018).

Others argue that the dominance of English as the main language of instruction may have reached or soon will reach its ceiling, for instance because researchers publishing in English increasingly have difficulty to stay active in their national discourse (Altbach & Wit, 2018). Such observations are in line with findings in earlier studies by Luke (2010) among educational institutes in the USA, the UK, and Australia: a too exclusive focus on international student recruitment from a commercial perspective may lead to (unwanted) radical impact on educational dynamics, such as the 'massification' of educational programmes (Killick, 2015).

What the debate of (assumed) loss of quality due to language proficiency refers to is that speaking a language and thinking in that same language are two different things (Pollock, Reken & Pollock, 2017). When using text, it is not automatic that the *context* also comes across. When we internationalize our classrooms, we must take into account that the academic expectations and instructions in class may be received in very different ways, the limitations of vocabulary and pronunciation often already starting from the sender (Carroll, 2015). Achieving the outcomes of internationalization of higher education will therefore depend, to a large extent, on the effective use of a sufficiently commonly understood language, whether English or not.

The issue of (English) language proficiency as a condition for successful internationalization of higher education has meanwhile led to a range of possible interventions. Carroll (2015) spoke of ESB and NESB for identifying the ones with an

'English speaking background' from those with 'no English-speaking background', and of current 'English language proficiency', abbreviated to ELP, that will need to be diagnosed in order to decide on 'English for academic purpose', or EAP training. What this illustrates is that ensuring that English as a lingua franca is sufficiently effective requires, according to Carroll, 'progressive language support', and cannot be expected to happen automatically by mere exposure. Educators may need to be more explicit about the expected (contextual) level of language capability and integrate a pathway to it in the (internationalized) curriculum of the discipline. Said differently, it is a myth that our education will internationalize by simply starting to lecture in English (De Wit, 2011).

The key aspect that I take from this brief overview is that language is the medium for both 'text and context'. When internationalizing the curriculum, the context may too easily be taken for granted yet be crucial for understanding the (actual) meaning of an instruction, message, course description or intended learning outcome. For example, what do we exactly mean, and expect to happen, when we instruct a student to 'critically review' a certain theory? Does hearing the word 'critical' entail examining and breaking information into parts and making inferences, or does it resonate with fault finding and negative judgment as in 'critique'?

Clearly, differences in cultural background of learners plays a role in this; familiarity with high or low context communication (e.g. is the meaning of a message explicitly verbalized, or not) was one of the earliest identified cultural dimensions (Hall, 1959). But whether culturally familiar with it or not, for intercultural competence development as an outcome of internationalization, a sound understanding of context remains crucial (Bennett, 1993, 2013). It is therefore worthwhile to take into account both the learner's and educator's proficiency of a language, and the extent to which this may relate to developing intercultural competence, especially during an episode of mobility.

Perception of cultural diversity

Another aspect of effectively developing 'global preparedness' as an outcome of internationalization is the ability to observe diversity, and of *cultural* diversity in particular. In my view, one of the 'gateways' to achieving the objectives of internationalization (e.g. to instil meaningful contributions to society; see above), is recognizing and acknowledging the tensions, as much as the (innovative) connections, between different cultural perspectives. Even though nationality should not be taken as a synonym for culture, the term international does introduce cultural diversity into our systems of learning, and with that the opportunity, if not the obligation, to explore and utilize cultural diversity in the context of international learning objectives.

Clearly, diversity may also refer to issues like ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, ideology, socioeconomic status, gender, or age. Such categories of diversity however do

all carry a 'cultural load' in the sense that they are all human-made and not natural phenomena. I thus look at culture as both objective and subjective, meaning, culture includes all the institutional aspects of culture – i.e. what we shape and shaped, as well as all the worldviews that these institutes may support, promote and reproduce – i.e. what we think and thought (Bennett, 2013). Other scholars referred to this as our cultural archive, our 'repository of memory' (Stoler, as cited in Wekker, 2016) or as the 'presence of the past in the present' (Bourdieu, as cited in Wekker, 2016). In brief, the above would mean: the moment we internationalize we also (need to) interculturalize.

As mentioned earlier, a relatively popular belief about internationalization, and about educational mobility in particular, is that cross-cultural contact in itself contributes to the competence of dealing with cultural diversity. However, already Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory, which will be discussed in more detail later (see chapter 2), has as a key notion that improving intergroup understanding, and certainly reducing prefabricated ideas and stereotypes about other groups of people, will only happen when certain conditions are being met. Although this assumption about the strict necessity of such conditions for successful intergroup contact has been tempered by more recent research (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), it is still plausible to assume that the dynamics that come into play when people need to relate across different learning-, cognitive-, and didactical styles will most probably only enhance learning and understanding if there is a certain commonality felt next to the diversity felt (De Swaan, 2014; Sen 2006). For mixed student teams this can be the shared desire to jointly meet the assessment criteria and earn a good grade; for a multicultural faculty the goal to jointly design an inspiring curriculum or an inclusive learning environment. The moderating role of communality in bridging diversity is currently receiving renewed attention, possibly also partly due to an increased understanding of how the human brain *physically* works, namely, predominantly tuned to seeking comfort rather than stress (Hammer, 2012; Nguyen-Phuong-Mai, 2017a, 2017b).

If not automatically through cross-cultural contact, how else then do people develop a capability to communicate and behave effectively and appropriately in a world of various cultural contexts? Deardorff (2006, 2009b) posited that people are able to experience and maintain a process of both *intrapersonal* development, like shifting attitude, and *interpersonal* development, like shifting behaviour when dealing with culturally different people. Intercultural competence, and intercultural competence development, is thus a wider construct or process requiring more than mere diversity awareness or instrumental cross-cultural encounters.

It is therefore useful to further explore the interplay between attitude, knowledge and skill relating to (cultural) diversity (the intrapersonal component) on the one hand, and enacting thoughts and strategies when with culturally diverse others (the interpersonal

component) on the other hand. The exploration ideally leads to a deeper understanding of mobility as an instrument for achieving intended learning outcomes that relate to developing 'meaningful contributions', and more specifically to intercultural competence development. This will be further discussed in chapter 2 when focusing of the various models of intercultural competence, and intercultural competence development.

Educators' competences

Another relevant determinant of effective internationalization is the level of competence of the ones who design and deliver the curriculum, i.e. the ones who are expected to facilitate the students in achieving the intended international learning outcomes. In the 2018 EAIE Barometer, 'lack of commitment to internationalization by some faculty/staff' came out as the second highest commonly noted internal challenge in higher education institute's pursuit of internationalization (i.e. 38% of all responses, and 45% when singled out for institutes of applied sciences). The authors of the barometer refer to this finding, among others, as a "worrying indication of the reality of internationalization policy development and implementation"; internationalization is apparently "not recognized as an important feature of the work of faculty" (Sandstrom & Hudson, 2018, p. 36).

Overlooking the above figures, it would be useful to have a clearer distinction between the scores of non-teaching staff and faculty, and between lack of commitment in the sense of lacking capability (can do) vs. lacking motivation (wants to). A sharper delineation of terms would help identify to what extent educator's competences enhance or hinder the internationalization process. Nevertheless, the signal that the success of internationalization of higher education may also depend on the (professional) contributions of the institute's employees is clear.

For inbound mobility, an example of a persistent issue in the international classroom is known as 'deficiency-thinking' (Carroll, 2015). Instead of focusing on the specific qualities of the foreign student, domestic educators and students alike have a tendency to think in terms of what foreign students are not doing right, on what they fail (to understand). Yet, students from other backgrounds may be very resilient, possess less familiar yet context-relevant knowledge, speak multiple languages, have specific social abilities, etc. The educational challenge is to recognize, value, and make use of these abilities and talents also when they present themselves in unfamiliar ways (Killick, 2015).

In the context of outbound (credit) mobility, students who are helped to reflect on their experiences while abroad are more prone to come to a deeper insight and will be motivated to consider - or try - adapting their behaviour (Hammer, 2012). Such 'helping to reflect' often directly relates to the educator's design and delivery of the mobility part of the curriculum. For instance, Hammer (2012, p. 127-130) used terms like 'developmental interviewing', 'guided reflection' and 'cultural mentoring' as opposed to more traditional

'non-referent, open-ended' interviewing methods in an attempt to design an instrument that would (better) help evidence the student's capacity for navigating cultural differences and commonalities during an episode abroad. What it shows is that educators, e.g. in the capacity of a supervisor, would need to be knowledgeable of proven effective methods for helping students turn experiences (abroad) into meaningful learning experiences, and should not assume this to happen automatically.

I conclude that prerequisites for successful internationalization of higher education includes the capabilities of educators to offer an inclusive pedagogy so that (cultural) diversity is actively being used as a logical and current key aspect of learning. The facilitation of educator's capabilities might be found in the design and offer of targeted training of educators, like, for example, in the *Intercultural Competence Learning Lab* (ICLL) (Van der Poel, 2016b). In this training, teachers typically form a community of practice where they learn and test inclusive didactics and develop their personal intercultural awareness as a precursor for competence. Participants (since 2011) confirm that their increased sensitivity of cultural complexity has a direct and positive effect on their approach of education (more details to be found in chapter 5).

Still, additional research is required to learn about the effects of professional development at the level of *student* learning outcomes. When educators confirm that they look at their educational practice from a different perspective (after having received a training) this still does not yet provide evidence that their teaching has become (more) effective, (more) inclusive, or (more) relevant. One of the outcomes of a recent study with honours teachers, of whom some were involved with international education (Heijne-Penninga, Wijkamp, Hogenstijn & Wolfensberger, 2018), is a predominantly 'neutral' answer by the participants to the question whether their training led to the improvement of student learning. The actual effect of professional training on the core business of education - i.e. student learning - still requires more empirical evidence.

In brief, the competences of the educators involved with internationalization of higher education would need to internationalize or interculturalize as well in order to witness the desired outcomes of internationalization of higher education. That said, the competences of educators remain a means and not a goal in itself; the ultimate objective is *student* learning outcome.

Conclusions

In this first chapter I discussed definitions and aims of internationalization of higher education, briefly focused on *mobility* and *curriculum* as two key aspects of internationalization of higher education, and on *language*, *cultural diversity* and the *educator's competences* as three influential factors of effective internationalization of higher education. The main conclusions from this overview are:

1. Internationalization of higher education is an intentional process with the aim to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. Internationalization of higher education is thus purposeful, and not neutral; scholars highlight that the outcome of the process ideally contributes to 'being prepared for a global world' (Sandstrom & Hudson, 2018).
2. Student mobility is generally recognized as playing an important role in achieving the objectives of internationalization of higher education. Yet, mobility comes in multiple forms and the intended international learning outcome connected to it may not always be clear, or not clearly assessed. Credit mobility often concerns a relatively small portion of the programme, as well as of all the students enrolled in higher education. The effects of credit mobility on intercultural competence (development) may thus be limited, or not known.
3. For reaching out to all students enrolled in higher education, internationalization at home (IaH) and internationalization of the curriculum (IoC) are both needed. This will help achieving intended international learning outcomes by means of the delivery of (domestic) learning interventions to all students.
4. Credit mobility then, with the objective to contribute to achieving intended international learning outcomes, could be included in the process of internationalization of the curriculum, possibly, if not preferably, with a specific focus on using the (culturally) foreign environment as input for developing intercultural competence.
5. In the meantime, proficiency of language, and the proficiency of the English language as the frequently chosen lingua franca in particular, is an important factor affecting the internationalization of higher education, including intercultural competence development; it may influence the outcomes of internationalization, also during episodes of mobility.
6. Likewise, actively observing cultural diversity forms an important factor for successful internationalization of higher education; the more or less effective recognition and acknowledgement of different (cultural) perspectives when learning may influence the outcomes of internationalization, including intercultural competence development, again, and even more so, during episodes of mobility.
7. Another influential factor is the educator's competence in dealing with internationalization; the design and delivery of an internationalized curriculum, and of (support during) mobility, may influence the outcome of internationalization, including intercultural competence development, again, and even more so, during episodes of mobility.

Along with these conclusions, which all relate to the aim of making internationalization of higher education purposeful, I think a word of caution is justified. The outcome of internationalized higher education can be – among others – that students and staff know how to deal with cultural differences in a more competent manner. However, such an outcome of internationalization of higher education may be ambiguous for both students and staff since in itself prone to the cultural variety of our viewpoints and practices. For instance, with the revised definition of internationalization of higher education, as suggested above, what we qualify as a *meaningful* contribution to society may differ greatly among representatives of the various cultural environments across the globe. In studying this topic, we should be aware that looking at the input and effects of internationalization of higher education through a *truly* international lens is a paradox; we only have our own lens to look through.

The empirical part of this dissertation, presented in chapter 4, seeks to provide evidence whether one strategy in particular, namely study abroad as a form of (credit) mobility, produces a desired outcome of internationalization of higher education, i.e. an increased ability to deal effectively and appropriately with cultural differences. By providing both a theoretical and empirical analysis of the impact of student mobility this dissertation aims at contributing to an increased understanding how internationalized higher education may achieve its intended learning outcomes.

Chapter 2

Concepts and Theories on Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Competence Development

A prerequisite for understanding intercultural competence, and intercultural competence development, is having an idea of what the term *culture* actually means. Already in the 1950s Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) listed over 160 different definitions of culture. And almost 70 years later scholars still acknowledge that there exist very many definitions of culture, and that it remains difficult to simply pick one as the most appropriate (e.g. Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018; Nguyen-Phuong-Mai, 2017b; Shaules 2015).

There seems to be a general understanding however that the term *culture* refers to “knowledge, shared realities, and clustered norms that constitute the learned systems of meanings in a particular society” (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 9). Furthermore, there is consensus that culture concerns groups; the learned systems of meanings are shared and transmitted among the members of a social system (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012; Shaules, 2015). Moreover, culture refers to what evolves and guides our behaviours, and to our ability to learn from others (Nguyen-Phuong-Mai, 2017a, 2017b). In order to do so, based on the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966), Bennett (1993, 2013) posited, that people need *objective* culture, i.e. institutes, like political or economic systems and its products like debate or cuisine, as much as *subjective* culture, i.e. worldviews, like ideologies or general beliefs about collaboration.

The above characteristic of culture as *multiple* ways of human interaction, expression, and creation can only become clear when comparing cultures, or ‘in between’ cultures. The term *intercultural* is therefore used when referring to interaction and communication between people where in particular the “differences in cultures play a role in the creation of meaning” (Bennett, 2013, p. 11). For instance, all people eat, but how and what people eat may become a source of intercultural misunderstanding. The term *intercultural* may also refer to the *kind* of skills that are needed for dealing with cultural differences in cross-cultural contact (Bennett, 2013, p. 12). For instance, in the international classroom a teacher may need intercultural didactical skills.

Before intercultural *competence* comes into play, one will need to be exposed to questions or situations that call upon, however basic, cultural dilemma resolution while interacting with others, like deciding how to greet a foreigner respectfully. One will need to somehow become aware of other people behaving differently or expressing worldviews in unfamiliar ways. Intercultural sensitivity, as the “ability to discriminate cultural differences and to experience these differences in communication”, is therefore, according to Bennett

(2013, p. 12), a precursor for intercultural competence. Although it might be more obvious there, experiencing cultural differences does not necessarily only happen abroad; cultural differences, and as a response, cultural strain or surprise, is present in most people's everyday life. The ongoing debate in the EU on how to deal with (incoming) migration serves as an example.

Finally, observing human behaviour as expressions of culture requires having a vocabulary for articulating the observations as such. As long as our categories needed for discriminating between cultures remain undeveloped, human behaviour that is foreign may simply be that: 'foreign' or 'different'; we may lack the words to call it otherwise. Explicitly attending to experiences and having the ability to attribute and articulate meaning to an experience in *cultural* terms, are among the fundamental precursors for cultural learning, and taken as leading in the further exploration of the concept of intercultural competence (development).

The discussion below will start with looking at intercultural competence within three domains: attitudes, cognition and behaviour. What follows is a discussion of the conceptualizations of intercultural competence making use of various models, and of the various paradigms or assumptions these models may stand for. From there the process of intercultural competence development, and its preconditions are explored further in detail. This chapter ends with discussing mobility as an instrument for intercultural competence development.

Domains of Intercultural Competence

In the literature, intercultural competence is being described in multiple ways, mostly as variations of a construct with affective, cognitive and behavioural domains (Bennett, 2009; Hammer, 2015a; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001; Yershova, DeJaeghere & Mestenhauser, 2000). I will first describe and review the three domains, before discussing categories of models of intercultural competence that in various ways and degrees incorporate these domains.

The *affective domain* is often taken as the starting point of intercultural competence (development), with curiosity as a key disposition (Deardorff, 2006, 2009). People need a certain attitude, like open-mindedness, as a precursor for effective intercultural learning (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). Typical attributes listed in literature indicating conditions that may enhance intercultural competence are openness, tolerance of ambiguity, suspending judgment, respect for others, empathy, readiness to learn, ability to manage uncertainty, and mindfulness (Bennett, 1993; Kim & Ruben, 1992; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Such capabilities are often looked upon as personality traits, of which some may be seen as less trainable than others (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002;

Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). On the other hand, empathy, as one of the listed attributes, is also often included in intercultural training, for instance by learning to ask attentive and involved questions; it is therefore apparently seen as a capability that can nevertheless be developed (Carroll, 2015; Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018).

The *cognitive domain* typically encompasses knowledge and thinking skills, with knowledge however getting more attention in literature than thinking or sense-making skills (Bennett, 2009, 2013; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Yershova, et al., 2000). There is a popular emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge of a specific host country culture, prior to getting there, often with the underlying goal to facilitate successful intercultural contact. Capabilities that receive a lot of attention are proficiency in the host country language, or an identified lingua franca, and knowledge of the *do's and dont's* in the host culture, like shaking a hand for a greeting, or not. In addition, a more culture-general focus emerged over the past decades, with an emphasis on cognitive competences like cultural self-awareness, value orientations, communication styles, and a global mind-set (Belenky, Bond & Weinstock, 1997; Bennett, 2013; Hofstede et al., 2010; Nisbett, 2003). An example of more culture-general knowledge, as compared to culture-specific knowledge, would be understanding that respect, as a concept, is interpreted and expressed differently over cultures.

In the *behavioural domain*, the relevant operational skills for intercultural competence include communication skills, observation skills, active listening skills, analysing skills, engagement with others, and building relationships (Wiseman, Hammer & Nishida, 1989). In this domain the capabilities are found that are more tangible and observable. Accordingly, many of the concepts in this third domain have been operationalized into instruments for training or measuring intercultural competence, like negotiating cross-culturally. Yet, one may question who exactly determines what behaviours to include when defining the domain. According to Deardorff (2009a), for example, the explicit skill of 'building relationships' can be seen as an overall shortcoming in the predominantly individualistic Western conceptualizations, as compared to non-Western understandings of (this domain of) intercultural competence.

Even though conceptually the three domains can be separated, scholars meanwhile acknowledge that the human being has the ability to sense, act and think in an integrated or holistic manner. Building on constructivist theory, Deardorff (2006, 2009a, 2009b) for instance conceptualized intercultural competence predominantly as an ability of using attitudinal, cognitive and behavioural options in continually varying constellations. According to this scholar, depending on (cultural) context, people may for instance experience phases of culturally appropriate and effective behaviour without giving it much thought.

In a similar vein, Hoffman and Verdooren (2018) argued that instead of focusing on the separate elements, it is more fruitful to seek for learning experiences that hone the various aspects of competence in combination, and in doing so respect the complex nature of intercultural competence. With reference to the so-called Dunning-Kruger effect (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) these authors reiterated that increased knowledge also leads to increased realization of what is not known, often creating a feeling of decreased competence. Looking at cognition in isolation may lead to wrong assumptions about the development of intercultural competence.

The separate domains can also not always rely on agreement among scholars in terms of level of analysis and abstraction (Spitzberg, 1989; Spitzberg and Chagnon, 2009). The three domains often overlap. For instance, motivation, or personal agency, entails intent, forethought, and self-efficacy, and thus consists of emotional, intellectual, and behavioural components (Bandura, 2006).

Other scholars argued that the concept of identity should be taken as foundational for intercultural competence (development) (Kim, 1988; Sen, 2006; Yoshikawa, 1988). Identity refers to the integration of personal and social dimensions into an holistic orientation of the self in relation to others. According to Kim (2009), the degree to which an individual would feel secure in his or her identity (how one sees oneself) is crucial for developing (intercultural) relationships; the level of abstraction thus no longer being the separate domains, but rather the degree of successful overlap, or integration of the multiple domains.

Relatedly, like Deardorff (2009b), Spitzberg & Cupach (1984, 2011) and Rathje (2007) argued that at least one more domain would need to be taken into account: context. They argue that political, historical and social context need to be considered when discussing intercultural competence; similarly, more scholars state that the three domains cannot be isolated from issues like equality, power, colonialism, indigenouness, Westernization, and global citizenship (Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018; Medina-López-Portillo & Sinnigen, 2009).

In summary, with categorizing the constituting factors of intercultural competence into separate domains, we may risk losing an integrated or holistic perspective on intercultural competence that multiple authors consider highly important. Furthermore, the cross-cultural generalizability of the identified factors per domain can be disputed, as much as it is unclear how each factor would relate to cross-cultural outcomes, such as a mutual understanding of respectful behaviour. Finally, scholars seem to base their construct of intercultural competence on different leading paradigms. Hammer (2015) for instance refutes a compositional paradigm consisting of cognition, attitude and behaviour in favour of a developmental paradigm where, according to this scholar, intercultural competence is primarily a function of engagement with cultural difference.

The question from which possible paradigm one may best look at intercultural competence is the key topic of the next section. Five categories of models of intercultural competence are presented in order to further discuss and examine the dominant assumptions per category of models. From each category an exemplary model will be discussed in more detail.

Models of Intercultural Competence

In the literature, five categories of models of intercultural competence have been distinguished by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009). As will be described in more detail below, they distinguish between compositional models, co-orientation models, developmental models, adaptational models, and causal path models.

Such categorizing helps make the prevailing underlying paradigms clear. For instance, does a model of intercultural competence take motivation as the leading agent, or personality, or making meaning, etc.? Categorizing also helps make clear that the concept of intercultural competence can be analysed from multiple perspectives, giving an indication of the epistemological choices that are available when trying to define the concept. The five categories, presented below, are not mutually exclusive, nor do they claim to offer the only categorization possible (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016).

Compositional models

Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) listed various models of intercultural competence that can be labelled as compositional (e.g. Deardorff, 2006; Hunter, White & Godbey, 2006; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). In these models, intercultural competence is predominantly portrayed as a set of factors, elements or components (often from across the various domains, see above) that are supposed "to be productive or constitutive of competent interaction" (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 10). The overarching assumption is that intercultural competence is a more or less comprehensive set of capabilities and traits. The downside of a compositional model is that it is often weak in showing the relations between the various components, and that the process of how certain capacities can be acquired or strengthened is less clear.

The Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) may serve as an example of a compositional model. This model has been selected for further discussion because the model is based on one of the first research studies that documented (degrees of) consensus among 23 expert participants; i.e. as a reiterative grounded theory after employing Delphi methodology.

For the base of the Pyramid Model, Deardorff adapted Byram's (1997) observation that attitude is the fundamental entry point. At the other end, at the apex, Deardorff positioned a desired external outcome, described by the author as behaving and

communicating appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations. In between the base and the apex various components of intercultural competence are being positioned, such as knowledge and comprehension (e.g. culture-specific information), and skills (e.g. the ability to listen and observe). 'Mounting' the pyramid corresponds with moving from a predominant individual level towards an increasingly interactive level; it resonates for instance with Bloom's (1964) taxonomy of moving from lower thinking skills (as foundational) toward higher thinking skills (as outcomes).

The weakness of the Pyramid Model may be that cultural learning appears as ultimately leading to a final state of intercultural competence – at the apex. The model is somewhat 'Maslowian' so to speak; degrees of intercultural competence are presented as a sequence of linear steps, where a 'lower' ability would first need to be mastered before an ensuing ability can start to develop. In Deardorff's (2006, 2009) Process Model of Intercultural Competence (discussed further below) this shortcoming has been taken away.

Co-orientation models

Co-orientation models (e.g. Byram, 1997; Fantini, 1995; Rathje, 2007) primarily focus on the process of human interaction. Establishing a commonly accepted frame of reference is often the desired outcome; the overarching paradigm for these models is meaning-making or understanding. This category of co-orientation models is mostly rooted in linguistics, which is not so surprising, since language is often considered the key vehicle for establishing common grounds in intercultural interaction. What is less clear about these models is how the kinds of traits identified in for instance the compositional models would moderate this process.

Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence Model serves as an example and has been selected for further discussion because it is one of the first models that started to focus on intercultural, as compared to bicultural competence, i.e. on the "ability to combine aspects from *multiple* cultures in performance" (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 18). The model is an example of conceptualizing intercultural competence as a process that produces meaning, or comprehension of human interaction; on understanding 'how people get along'. Knowing culture (knowledge; *savoir*), understanding cultural differences (attitude; *savoir être*), interpreting cultural differences (skills; *savoir apprendre/faire*), and comparing cultural differences (skills; *savoir comprendre*) are the four dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitude as conceptualized by Byram and Zarate (1994) when assisting the Council of Europe to ultimately arrive at a common framework of reference for languages (Council of Europe, 2001).

Byram (1997) later added a fifth *savior*, labeled as *savoir s'engager*, for having an additional dimension of *critically evaluating aspects of own and foreign culture* as relevant

for developing intercultural communicative *competence* rather than developing into an intercultural *speaker* (Byram, 2009; italics added). The additional dimension thus concerned an understanding of the other *society* (read: context) where the language is spoken rather than an understanding of the other language per se.

While Byram's model does not reflect how - it does not show causality - adding this fifth dimension (*savoir s'engager*) makes the model more purposefully aiming at "establishing and maintaining relationships" across cultural boundaries (Byram, 1997, p. 3). The five factors together do still not represent stages or phases representing higher levels of competence, but the model now does include increasing levels of a (moral) compass with the objective of navigating aspects of tension and harmony in foreign encounters in an increasingly effective manner (Hoff, 2014). One could therefore argue that the model has somewhat moved from a *co-orientation model* towards (also) being a *developmental model*, of which other examples will be discussed immediately below.

This brief discussion of the model adds two relevant points to the body of knowledge needed for understanding the process of intercultural competence development: (a) contact with dissimilar others, as much as learning from dissimilar others, ideally takes place in a context of cultural (self-) awareness, and (b) such an awareness is rooted in (moral) judgements about aspects of culture, including one's own.

Developmental models

The third category consists of models that construe intercultural competence as developmental concept, with steps or stages in dealing with cultural difference as its major focus (e.g. Bennett, 1986, 1993; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The weakness of the compositional models is the strength of these developmental models: the key focus is on the process; it profiles competence over time. The overarching paradigm is (cognitive) growth and learning to observe and integrate cultural differences in the construction of daily life in a more complex manner. Typical examples are King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) Intercultural Maturity Model, and Bennett's (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS). Both models represent the idea that higher levels of competence require ongoing "study, observation, and interaction with representatives of another culture" (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 21), something this dissertation aims to explore in the context of mobility. Moreover, the DMIS in particular has been foundational in the design of both assessment rubrics and instruments for measuring levels of intercultural competence that are frequently used in higher education. Examples include the *intercultural knowledge and competence value rubric* of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU, 2010), and the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). For a detailed introduction of both the DMIS model and the IDI instrument see chapter 3.

King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) model builds on Baxter Magolda's (2001) earlier model, representing a matrix of four phases towards self-authorship. Central in this model are the stages of developing an idea of self, which is crucial in knowing how to relate to others. The model is designed around three leading questions, namely 'How do I know?' (cognition), 'Who am I?' (identity), and 'What relationship do I want with others?' (interaction). It describes how learners arrive at answers to these questions in an interplay of intrapersonal and interpersonal actions and reflections. The model describes how a focus on external authority is gradually transformed into an internal belief system that supports a coherent sense of self, and meaningful social interaction.

In line with Byram's (1997) model (see above), over time the individual develops a compass for judgment that is increasingly felt as 'own'. Building on this, and by refining Baxter Magolda's (2001) initial matrix, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) produced an Intercultural Maturity Model that stages the progressive competence of intercultural interaction as a process of maturation. Their model describes the process of becoming increasingly capable of understanding and enacting ways that are interculturally appropriate, and as such forms an integrated or holistic framework of cognition, identity and interpersonal contact.

This ability to shift in cognitive perspective, and in behaviour, as indications of higher levels of maturity resonates with another developmental model, namely with the concept of increasing ethno-relative comprehension and forms of engagement in Bennett's (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS). One's competence in dealing with intercultural relations increases when one's interpretations of experiences with cultural differences become more complex and sophisticated (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). People can move from a predominantly ethnocentric worldview toward a more ethno-relative worldview when realizing that one's indigenous culture is just one among many others. The process is conceptualized as taking place through various stages, representing a continuum of an increasingly complex perception of diversity, bearing in mind more than one cultural perspective.

Of particular interest is the transformative, or developmental potential that both the Intercultural Maturity Model and the DMIS conceptualize, albeit that the first may be seen as predominantly evolutionary and the latter more as revolutionary; Paige and collaborators (2003, p. 485) posited that positions at the ethnocentric side of the DMIS model are stage-exclusive. Still, prerequisite in both models are that understanding and accepting differences is not experienced as a threat. Instead, the foundation for learning about cultural differences is the ability, confidence and freedom to make use of cognitive and behavioural attributes in an intercultural context (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The other important notion is that the developmental paradigm lies in the increasingly sophisticated interpretation of the experience, not in the experience per se. Being in the

vicinity of an event does not automatically lead to understanding or appreciating what is going on (Mezirow, 2000). It must further be acknowledged that development does not take place in an unproblematic, nor in just a single directional manner; learners progress and regress (Killick, 2015). While models of maturity and development generally have a desired direction, it is far from automatic that learners will follow that path in a straight line and arrive at comparable end stations; there are multiple factors that influence the willingness and the ability to, for instance, adapt.

Adaptational models

A fourth category of intercultural competence models is based on the idea that successful functioning in an intercultural context necessitates balancing own perspectives with the perspectives of others (e.g. Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1989; Kim, 1988), mostly with the intention to stay in the relationship (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016). The strength of these models lies predominantly in making the process of tension resolution when adapting to another culture vs. maintaining one's own culture visible (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). The underlying paradigm of these adaptational models is therefore dyadic, or dialectic: perspectives are considered both an input as well as a result of interaction. This category includes concepts where intercultural competence is seen as a set of strategic considerations and approaches in response to cultural transitions (Berry et al., 1989). An example of this type of model is Kim's (1988, 2001) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence and has been chosen for further discussion since it highlights the complexity of adaptation, including the possible influences of mass communication experiences, that can be considered as highly relevant when exploring intercultural competence development among young adults.

In the paradigm for adaptational models the outcome of the interaction is leading; adaptation is seen as evidence of an ability to reason from, and to enact an ethno-relative perspective (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Adaptational models resonate with developmental models since the increasingly complex understanding of cultural differences is claimed to enable intercultural competence in its behavioural sense (Bennett, 2013). In Kim's (1988) Intercultural Communicative Competence Model the learner thus navigates different contextual information and interaction factors in order to arrive at an informed choice for adjusted cultural orientation. Such factors are for instance the culture's tolerance for alternative behaviour, or the pressure to conform, but also the degrees of access to, and the use of both personal and mass communication.

A relevant caution when looking at adaptational models is the tension and anxiety that learners may experience when adapting to foreign culture versus sustaining one's own known culture; stress as a reaction to the unfamiliarity and the ambiguity of a foreign

environment (like a perceived low tolerance for alternative behaviour) can seriously affect the outcomes of cultural learning.

Causal path models

A final group of models consists of the ones that highlight causal relationships, with for instance motivation or competence achievement as its leading focus (e.g. Deardorff, 2006; Griffith & Harvey, 2001; Ting-Toomey, 1999). These models are based on the idea that the prevalence of a certain factor upstream, for instance speaking a foreign language, will lead to higher levels of cultural engagement and learning downstream (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). The paradigm has causal pathway relationships between relevant factors. The complexity of some of these models can however be experienced as problematic, e.g. by the use of two-way arrows; a relative weakness that is sometimes 'resolved' by making models circular, or by including feedback mechanisms. An example of a causal yet circular model is Deardorff's (2006, 2009) Process Model of Intercultural Competence, selected for further discussion since, like the Pyramid Model discussed above, rooted in consensus among experts. The model is highly popular in the field of cultural training as one of the few models that explicitly incorporates an ongoing dialectic between intrapersonal and interpersonal processes.

In Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence the same components as in the pyramid model are included (attitude, knowledge and comprehension, desired internal outcome, and desired external outcome), but with more justice to the complexity of the developmental process and presenting the components in the form of a circle, or as an ongoing movement. Furthermore, the model is more explicit in its interplay between internal and external outcomes; it expresses more clearly than the pyramid model (discussed above) how people acquire and test insights in the interactions with others, then take these experiences as input for their internal thought processes, hence producing internal outcomes that are used in future interactions with others, and so forth. For instance, for a foreigner, bowing in Japan for a greeting may require reflections on various experiences before a feeling of control may start to occur.

Deardorff's (2009) pyramid and process models bring forward a few salient aspects for understanding intercultural competence development. First, what the models have in common is that an attitude of respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery is considered the "*necessary starting point*" for intercultural competence development (Deardorff, 2009, p. 480). Apparently, in both models, the prerequisite for intercultural competence development is a certain receptiveness for new information.

Secondly, the process model in particular reminds us of the ongoing nature of cultural learning. Rather than building blocks supporting a somewhat static proficiency level, the process model tells us that intercultural competence development requires

continual effort and accepting varying outcomes. When residing in a familiar cultural context for a longer time, our efforts may gradually reduce and the external outcomes (like behaviour that is considered to be appropriate) may come increasingly easily. When moving on to unfamiliar cultural environments our efforts may need to increase and achieving external outcomes may initially be hard again.

A third observation is that intercultural competence is an outcome of an iterative process, or dialectic between *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* development: our thinking helps us to decide how to interact, and our interaction helps us with what to think. The example above, i.e., bowing in Japan, illustrates that what people may learn about typical behaviour in another culture, like greeting habits, may be tested in the interaction with representatives from that culture. The first experience may inform the initial understanding (of the meaning) of the greeting habit, and may lead to an adjusted greeting a next time, and in a comparable manner a third time, etc. Table 2.1 summarizes the five categories of models discussed above.

Review of the various models

The various models and the prevailing paradigms of intercultural competence, as presented in the overview and in the table above, can, and have been criticized. For a start, practically all models originate from scholars with Western cultural backgrounds and take a single cultural background of learners as leading (Deardorff, 2009; Pollock, Van Reken & Pollock, 2017). This may be increasingly problematic since many learners may have a multicultural identity and are for instance able to interpret factors from multiple, even seemingly contradicting perspectives, without experiencing this as an internal conflict (Sen, 2006). It is further problematic since concepts like 'oneness', known in some Asian regions, or 'ubuntu', known in some African regions, are examples of important regional social interaction principles yet hardly to be found in current models of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2015). It raises the question of how universally valid the models and the underlying paradigms are, and with that the question of how useful the models really are for exploring and explaining behaviour that is - intrinsic to its name - situated 'between' various cultures.

Then, some scholars have difficulty with the projected outcome of the models, which is predominantly one of enabling learners to deal with differences. In taking differences as the leading input, as most models do, we call upon the primary human biological response mode, regulated by the amygdala part of the brain which is basically a defence mechanism (Nguyen-Phuong-Mai, 2017a). Confronted with differences, learners may therefore initially be put into a reactive mode of protection against risks, so creating the opposite of what most models aim at, namely a pro-active mode of deeper understanding or learning. A focus on differences as the leading input can historically be

Table 2.1.

Categories of Models of Intercultural Competence with a Brief Description, Assumption or Paradigm and Exemplary Model.

Category	Description	Assumption or Paradigm	Exemplary Model
Compositional	Constellations of factors, elements, or components	Competence is delineated as a more or less comprehensive set of capabilities and/or traits, usually categorised under cognition, attitude and behaviour (CAB)	Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006)
Co-orientation	Process of establishing jointly accepted or created frames of reference	Competence is seen in terms of outcomes of interactional processes; as (jointly) making meaning in the interaction with culturally different others	Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (Byram, 1997)
Developmental	Evolving steps and stages of dealing with differences	Competence is perceived as (cognitive) growth and learning to observe and integrate cultural difference in the construction of daily reality in an increasingly complex manner	Intercultural Maturity Model (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005); Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993)
Adaptational	Balancing of own behavioural options with the ones of others	Competence is observed as behavioural frameshifting; a dialectic process of input and result of interaction, considering behavioural options, with the intention of staying in the relationship	Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Kim, 1988, 2001)
Causal path	Influencing the relationships between relevant factors	Competence is seen as influencing causal pathway relationships between relevant factors leading to higher levels of effectiveness (e.g. via other factors)	Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2009)

Note. This overview is based on Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009.

understood as the predominant outcome of exploring *foreign* cultures, being the prevailing practice during the naissance of the field of intercultural communication (e.g. Mead, 1949; Hall, 1959, 1976). In recent years however scholars increasingly understand, also in neurological terms, how the human being seeks 'normality' or 'automaticity' (Evans, 2010, Kahneman, 2011; Shaules, 2015). Moreover, and in particular for learners in their late teens or early twenties, the frontal area of the brain is maturing slowly and is, at this age, biologically not ready for speedy transmission of new information. So, with this 'organ

of socialization' not yet fully developed, seeking commonality is often the 'buoyancy device' when confronted with unfamiliar challenges (Hammer, 2012). Construing models on the logical discourse that people have a natural interest in diversity can thus be looked at – apart from not helpful – as not always very realistic. Or in Bennett's (1993, p. 21) words: "Intercultural sensitivity is not natural, it is not part of our primate past".

Building further on the input from biology and neurosciences, models of intercultural competence could also benefit from taking into account our growing understanding of brain plasticity; human beings have the ability to adjust values to behaviour. For many trainers in the intercultural field this may go against their everyday practice, i.e. informing learners that behaviour is predominantly driven by cognition. Yet, contemporary biological insights resonate with longer existing psychological insights of cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1962): the human being is able to bring cognition into sync with prevailing behaviour. In other words, the developmental direction, e.g. in causal path models discussed above, may need to also include the opposite of what is predominantly being conceptualized: namely, that our behaviour is forming our cognition.

Furthermore, and still in line with the above comments, the German scholar Rathje (2007) posited that the overarching effectiveness criterion of many models turns intercultural competence too much into an instrument or a means; intercultural competence apparently leads to the achievement of a goal. Yet, the existing differences within groups, or cultures, should ideally lead to a concept of intercultural competence as a human capability of becoming familiar with the normality of differences, rather than with the adaptation to an assumed coherent set of values and norms. Intercultural competence should be understood "as the ability to bring about normality [of difference] and therefore cohesion" (p. 262); communities need "glue, not a mould" (p. 263).

Then, the implicit notion of 'progress' in most models can be theorized as problematic; intercultural competence can also decrease or reduce (Vande Berg et al., 2012). In line with concepts of culture shock (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1962; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001), for many people the ability to absorb foreignness mostly comes in waves of feeling more or less competent and confident. Unsettling, frustrating or overwhelming encounters, as much as – paradoxically – exposure to cultural learning may lead to (temporary) lower levels of experienced intercultural competence (Acheson & Schneider-Bean, 2019). Or as an intercultural competence learner shared with me "the growing awareness makes me insecure" (Van der Poel, 2016, p. 102).

Finally, some of the models do not sufficiently integrate the role of language for meaningful engagement and exchange (Byram, 2012a). Models that are not explicit about linguistics as a core medium may lose some of their validity due to the uncertainty about a precondition for successful intercultural interaction. Granted, communication also takes place non-verbally, potentially even more powerfully than verbally. Yet, models that

include meaning-making, understanding and balancing cultural perspectives as crucial factors for intercultural competence (Byram, 2012b) may benefit from having a 'disclaimer' indicating which conditions are assumed to be in place for the concept to work as theorized.

Summarizing, the critique on the above models and the underlying paradigms concerns a predominantly Western mind-set from which the concepts sprout, and an emphasis on an assumed desired developmental direction or outcome, which is not always rooted in much empirical evidence (Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Van der Vijver & Leung, 2009). Further, scholars argued that some models are not sufficiently explicit about the assumed preconditions, like language proficiency (Byram, 2012), power relations (Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018; Medina-López-Portillo & Sinnigen, 2009), or the human biological characteristics or constraints that may affect the outcomes (Nguyen-Phuong-May, 2017; Shaules, 2015).

The overview of the various models and paradigms makes nevertheless clear that intercultural competence is predominantly about (developing an) understanding (of) the complexity of social interaction, and in particular in the context of more than one cultural perspective. All models are abstract representations of the human contributions to what ultimately constitutes society (as a cultural product), and how that society in itself reproduces constellations of human interaction. Intercultural competence is thus apparently being theorized as both an outcome and a process and will be discussed further in the following paragraphs.

Intercultural Competence Development

Overlooking the above discussion of the various theoretical foundations and models of intercultural competence, most of the constructs assume that intercultural competence development is helped when a prerequisite condition of curiosity or readiness to learn is present (e.g. Bennett, 1993; Byram 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Kim, 1988). Deardorff (2009, p. 479) for instance posits that "attitude – particularly respect ... openness and curiosity – serve as the basis of this [process] model and *affect all other aspects* of intercultural competence" (italics added).

It may be tempting to assume that a precondition of curiosity is automatically in place when dealing with young people, i.e. with adolescents who are familiar with roaming across borders due to cheap travel opportunities, and who are continuously connected to the world with the help of modern digital devices and media. Yet this could be too rosy an expectation. As discussed, the human being is 'wired' to come to snap judgments when things are foreign; our amygdala is simply quicker than our cortex (Nguyen-Phuong-Mai, 2017). For adolescents this is even more true since the cortex is still not fully developed

(Swaab, 2010). Therefore, as paradoxically as it may sound, the required precondition of curiosity may just as well require a precondition, namely one of relative maturity and safety.

Building further on that observation, despite the fact that only one category has been labelled as such, quite a few models ultimately include a component of development. For instance, Byram (1997) added a component of *emerging morality* in order to include a compass for development. King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) refined model now includes the aspect of *maturation*. Kim's model (1988) is based on *increasingly* complex understanding. I conclude that a juxtaposition of compositional models as opposed to, for instance, developmental models (e.g. Hammer, 2015a) may be a false dichotomy. Intercultural competence as a psychological construct may just as well consist of composite elements, *and* be developmental.

Furthermore, when developing (intercultural) competence, issues like anxiety, doubt, stress, (lack of) self-confidence, and power can affect the process of development, and may require careful attention in order to maintain a conducive context for the ongoing development of (intercultural) competence. Where a certain level of discomfort may be essential for development (e.g. being out of one's comfort zone may help when encountering new viewpoints), too much stress may be counterproductive (Barna, 2013).

Moreover, in most of the models the learner's interpretation of what happens is key (Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Kim, 1988). Learners must be allowed to develop their personal judgments in dealing with cultural differences in whatever bumpy manner. Rather than being told or instructed, learners ideally develop their own moral compass, and in doing so make their intercultural competence development purposeful.

Concluding, while acknowledging that intercultural competence consists of multiple components that include the domains of attitude, cognition and behaviour, I also observe that in multiple models the developmental paradigm appears as leading. As mentioned, I think this can go together very well. I further notice that intercultural competence development is mostly theorized as a process initiated by a readiness to learn; be it out of curiosity or out of a desire for conformity, it mostly concerns a desire to arrive at a deeper understanding and considering behavioural adaptation options. Intercultural competence is meanwhile also an outcome: our cultural attitude, knowledge and skill may reach a certain level, yet will still require continual adjustment based on experiences and learning from cultural contexts that are being observed as relevant. Both process and outcome of intercultural competence development can be hindered and enhanced, not least because of conditions or aspects that affect the various components, like anxiety, that is keeping people from further considering or developing certain behaviours or skills.

I consider Deardorff's (2006) overview of expert contributions to defining intercultural competence, and intercultural competence development, as foundational for

arriving at a (temporary) definition of intercultural competence. In this dissertation, I define intercultural competence as an ongoing *process* of developing one's knowledge, skills and attitudes, with as an external *outcome* one's ability to behave and "communicate both effectively and appropriately" in multiple intercultural interactions and contexts (based on Deardorff, 2004, as cited in Deardorff, 2006, p. 247 - 248).

In the next paragraphs I discuss additional theoretical concepts in order to even better understand the above theoretical foundations of intercultural competence, and of intercultural competence development. First of all, since basically present in each of the models, the observed interplay between personal development and the social interaction with (dissimilar) others when developing (intercultural) competence, needs further scrutiny (Mezirow, 2000). For meaningful interaction with others, a concept of the self is required. The learner must learn to 'see' culture, including his or her own, and to come to (moral) judgements about it; and in doing so he or she refines the own juxtaposition with different others. How is the learner helped to engage with that *dialectic* process, or how is the learner at least encouraged to seek that position?

Connected, secondly, an understanding is required of what would bring a learner beyond the anxieties and stress that may affect intercultural competence development, particularly when entering a new (cultural) environment. What effort is required to give room to curiosity and open-mindedness as key agents for further exploration, and to allow for confidently seeking interaction with dissimilar others (Deardorff, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 1999)?

Thirdly, I want to explore what the interaction with the dissimilar other actually entails in order to turn exposure, or contact with the other, into a meaningful *cultural* learning experience. What condition is needed in order to start construing experiences as *relevant* experiences *because* of its (possible) implications for cross-cultural behaviour and communication (Bennett, 1993)?

The above questions are further explored by discussing the theoretical concepts of *dialectics*, *exposure* and *engagement* as three assumed preconditions for cultural learning. Cultural learning can be understood as acquiring practices, values and norms from cultures different than the own, by getting in touch with representatives of other cultures, and considering this new knowledge as input for appropriate behaviour (Killick, 2015). The discussion below is thus aimed at arriving at more clarity about preconditions (e.g. during mobility) that may influence intercultural competence development.

Preconditions for Intercultural Competence Development

Dialectic process

Building on the works of constructivists like Kelly (1963) and Berger and Luckmann (1966), authors theorized that attributing meaning to human behaviour is central to both understanding interaction, as well as to contributing to it effectively (Mezirow, 2000). The interaction with (dissimilar) others is needed for seeking (new) meaning as much as for seeking if current meaning is appropriate and effective; each outcome in itself constitutes new meaning. This is an ongoing interplay, or dialectic process.

The concept of *dialectic* goes back to the works of Greek philosophers like Plato, e.g. when relating about Socrates (Bósèdé Olúwolé, 2017). It stands for a back-and-forth debate between members of a discourse, often representing opposite sides (thesis and antithesis) reaching more sophisticated views as the dialectics evolve (synthesis). The sophisticated resolution itself can be criticized again, hence the ongoing nature of the concept of dialectic.

Some scholars argue that culture and cultural differences add a layer of complexity to this particular process (Lou & Weber Bosley, 2012). The term *intercultural*, as discussed above, refers to a specific kind of human interaction or discourse, namely one in which cultural diversity plays a crucial role (Bennett, 2013); it refers to the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds rather than to the comparison of multiple cultures (Asante & Gudykunst, 1989; Yershova et al., 2000). The term *intercultural* may thus, albeit not exclusively, be used as an indication of the 'debating space' where a person from one culture meets a person from a different culture, and where both are challenged to navigate the cultural differences by actively seeking and considering (new) meaning. The term *intercultural* is therefore fundamentally different from *cultural* since the focus is now explicitly on the interface between two or more (individuals of) different cultural backgrounds (Bennett, 2009).

The concept of interplay, or dialectic in cultural context may resonate predominantly with intercultural *communicative* competence (Byram, 2009), since language is often seen as the key medium in such interface. For an effective dialectic to take place, a precondition of communication needs to be fulfilled. As indicated earlier, resorting to a lingua franca is often helpful, but may not be sufficient. Reaching more sophisticated views requires that the language proficiency will allow for understanding both literal text, and context. The explicit capability of skilfully connecting different points of view in order to arrive at reconciliation of cultural dilemmas can be seen as the transcultural benefit of intercultural competence over mere cultural knowledge (Bennett, 2009).

The discourse that evolves when cultures overlap is of particular interest for understanding the assumed outcomes connected to mobility; the expectations of the

effects of foreign encounters are generally high, think of mobility programmes that are being promoted with slogans like 'broadening one's horizon'. In an attempt to grasp that process, Trompenaars and Woolliams (2009) designed an instrument that profiles, what they call, a hypercultural competence of respondents along the clusters of recognition, respect, reconciliation and realization. One of the interesting aspects of the instrument is the seemingly obvious sequence that one will first need to recognize or be aware of cultural differences before one is enabled to consider acting upon this insight. Bridging cultural differences, reconciling cultural tension, innovating by connecting opposing cultural views, none of it will happen if culture is not first seen and respected as a relevant factor. Hence, summarizing, assuming that a dialectic process as described above will evolve automatically when exposed to foreignness is potentially naïve. I therefore first explore *exposure* per se as a precondition for cultural learning, before discussing *engagement*.

Exposure

It is a relatively popular belief that exposure to cultural differences leads to intercultural competence, or to knowing how to deal with cultural differences in general. For instance, in international recruiting, a résumé with exotic work locations often triggers a notion of higher suitability for international postings. Making use of their database of test results, Brinkmann and Van Weerdenburg (2014, pp. 127-128) refuted, as they call it, the "exposure equals competence myth". Their analysis shows that time spent abroad has a minimal effect on the recorded levels of competence, when using the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC) test instrument (see chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the instrument). Furthermore, young people, assumedly with currently more cross-cultural exposure than elderly people, do not score higher. Europeans do not score higher than US Americans, and respondents from culturally heterogeneous countries do not score higher than respondents from homogeneous countries. Cross-cultural friendship is the only factor that positively relates to intercultural competence, which somewhat resonates with Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis Model for Intergroup Contact, to be discussed below.

More researchers in the field have uttered serious doubts that being in a multicultural environment will automatically lead to intercultural learning (Leask, 2015; Lilley, 2014; Vande Berg & Paige, 2009; Wit, 2011); "Intercultural skills are not learned by osmosis" (Yershova, DeJaeghere & Mestenhauser, 2000, p. 67), and students need to do more than just soak up culture (Covert, 2014). According to Morais and Ogden (2011) it is difficult to produce validated evidence for student transformations solely due to mobility; accordingly, the "immersion assumption" is being contested (Vande Berg et al., 2012, p. 125). In this context, Holmes (2005, 2006) and Holmes and O'Neill (2012) found that

intercultural contact that occurs at a functional level, e.g. in group work, does not of itself develop intercultural competence.

Nevertheless, the rationale for including mobility as part of the curriculum is often rooted in the assumption that being exposed to a foreign (learning) environment helps achieving certain desired learning objectives, such as knowing how to mitigate the pitfalls of cultural differences (see Box 1 in the Introduction). In the case of outcomes related to cultural learning it is the foreignness in particular that is expected to have effects that will be different from when staying at home; the more exotic the behaviour, the more impact it should have. Despite evidence of the contrary (see the studies above) the overarching belief is that exposure significantly enhances (cultural) learning. Although some positive correlations were found between mobility and personal traits associated with employability (like problem-solving abilities, Bracht et al., 2006, as cited in Brandenburg et al., 2015), other authors caution that these findings are all too often solely based on self-assessment and a statistical analysis of 'movement', e.g. duration and location, which do not provide evidence of intercultural competence development per se (e.g. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016).

In Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory the tenor is that contact in itself does not lead to more tolerance or respect for the other; proximity does not produce society (Dewey, as cited in Hudzik, 2015). Contact may however decrease prejudice when certain conditions are met. Among these conditions is *doing* something together. When that happens, according to Allport (1954), four variables in particular influence the probability of a positive outcome: equality, emphasis on cooperation, common goals and support by authorities. A possible implication of Allport's (1954) theory would be that cross-cultural encounters among students, as part of a formal curriculum, would require both educators and designers of curricula to ensure that conditions of equality, cooperation, purpose and support by (didactical) authorities are met before expecting outcomes to emerge that relate to cultural learning and intercultural competence development. This is not to say that intercultural competence cannot develop without contact (think of internationalization at home initiatives, discussed in chapter 1), or without contact that meets all conditions; the likelihood of it however can be expected to decrease.

Support for the above can be found in the works of Pettigrew (1998) and of Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) who tested Allport's theory in a large meta-analysis based on 515 studies. They were able to confirm a link between intergroup contact and (reduced) prejudice; however, when collapsing across all studies and conditions of contact, the effect size was only small. Accordingly, Savicki (2012, p. 232) concluded that "in the absence of [the] ideal conditions, the results [of contact] are not likely to be impressive". This conclusion somewhat resonates with Pettigrew's research in 2008; when singling out the affective part of intergroup experiences, empathy, perspective taking, and reducing

anxiety are more important factors for reducing prejudice than mere knowledge about the other (Pettigrew, as cited in Bennett, 2009). Findings by Holmes and O'Neill (2012) are comparable; reluctance, fear, confusion, and complexity are among but a few of the sensations that affect (making) contact. These findings encourage exploring the idea of engagement rather than contact per se.

Engagement

According to Sen (2006, p. 13), the concept of *engagement* relates to enacting an understanding that human beings always have something in common, despite their "diversely different" identities. Engagement means acknowledging the very multiplicity of our identities, and *therefore* also that there is always somehow some overlap and similarity with different others. Engagement further means making a connection with universal human (mental) traits, in the sense that they can be found in almost all people (Appiah, 2006), e.g. we all relate, love, and mourn. In a similar vein, terms like relationality (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), or reflexivity (Kramsch, 2014) are used when describing constructs that relate to the process of engagement.

Other scholars take a slightly different approach to engagement; whether understanding the viewpoints of a different other leads to feelings of connection to the viewpoints of the other calls upon a different skill (Lillley, 2014; Lilley, Barker & Harris, 2015). Not empathy, but ethical, critical and reflective thinking are considered the most needed skills when talking about intercultural competences development; engagement ideally helps students in *how* to think, not *what* to think.

Relatedly, according to Mezirow (2000), for actively *constructing* beliefs, the most productive process is reflective discourse, i.e. actively achieving an understanding and arriving at a justification of an interpretation. This involves examining alternative perspectives, weighing arguments and evidences, and critically assessing assumptions. Assumptions about outcomes of decisions and actions are tested by contrasting them to past experiences and future implications (Killick, 2015, p. 114). Transformative learning may thus first concern an effort: one may need to step out of the ordinary, out of one's comfort zone; it is a process of change beyond the limitations of one's original thinking, or culture (Kim, 2001).

In the context of (international) mobility, engagement may therefore be considered a term that stands for (pro-) actively connecting with (dissimilar) others with a sense of mutuality and relationship building. What is relevant for understanding intercultural competence development during mobility is that mere contact can remain distant, instrumental, and shallow; engagement however requires an affective, cognitive and behavioural reaction that is aimed at staying in the relationship.

Multiple factors, including the intensity of an encounter, or our emotional state during an encounter, may turn an engagement into an experience with limited or more profound impact. Levels of becoming aware of multiple perspectives, and of feeling enabled to act from a perspective that is different from the original own, will vary. Moreover, critical thinking is a way of learning, modelled by educators, and different in popularity across cultures. It is rooted in the conviction that meaning can be made (Mezirow, 2000), which is an idea not equally supported in each and every culture. Still, central to transformative learning is the *ability to construe new interpretations of the meaning of experiences* (Mezirow, 2000. p. 5), something for which *engagement* may serve as a precondition.

Resuming, dialectic process, exposure and engagement are theoretical concepts that refer to three distinctive preconditions for cultural learning and intercultural competence development. The first key notion is that students may need support in seeking and using the dialectic, or 'debating space' for comparing and reconciling cultural perspectives, in particular comparing their own perspective with that of dissimilar others. Secondly, exposure to foreignness is a necessary, but not yet a sufficient, precondition for effective cultural learning; the 'debating space' is not automatically found and used. Finally, engagement is required for staying in the relationship with dissimilar others in order to possibly arrive at *meaningful* outcomes of encounters, where different cultural perspectives are discussed and compared.

Intercultural Competence Development during Study Abroad

In the first chapter of this dissertation I discussed that mobility may be part of the curriculum of internationalized higher education and should not be regarded as a goal in itself. Educational mobility is rather an instrument that ideally leads to achieving learning objectives, like effectively and appropriately dealing with cultural differences. For example, study abroad, as a means and a form of educational (credit-) mobility, could lead to higher levels of intercultural competence, as an outcome.

In this second chapter I so far discussed models of intercultural competence, the outcome and process of intercultural competence development, and the preconditions for that process to effectively take place. In the following paragraphs the focus is on aspects of mobility that – according to literature – possibly relate to the outcome and process of intercultural competence development as discussed above. More specifically, I will discuss what may turn a sojourn abroad into a meaningful or (trans-) formative cultural learning experience, and will gradually work towards some conclusions, which may have important implications for empirical research concerning intercultural competence development during study abroad (e.g. as presented in chapter 4).

Educational mobility and cultural learning

With the term educational mobility Carroll (2015) refers to students' relocating in order to acquire a recognized set of knowledge and skills, whether or not concluded with a formal qualification or degree. In the past this was often done via a grand tour (US), and in the more recent past in the form of an 'export commodity' (UK) or as (bilateral) exchange programme (continental EU). Nowadays, American Field Services - AFS / Council on International Educational Exchange - CIEE (US), and Erasmus+ (EU) programmes support sojourners abroad. But in whatever form or era, encouraging mobility, including educational mobility, remains predominantly based on the idea that experiencing (cultural) differences leads to higher levels of (cultural) understanding. Accordingly, it does not come as a surprise that educational institutes keep on embracing the instrument of (credit) mobility when aiming at internationalization of the curriculum (Carroll, 2015).

As noted before, the internationalization of higher education ideally needs to be purposeful, meaning enhancing the quality of education and making meaningful contributions to society (De Wit et al., 2015). The assumed educational relevance of mobility (partly) lies in increasing international awareness and attentiveness to diversity (UNESCO, 2014a). This concerns both a process, e.g. developing one's (cultural) knowledge, skills and attitudes, and an effect, e.g. an ability to behave and communicate both effectively and appropriately in intercultural interaction and is thus aimed at both intrapersonal as well as interpersonal outcomes (Deardorff, 2006, 2009).

Moreover, as already discussed above, scholars agree that these objectives will not automatically be achieved by mere exposure. Vande Berg, Paige and Lou (2012) for instance argued that for cultural learning to take place immersion in another culture is helpful, but not sufficient. Their overview of studies tells us is that facilitation of the student's cultural learning is required in order to see (significant) effects. What this facilitation should ideally consist of is, however, less clear. A fully integrated trajectory in the regular curriculum apparently showed the biggest effects; mentored and instructor-guided interventions scored relatively higher than non-guided interventions, but the characteristics of that support remain multiple and varied, hence somewhat unspecified (Vande Berg et al., 2012).

Overall, Vande Berg and collaborators' (2012) list of studies seem to indicate that an experience does not automatically constitute a learning experience, and likewise that a (cross-) cultural experience does not automatically constitute a culturally relevant learning experience. Or, in the words of two authors who contributed to the review, "An event does not engender experience, it is the *personal interpretation* of the event that determines the nature of experience" (Engle & Engle, 2012, p. 302., italics by authors). Moreover, our sensory observations, what we see, hear, smell, touch and taste, are not automatically remembered as relevant information for future cross-cultural encounters. The key to

effective intervention in student learning, while abroad, is making a distinction between sensations and memories, and learning. A study abroad may have been 'sensational' and still may not have generated new insights (Hammer, 2012), which necessitates that the learner first discovers memories as relevant and useful (Zull, 2011).

All of the above findings and conclusions are in line with Bennett's (2013) idea that students can have (had) an intercultural experience without noticing it, which will typically happen when students lack the required categories for constructing it as an *intercultural* experience. Sojourns abroad, study abroad, or exchange programmes may fail to contribute to intercultural competence development because the context, i.e. the unfamiliar host environment, may not be construed as a potentially (trans-) formative context. Students will only experience, recognize, and articulate *cultural* differences when they consciously construe these differences *because of* culturally diverse meaning (Bennett, 1993). Educators may recognize this when for instance going through student's reflection reports after an episode abroad; all too often the reflective accounts do not connect observations with deeper values and cultural assumptions (Root & Ngampornchai, 2013).

Cultural learning, as shared earlier, can be understood as acquiring practices, values and norms from cultures different from the own, by getting in touch with representatives of other cultures, and considering this new knowledge as input for appropriate behaviour (Killick, 2015). Cultural learning may further take a culture-specific form, i.e. knowing more about a particular cultural environment, or a culture-general form, i.e. knowing more about cultural behaviour irrespective of a particular cultural environment. For example, learning how best to arrive at consensus in The Netherlands (popularly known as 'polderen') would constitute culture-specific knowledge; understanding that cultural variations of perceived equality moderate decision-making, would be a form of culture-general learning. Meaningful cultural learning resonates more with culture-general learning than with culture-specific learning; the focus being on the actual practice of respectfully reconciling differences rather than on the (observation of) differences per se.

Moreover, according to Bennett (2009, 2012) cultural learning must include *how* to learn about culture, so that sensitivity, i.e. more complex perception, can be considered for enacting appropriate behaviour. The learner rather seeks than avoids other viewpoints and should ideally learn how to do this. Accordingly, the *sensitivity* that Bennett refers to includes a more complex understanding of culture, including own culture; the cultural (self-) awareness concerns a deeper understanding that one's own observations always take place through a personal cultural lens that constitutes just one perspective out of many.

Developmentally, referring back to the DMIS model discussed above, this is what Bennett (1993) observes as a prerequisite for the transition from a predominant ethnocentric worldview toward an ethno-relative worldview; adapting a predominantly ethno-relative worldview is transformative in the sense that one can no longer deny the very existence of multiple perspectives. In arguing like this Bennett embraces a developmental perspective that Adler (2013) introduced to the field, namely that intercultural competence development means questioning familiar cultural programming and allowing to be forced into new consciousness.

Building on the above, for mobility thus to be effective, students may need to be helped in the process of thinking about their thinking, in finding new consciousness. Study abroad, as a form of educational mobility, would ideally help students taking their experiences and memories as material for deeper understanding and learning (Hammer, 2012). Learning means mentally structuring information, or internalizing an awareness of the outside world, which according to Piaget (1952) basically takes place in the form of assimilation or accommodation. Assimilation is the process whereby existing knowledge and skills are used in new situations. Accommodation happens when people alter existing knowledge and skills in order to deal with a new situation; we expand how we think about things.

Some scholars posit that both assimilation and accommodation are possible at the same time, in whichever partial ratio to each other (Tennant, as cited in Killick, 2015). Comparable binary concepts come back in the works of Argyris and Schön (1974) with single- and double loop learning, as well as in Watzlawick's (1974) first- and second order change; we can learn, but also learn to learn. Moreover, we may even question the principles underpinning our learning to learn, e.g. by taking risk or not; introducing a possible third loop or level of learning (Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003).

Hence, the key notion for exploring mobility as an instrument for intercultural competence development is that learning, especially in the context of cultural understanding, may involve 1) making adjustments within an existing learning system, 2) making changes of the learning system itself, and 3) making changes in the underlying principles of the learning system. For example, when taking over stereotypical beliefs as sufficient clarifications for foreign behaviour, e.g. in this country people try to avoid eye contact, this would constitute a form of assimilation. We tune in to what is common belief, we may imitate, and may use it as a sufficient category for understanding what is going on. This normally does not take much effort and serves as a quick coping mechanism for dealing with differences. When in an unfamiliar environment, this may come across as a very attractive way of relieving stress and anxiety about the strangeness of things; that students feel tempted to resort to assimilation is perfectly understandable.

However, when learners start reflecting on the differences between stereotypical beliefs and other existing beliefs, or available experiences, they may start to consider accommodating. The desire for consistency and stability, for stopping the dissonance in cognitions, will make learners search for a new equilibrium between the beliefs (Carroll, 2015). This will require that some beliefs are adjusted, or rejected as no longer valid or useful, such as realizing that in certain cultures limited eye contact can be a sign of respect. So, beyond assimilation, learning thus involves examining and testing own ideas, and integrating these with new ones, resulting in more refined ideas. Learning then means *constructing* beliefs, rather than getting existing or fixed ideas transmitted (Kolb, 1984; Passarelli & Kolb, 2012; Perry, 1970, 1981).

Finally, episodes of study abroad may eventually contribute to questioning the principles underpinning our learning to learn (Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003). As mentioned before, across our globe there exist 'different ways of knowing'; ways that Westerners appear to be less familiar with and henceforth seem to be underrepresented in the concepts and models of intercultural competence development (Deardorff, 2015). In the work of Nisbett (2003) a Socratic learning style, that appears as predominant in Western countries, is compared with learning styles that are more common in other parts of the world, like Confucian in parts of Asia. Discovering that knowledge can also be rooted in elderly or spiritual wisdom, popular for instance in parts of Africa (e.g. Ubuntu), or in understanding mother Nature, popular in parts of Latin America (Scholastic), may lead to learners experiencing 'disorienting dilemmas' (Mezirow, 1991) when thinking about the principles of knowledge acquisition. If the very concept of *study* is questioned during study abroad, or if, due to studying abroad, students start to wonder about the very origin of their knowledge, then indeed study abroad may have been instrumental in purposeful international higher education.

Mobility and modern digital devices

Working towards a conclusion on the above discussions, I consider it relevant to briefly highlight a reoccurring theme, namely the question of where students 'mentally', as compared to physically, reside while abroad. Modern devices like laptops, tablets, and smartphones in particular, can link students 24/7 to familiar contexts, which may enhance behaviour that is isolated from the actual physical foreign environment. The smartphone may be used to 'disappear' or for being 'absently present' (Schnitzler, 2017). Some reports show that those aged 16 to 24, in the UK, in 2017, spend an average of close to 5 hours each day on the internet (The Telegraph, 2018); recent numbers reveal that teenagers and millennials worldwide are busy for about 4 hours a day with mobile devices (Statista, 2019). Hence the question seems justified as to whether the use of digital devices, like the

smartphone, may curtail the assumed effects of mobility on the development of intercultural competence.

Engle and Engle (2012) reported a remarkable drop in student scores on intercultural competence tests the year they allowed students to use the Internet freely compared to the years when it had been restricted. Granted, this was observed 7 years ago; our students' relations with modern devices may have evolved since then. Nevertheless, familiarity with the virtual world may lead to less familiarity with a world that is less predictable and riskier, i.e. the real world.

On the other hand, digital devices can be very instrumental in cultural learning. Study abroad assignments at Purdue University include producing digital evidences for being together with dissimilar others (Purdue University, 2019). Further, voice-over-internet conversations with students while abroad, e.g. by Skype®, may be used for deeper reflections on cross-cultural experiences, and for support when things become complex or stressful; digital means may be used for addressing issues of anxiety and tension (Kim, 1988), and for critical evaluation of experiences (Byram, 1997). Digital devices may further serve as a means for evidencing cross-cultural conversations, e.g. by recording and uploading a vlog.

A discussion about the effective use of modern digital devices ideally builds on the premise that for mobility to result in intercultural competence development, an intentional and reflective pedagogical setting needs to be present (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2012). Digital devices can be part of the design of such pedagogical setting (for an empirical test of such setup, see chapter 4), but care needs to be taken that the digital reality does not replace students' engagement with different others abroad.

Conclusions

Many scholars group the main constituents of the concept of intercultural competence under *attitudes*, *cognition* and *behaviour* (e.g. Deardorff, 2006; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998); some scholars argue that *context* would need to be considered as an additional relevant factor or domain when defining intercultural competence (e.g. Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018; Rathje, 2007). Apart from compositional (Deardorff, 2006), co-orientational (Byram, 1997), adaptational (Kim, 1988) or causal path (Deardorff, 2009), multiple models of intercultural competence may *also* be considered as developmental (Byram, 2009; Deardorff, 2009; Kim, 2001; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005); they contain descriptions of intercultural competence as both an outcome and a process, with ongoing changing levels of the outcome. Some other models are explicitly designed as developmental (e.g. Bennett, 1993), and put an emphasis on increasingly sophisticated interpretation of experience, not on experience per se. For this dissertation intercultural

competence is defined as an ongoing process of developing one's knowledge, skills and attitudes, with as an external outcome one's ability of effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in (multiple) intercultural interactions and contexts (based on Deardorff, 2006).

For intercultural competence development to take place, people may need to be assisted in resorting to curiosity and open-mindedness when exploring unfamiliar context (Deardorff, 2006, Ting-Toomey, 1999). Intercultural competence development is further facilitated by reducing anxiety and stress to some extent (Kim, 1988), by becoming increasingly culturally self-aware (Baxter Magolda, 2001), by forming a personal cultural identity (Byram, 1997; Sen, 2006), and by actively acquiring increasingly sophisticated ways of navigating cultural differences (Bennett, 1993; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Interventions during study abroad therefore ideally support students in finding and maintaining a dialectic, or 'debating space' with dissimilar others in order to *consciously* develop their intercultural competence, i.e. to reflect and actively make (new) meaning (Byram, 1997; Mezirow, 2000). In addition, while abroad, students also need to be assisted from yet another perspective: they should be encouraged not to 'flee' when facing potential disconcerting differences (Engle & Engle, 2012). If students shy away from cultural experiences, there will hardly be 'material' available for intercultural competence development; there is nothing relevant to reflect upon, or no dilemma to be reconciled (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2009). Intervention during study abroad is therefore aimed at exposure and engagement, in order to get into, and stay in the relationship with others (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016), meanwhile offering sufficient freedom and confidence (King & Baxter Magolda, 2006).

A cultural mentor may encourage students to engage with dissimilar others and can assist students in giving their experiences culture relevant meaning (Lou & Weber Bosley, 2012). People tend to forget their authorship of both their personal cultural identity as well as the environment of which they are part (Berger & Luckmann, 1966); people may take things 'for granted' while they are actually (self-) construed. A cultural mentor can assist in reminding the learner that knowledge once acquired can always be altered or expanded. Transformative learning points to the ability to construe new interpretations of the meaning of experiences (Mezirow, 2000). The mentor can also remind the student that learning does not only take place within the confines of the formal curriculum, but just as much extra-curricular, and informally (Condon, 1986).

Finally, students need to be assisted in articulating their experiences into meaningful terms and examples for the intellectual and professional context. Study abroad is part of the curriculum, part of a programme, with learning objectives and a professional profile: accordingly, students need to learn to effectively verbalise how their experiences

abroad support their professionalism and future employability (Messelink, Van Maele, & Spencer-Oatey, 2015).

Chapter 3

Methods Used to Capture Intercultural Competence Development

In order to analyse whether interventions aiming at enhancing intercultural competence (such as study abroad) indeed serve this goal, a reliable measurement of intercultural competence development is a necessary condition. There are several instruments available that also tap into intercultural competence development, such as the Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI, Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992), the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS, Chen & Starosta, 2000), the Intercultural Competence Profiler (ICP, Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2009b), and the Intercultural Competence Questionnaire (ICQ, Matveev, 2002). Very predominantly, however, the field relies on Bennett's (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS), and on the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI, Hammer & Bennett, 1998; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003) as an instrument based on this model. In this chapter I further discuss the DMIS, which has already been introduced in chapter 2, as a frequently used underlying concept of intercultural competence development, and the IDI instrument for understanding and measuring such development, for example before and after study abroad. I discuss the theoretical construct and validity of the instrument, user experiences with the instrument, and critically review strengths and weaknesses of using the instrument for measuring intercultural competence development.

I conclude this chapter with discussing two related test instruments, namely the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC, Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004) and the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire - Short Form* (MPQ-SF, Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013). Both instruments are rooted in the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ, Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra, 2003) and aim at profiling personal attributes that may affect a person's receptiveness to developing intercultural competence, which may provide for control variables when empirically measuring intercultural competence development.

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

As introduced in chapter 2, Bennett's (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) is a staged model representing how people perceive cultural differences. In the DMIS, *intercultural sensitivity* refers to how people construe cultural differences and the varying kinds of experiences that accompany the constructs (Kelly, 1963), e.g. think of a *polarized worldview* where people may use 'us and them' terminology when trying to express preferred and less preferred behaviour. With reference to cognitive

complexity theory (O'Keefe, Delia & O'Keefe, 1977), Bennett (2013) further posits that the DMIS assumes that expertise is a function of seeing and integrating constructs in a more complex manner; our perceptions become increasingly real if we perceive them in more sensitive (i.e., more complex) ways. To illustrate this, Bennett gives the example of a wine connoisseur possessing a more sophisticated expertise of recognizing different wines than that of an average person. Therefore, the model is developmental; the construal of reality reflects "an increasing capability of accommodating cultural differences" (Bennett, 1993, p. 24).

The DMIS thus models an elaboration from less complex perceptions of experiences toward more complex perceptions. It does this along six distinct kinds of orientations ranging from avoiding cultural differences towards seeking experiences with cultural differences. In a *denial* orientation, i.e. the most ethnocentric stage in the DMIS, people experience one's own culture as the only real one; other cultures are not, or only vaguely noticed (Bennett, 2013). In the ensuing stage, named *defense*, people look at their own culture as the most evolved one, or at least as the most preferred way to live, and consequently tend to typically organize the world in terms of 'us and them'. A variation of defense is *reversal*, where the concept is basically flipped, but nevertheless a polarized one: *their* way of living is preferred over *ours*. The most developed orientation at the ethnocentric side of the DMIS is *minimization*. At this stage people subsume differences into familiar categories, e.g. similarities of human biology, or (overly) emphasize universal values, like all human beings, in the end, wanting the same, e.g. democracy.

The first orientation at the ethno-relative side of the DMIS is labelled *acceptance*, where people would acknowledge that one's own culture is just one out of many, and all cultures being equally complex. The ensuing orientation is *adaptation*, where people would typically feel increasingly enabled to start enacting culture sensitive observations into various behavioural options that would be seen as culturally appropriate. Finally, at the end of the continuum, and as the most developed stage at the ethno-relative side of the DMIS, *integration* stands for an orientation expressing an experience of one's self that includes multiple cultural worldviews (Bennett, 2013; Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004).

Even though the six typical orientations can conceptually and experientially be separated as developmental stages, they do co-exist to some extent. When, for instance, perceiving reality from a predominant ethno-relative viewpoint, one may still experience moments of ethnocentrism. Hence, people may, in certain situations, defend their own cultural worldview as 'better' while generally acknowledging that different worldviews are equally complex and viable. Moreover, the *predominant* orientation along the continuum refers to the basic way cultural differences are approached, relatively irrespective of which cultures are concerned. Therefore, for example, looking at a student sojourning abroad, the idea is that his or her basic orientation to deal with cultural differences will be similar,

irrespective of which country is chosen for the sojourn. The DMIS is a culture-general construct, not a culture-specific one.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

Hammer and Bennett (1998) were the first to develop the *Intercultural Developmental Inventory* (IDI) in order to measure people's orientations toward cultural differences as conceptualized in Bennett's (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS). The first version of the IDI consisted of a pool of 60 items, using 7-point Likert scales to measure participant's agreement to statements reflecting certain stages of intercultural competence development (Hammer, 1999).

In 2003 a second version of the instrument was introduced (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003), and empirically validated (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003). In this version, the item pool was reduced to 50 items, with 5-point Likert scales. In 2011 Hammer reported a further analysis of the second version of the IDI and introduced a single score calculation, labelled as the *developmental orientation* (Hammer, 2011; Paige et al., 2003). Moreover, rooted in the concept of encapsulated marginality (Bennett, 1993), *cultural disengagement* was introduced as a separate scale. Additional cross-cultural validity testing was carried out making use of 11 samples with a total of 4763 participants (Hammer, 2011).

Currently the third version of the IDI is available (Hammer, 2009, 2011); it is a 50-item self-administered questionnaire, to be completed online in approx. 30 minutes, and producing, among others, the calculated *developmental orientation* score. The online availability and multi-language option (validated by back translation), as well as the possibility to calculate a single score for indicating a developmental position, are all aspects that enhance the popularity of the IDI amongst researchers (and educators) who need an instrument for capturing intercultural competence.

According to Hammer (2009, 2011), Hammer and collaborators (2003), and Paige and collaborators (2003), the IDI v3 possesses strong content and construct validity. As depicted in Table 3.1, all scales have sufficient or good levels of inter-item reliability.

The seven subscales in the IDI v3 still largely correspond with the DMIS stages. The *denial* scale measures an orientation that recognizes the more observable cultural differences (e.g. in food) but may not notice deeper cultural differences (e.g. in conflict resolution) and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences (IDI report, n.d.). Somebody scoring high on *denial* would be prone to not use the term 'culture' for describing differences in behaviour.

Table 3.1

IDI v3: Constructs (Scales), with Items, Score Range and Cronbach's α per Construct

Construct	Items	Score Range	α
Denial	7	1-5	.66
Defense (Polarization*)	6	1-5	.72
Reversal (Polarization*)	9	1-5	.78
Minimization	9	1-5	.74
Acceptance	5	1-5	.69
Adaptation	9	1-5	.71
Cultural disengagement**	5	1-5	.79
Developmental orientation	45	55-145	.83

Note. * 'Polarization' incorporates the original orientations 'Defense' and 'Reversal' as subscales in the Intercultural Development Continuum – IDC; ** scale not included in calculation of developmental orientation (based on Hammer, 2011; Hammer et al., 2003; Paige et al., 2003).

Polarization includes a sub-scale *defense* that measures an orientation of views on cultural differences in terms of 'us' and 'them', of an uncritical view toward one's own cultural values and practices, and an overly critical view toward other cultural values and practices. The *reversal* sub-scale of *polarization* is considered a measure of an orientation comparable to *defense*, but in a reversed form, i.e. having an overly critical view towards one's own culture, and an uncritical view towards other cultural values and practices. A person scoring high on *defense*, or *reversal*, would be prone to observe cultural differences, but predominantly in terms of opposing preferences of behaviour.

Minimization measures an orientation that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles, as much as an uncritical view toward other cultural values and practices. In the current IDI v3 this worldview is seen as transitional, i.e. positioned between the more monocultural worldviews (*denial* and *polarization*) and the more culturally sensitive or multicultural worldviews (*acceptance* and *adaptation*). Somebody scoring high on *minimization* would observe cultural differences yet downplay the effects or importance of 'culture' for understanding such differences.

The *acceptance* scale measures an orientation that recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural differences and commonalities, both in own and other cultures. Increasingly acknowledging the importance of 'culture' for understanding differences in behaviour would be typical for a person scoring high on *acceptance*.

Adaptation concerns an orientation that is capable of shifting cultural perspective and changing behaviour in culturally appropriate and authentic ways. A person scoring high on *adaptation* would be prone to consider, as informed choices, the appropriateness of behavioural options in different cultural contexts.

The scale *cultural disengagement* measures a sense of disconnection or detachment from a primary cultural group. This scale is not considered as part of the

developmental continuum, but as a separate measure. Scoring high on *cultural disengagement* would be indicative for a degree of lack of involvement in core aspects of being a member of a cultural community (IDI report, n.d.). This scale is based on the DMIS 'integration' stage, developmentally positioned after 'adaptation', and will be discussed more in detail below.

The final construct is *developmental orientation*. This is a single score construct based on the various sub-scales except *cultural disengagement*, hence on six sub-scales covering a total of 45 items. The single score calculation is rooted in the DMIS concept of an orientation that develops from a predominant ethnocentric position toward a predominant ethno-relative position. The single score so represents the *predominant* orientation of the test-taker toward dealing with cultural differences and ranges from 55 to 145.

The original *developmental orientation* construct aimed at doing justice to the so-called paradigmatic barrier (Bennett, 1993) between ethnocentrism and ethno-relativism, i.e. moving beyond minimization for arriving at a predominant ethno-relative worldview. This means that for acknowledging that one's own culture is one out of many (*acceptance* and beyond), one would first need to shed all orientations that are rooted in a single worldview (*denial*, *defense* and *minimization*). Moreover, Paige and collaborators (2003, p. 485) posited that positions at the ethnocentric side of the theoretical model are stage-exclusive, while at the ethno-relative side they are cumulative. This means that people cannot start preferring one culture over another culture (*defense*) if they would not first stop 'denying' culture (*denial*), and, at the ethno-relative side, that people may only start engaging in culturally appropriate behaviour (*adaptation*) after acknowledging that there are several cultural options (*acceptance*).

Finally, in order to arrive at an easily understood score, e.g. comparable to an IQ score, the calculated overall IDI score has been normalized around the mean score of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 (Hammer, 2011; Paige et al., 2003; see Table 3.2). In empirical research the *developmental orientation* (e.g. before and after study abroad), represented by scores between 55 and 145, is often used as an indicator of levels of intercultural competence (e.g. as the dependent variable in a quasi-experimental research design).

Review of validity of the IDI

Although rooted in the DMIS concept, the above described continuum of orientations (labelled by Hammer as the *Intercultural Development Continuum* - IDC®) does not fully reflect the original DMIS conceptualization where *minimization* is theorized as an ethnocentric orientation (hence not as transitional), and where *integration* is part of

Table 3.2

IDI v3: Developmental Orientation: Constructs (Orientations), with Abbreviation, Interval Ranges and Expected Weight for Normalized Distribution (in %).

Construct	Abbreviation	Score Range	%
Denial / Defense + Reversal (ethnocentric)	dd + r	< 85	15.87
Minimization (transitional)	m	85-114	68.26
Acceptance / Adaptation (ethno-relative)	aa	115 <	15.87

Note. Table based on Hammer (2011)

an ethno-relative set of orientations (hence not omitted). In the DMIS, *minimization* is conceptually ethnocentric, since it takes one's own cultural understanding as a leading concept for universal reality (Bennett, 2013, p. 93), and *integration* is part of the ethno-relative orientations since it is experienced as one's self that now incorporates a wider spectrum of cultural worldviews (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004).

Furthermore, Bennett (2009, p. 9) questioned the normalization of scores for the IDC®, leading to a repositioning of *minimization* as a normative condition and in doing so creates an overestimation of this condition. However, Hammer (2011, p. 482) countered that Bennett does not provide for empirical evidence for his statement and instead posited that: "there is no overestimation of *minimization* ... [and] the IDI does not underestimate the more ethnocentric orientations"; a review of data from a total of 4763 respondents used for cross-cultural validation confirms the normal distribution of IDI scores.

Hammer (2011, p. 481) further showed empirical evidence that the scores on the items that belong to the DMIS *integration* stage (originally operationalized as *encapsulated marginality*, or EM scale) do not convincingly correlate with the other ethno-relative orientations but with ethnocentric orientations instead, i.e. with *reversal* in particular. The author concluded that the items of this scale rather constitute a measure of *cultural disengagement*, or a sense of disconnection from one's cultural community, than the assessment of a dimension of cultural identity formation. The scale is therefore conceptually excluded from the intercultural competence continuum, and, consequently, also from the calculation of the single score for *developmental orientation*.

Other authors have critically reviewed instruments for measuring intercultural competence, including the IDI. Perry and Southwell (2011) reviewed four different instruments, Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) reviewed 11 psychometric instruments, Matveev and Mertz (2014) reviewed ten instruments. Among the instruments included in the reviews are for instance the *Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory* of Bhawuk and Brislin (1992), the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* of Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000, 2001) and the *Intercultural Sensitivity Scale* of Chen and Starosta (2000). After discussing these reviews, Gregersen-Hermans (2016, p. 128) concluded that the IDI is essentially criticized for being too single-dimensional (focusing on attitude only), too much

based on the concept of progress (while learners can also regress), and not sufficiently predictive in terms of behaviour across varying cultural contexts.

Gregersen-Hermans' (2016, p. 130) own position in response to this criticism is that, in the IDI, worldview must be seen as a cognitive condition for competent behaviour, and not as an attitudinal outcome. Secondly, she posits that progress towards a more ethno-relative worldview ideally is assessed making use of longitudinal research, rather than being inferred from single correlations between the orientations as identified by Hammer (2011). And, finally, referring to Hammer (2011, 2015b), she states that the predictive power of the IDI was confirmed. The validation of the IDI as a psychometric test was done by norm referencing, i.e., by comparing the individual test taker with the other test takers, and not by criterion referencing, i.e., by comparing the individual test taker with a given outcome, as promoted by Matsumoto and Hwang (2013).

Based on the review and analysis done by Gregersen-Hermans (2016) and Hammer (2015b), I conclude that the current third version of the IDI has both been attacked and defended as a (not) sufficiently valid instrument for measuring levels of intercultural competence. Despite its observed limitations, it seems appropriate to still consider the IDI v3 as a sufficiently validated and reliable instrument for measuring respondent's predominant orientation toward cultural differences. With this assumption in mind, I continue with discussing researchers' practical experiences with the IDI, and, thereafter, will critically review the value of the instrument for measuring the development of intercultural competence.

Experiences with using the IDI in empirical studies as a measure for intercultural competence development

Several scholars have measured changes in intercultural competences development by pre- and post-testing cohorts of respondents making use of the IDI instrument, hence producing, as some scholars propose, average 'developmental gains', based on scores prior to, and after treatment or intervention. For instance, Paige and Vande Berg (2012) reviewed 10 different studies, all published after the year 2000, that make use of the IDI for profiling intercultural competence development. In summary: an average developmental gain of 4.47 points was reported at the University of Minnesota MAXSA project. The Georgetown consortium project reported developmental gains ranging from 1.32 to 12.47. At the American University Centre of Provence (in France) the gains ranged from 10.81 to 13.43. Willamette University-Bellarmino University research revealed gains of 1.94 to 10.17 and are discussed in more detail below. University of Minnesota Duluth research: 1.22 to 11.56, with remarkable gains of 24.9 points for students who had not been abroad before. The AFS intercultural impact study: gains ranging from 2 points to 8 points. CIEE research: 4.03 to 9.0. Westmont in Mexico programme: 13.32 to 18.41.

University of the Pacific research; according to the authors one of the largest developmental gains reported in literature: 17.46 to 19.78; yet this is a gain spread over a time period of three to four years. Finally, an in-service teacher development programme reported by DeJaeghere and Cao (2009) revealed developmental gains of 6.9 over a period of 2.5 to 3.5 years.

To put these scores, or average gains, somewhat in perspective, in my own research trials among staff of an International Business School in The Netherlands, I found a change in average scores after professional training of 8.02 in 2011 (10 respondents), of practically zero average change in 2012 (13 respondents), and of 10.06 points in 2013 (11 respondents) (Van der Poel, 2016b). Interestingly, different from the groups in 2011 and 2013, the group with almost zero average change in 2012 was a group of participants who had not volunteered, but who were instructed by their superior to attend the training. For an overview of all scores mentioned above, see Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Average Developmental Gains, and Ranges of Developmental Gains of Various Research Projects Compared to the Average Gains Reported in Own Research Trials.

Research project	Average Gains	Range of Gains	
		from	to
Univ. of Minnesota MAXSA project	4.47		
Georgetown Consortium		1.32	12.47
American Univ. Centre of Provence		10.81	13.43
Willamette Univ.-Bellarmine Univ.		1.94	10.17
Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth		1.22	11.56
AFS intercultural impact study		2.0	8.0
CIEE research		4.03	9.0
Westmont in Mexico programme		13.32	18.41
Univ. of the Pacific		17.46	19.78
Dejaeghere & Cao	6.9		
Van der Poel, Research trial 2011	8.02		
Van der Poel, Research trial 2012	0.1		
Van der Poel, Research trial 2013	10.06		

Note. Van der Poel (2016b); Vande Berg et al. (2012)

Lou and Weber Bosley (2012) shared further details of the Willamette University-Bellarmino University research project. Based on data collected in the episode 2004 - 2008, and in contrast to their expectations, the researchers reported no meaningful difference in pre-test IDI scores between US American and international exchange and degree-seeking students (average IDI score of 92.31; N=298 and 91.68; N=168 respectively). With 76 percent of the international students coming from Europe, the assumption was that these students were more experienced in encountering differences

and would therefore score higher on the IDI than US American students. Not finding a meaningful difference was taken as a confirmation that exposure may not equate competence. Moreover, from both cohorts, various samples were taken for sorting out effects of duration of being in the programme and of instructor-led facilitation; differences were observed, but all were relatively small, and due to the size of the samples, mostly allowed only for some tentative conclusions.

Still at Willamette University-Bellarmine University, Weber Bosley (2015) reported in her dissertation the results of in total five studies, with data collected over the years 2008 – 2012, focusing on the effects of intervention in cultural learning on intercultural competence development as measured by the IDI. Her findings in brief were that seniors on average scored higher than freshmen (87.18; N=517 versus 81.89; N=1225), but more importantly, that seniors who studied abroad and were assisted in cultural learning (N=60) scored on average 10.65 points higher than seniors who studied abroad without facilitation in cultural learning (N=109). The researcher concluded that facilitation of cultural learning, also, or even more so, during study abroad, had a significant impact on intercultural competence scores after study abroad as measured by the IDI (p. 121).

In another study, rooted in Contact Theory, Gregersen-Hermans (2016) operationalized contact quality, or exposure to diversity, by the frequency of, and satisfaction with, contact inside and outside the classroom. She concluded that her results did not support the premise that the quality of intercultural contact on campus predicts intercultural competence development as measured by the IDI (p. 207). Instead, she found a quite limited range of worldviews, predominantly early minimization (p. 209), and relatively small differences in IDI scores between pre- and post-tests, spread over four different groups of in total 108 respondents, namely ranging from 0.37 to 4.05 points (p. 184). In line with the above reported findings from Lou and Weber Bosley (2012) and Weber Bosley (2015) the results seem to support the assumption that mere exposure to cultural differences is not a sufficient condition for observing meaningful changes in intercultural competence as measured by the IDI.

In summary, the above overview of studies making use of the IDI for profiling intercultural competence demonstrate first of all that, in general, the average (group-) scores tend to point at a predominant worldview that is described as (early) *minimization*. This basically implies that respondents have a tendency to highlight cultural commonality and universal values and principles, as much as having an uncritical view regarding other cultural values and practices. The overview further demonstrates that changes typically range between almost nothing (just decimal points) to a maximum of 20 points, with differences in pre- and post-test measurements mostly ranging between 1 and 10 points. But do such scores indeed express development, or 'gains', as the IDI intends to measure?

Critical review of using the IDI for measuring intercultural competence development

The above discussion shows that the single IDI score is a relatively popular measure for levels of intercultural competence, e.g. in empirical research with a pre- and post-test design, and mainly referred to as the *developmental orientation* of the respondent, representing his or her predominant worldview when dealing with cultural differences. Moreover, the IDI appears as a relatively popular measure for intercultural competence *development*, meaning, for registering a change in intercultural competence over time, for instance after a study abroad as compared to levels of intercultural competence before study abroad.

Yet, as discussed, the single IDI score has met substantial scholarly critique (Bennett, 2009; Castiglioni, 2013; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016). At the heart of the debate is the – at best – limited transparency concerning the calculation of the single IDI v3 score. When formally registering for the use of the instrument, administrators need to agree with terms that include a clause to not do research regarding the instrument as such (IDI 2018 license agreement). As a result, scholarly articles that validate the single score calculation can hardly be found. Moreover, articles that do explain the procedure are meanwhile as old as 2003 (Paige et al., 2003), and do not sufficiently address the concerns about single score calculation as part of the current version (v3) of the instrument.

Nevertheless, it is known that the single score construct is based on all sub-scales of the IDI except *cultural disengagement*, hence on six scales covering a total of 45 items (IDI manual, n.d.). Further, the single score calculation was designed to express the rationale of the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) (Bennett, 1993), i.e. to express an orientation that develops from a predominant ethnocentric position (or in IDC® terms: from a mono-cultural worldview) towards a predominantly ethno-relative position (or multicultural worldview). This way it profiles an ability to arrive at increasingly sophisticated discriminations of cultural differences.

The single score calculation includes putting a relatively high weight on the ethnocentric orientations, a bit less weight on the (in IDC® terms) transitional orientation of *minimization*, and no extra weight on the ethno-relative orientations. In doing so, the theoretical assumptions of the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) are maintained (Hammer et al., 2003; Paige et al., 2003), i.e. the idea that ethnocentric orientations keep the respondent away from a predominantly ethno-relative worldview. The relatively higher weight of the ethnocentric orientations is ‘resolved’ when participants increasingly indicate that they do not rely on these orientations, thereby moving their overall score towards a predominantly ethno-relative orientation. Finally, in order to arrive at an easily understood parameter, the score is normalized around the mean score of 100, like an IQ or EQ score.

Overlooking the above procedure, I would like to discuss two effects in particular when (considering) using the calculated single IDI score in a pre- post-test setup, namely: 1) a possible regression towards the mean and 2) the assumption that more knowledge also leads to more awareness of what is not known.

Regression towards the mean is a well-known phenomenon when designing scientific experiments and making use of standardized data (Pocock, Assmann, Enos, & Kasten, 2002). When a variable scores extreme at time 1, it tends to score more towards the average at time 2, and when a variable scores extreme at time 2, it tends to have been more towards the average at time 1. Accordingly, in the case of the IDI single score calculation with a standardized mean score of 100, a score at time 2 is more likely to be higher for a participant with an initial score of 75 (at time 1) than for a participant with an initial score of 125. This effect was also observed by Gregersen-Hermans (2016, p. 189), and is normally countered by controlling the differences in scores between time 1 and time 2 for the respective initial levels measured at time 1. In my own empirical research I applied this technique by including the score measured at time 1 as covariate in an ANCOVA (see chapter 4).

Nevertheless, regression towards the mean still questions the construct validity of the instrument (IDI) in terms of its underlying theoretical model (DMIS). The rationale of the DMIS is that people can advance their ability to discriminate categories of cultural differences. With motivation, effort and time this ability can become increasingly sophisticated or developed. Conceptually there is no reason to assume that this is easier, or happening faster, when acting from a predominantly ethnocentric worldview (low score), and more difficult, or happening slower, when initially profiled with an 'accepting' mind-set (high score). Phrased differently, there is theoretically no clear reason why the human capability of construing categories that are more sophisticated would regress towards an average level. One may argue it would do so towards a social norm, set by a social system, but that is not the same as a calculated mean.

The doubt whether the construct (IDI) vindicates the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS; Bennett, 1993) resonates with Bennett's (2009) own critique that by standardizing the scores, the stage of *minimization* is overestimated and made normative. Hammer (2011) countered this criticism by stating that there is no empirical evidence for such an assumption, but the impression of a conceptual mismatch remains. By putting a higher weight on the ethnocentric stages of the continuum, the scores on these scales are being amplified and also therefore the changes in scores on these scales. Moreover, there is no clear conceptual reason for assuming that intercultural sensitivity would be normally distributed among a population (Castiglioni, 2013). In brief, whereas intercultural competence development is conceptualized as linear in the DMIS, in the related instrument it is not.

The above relates to my second point of concern, namely that the (cultural) learning that takes place between time 1 and time 2 may affect the score at time 2 negatively, whereas this could still point at a positive development, or, stated differently, that a regression in score may actually mean progress. For instance, a more modest self-assessment at time 2 as compared to time 1 may result in measuring no or even negative change at time 2, but the time 2 score may indeed indicate a more sophisticated level of cognition. E.g., “When I went to the United States, I thought I knew a lot about this culture, but then realized that I was not well prepared for the many cultural differences”. Due to learning about culture the respondent may increasingly be aware of his or her limited understanding of cultural differences and may, in retrospect, look at the initial self-assessment (at time 1) as one that was based on naiveté or overestimation of the own capability. Conceptually this would constitute an important developmental step that would not be captured by the calculated single score in the IDI. Even worse, a small negative change in the score on the ethnocentric scales is amplified due to the extra weight on these scales.

A final note of concern regarding the IDI and its underlying construct DMIS, is the general idea that more complex perception of cultural differences is a sufficient construct for considering adjusted behaviour. As already highlighted in chapter 2, this however is debatable, since people may use constellations of multiple constructs in deciding what to do, including for instance religion, or power (Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018; Medina-López-Portillo & Sinnigen, 2009). A too heavy reliance on the assessment of attitude or perception, like with the IDI, as a precondition or proxy for competence may be risky (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). In this vein, and notwithstanding the extensive empirical analysis of the IDI (Paige et al., 2003, Hammer, 2011), Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) criticized the predictive, or criterion-based validity of the IDI (see above). They posited that the factor construct of the IDI was not consistent with the underlying conceptual model. Hammer (2015b) countered this critique by explaining the use of norm referencing for the validity of the IDI, and not criterion-based validity. Nevertheless, the fundamental question remains how an underlying model of sensitivity, or worldview, is tested by an item pool that claims to explain competence or performance. Both conceptually and by building on the review done by other scholars (Weber Bosley, 2015; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016), I hold the predictive validity of the IDI therefore as limited. In order to understand how people perform in intercultural context, more is required than the assessment of their predominant worldview. I tend to agree with Bennett (2013) who posited that sensitivity, as conceptualized in the underlying model (the DMIS), stands for the increasingly sophisticated discrimination of cultural differences as a cognitive *condition or precursor* for the enactment of intercultural adaptation (p. 86). It is therefore not automatically a *sufficient* driver for performance.

In summary, it can be argued that the single score, as calculated by the current third version of the IDI, profiles an individual's self-assessed predominant *perception* of cultural differences at (a) certain moment(-s) in time, but that the single test score is therefore not necessarily an expression of the individual's intercultural *competence*. The use of the IDI as an instrument for profiling intercultural *competence* may not fully align with the theoretical assumption of its underlying model, namely of ways of perceiving cultural differences; how one perceives cultural differences may be – at best – regarded as a precursor for competence (Bennett, 2013). In order to understand *competence*, a more holistic approach would be needed, profiling other drivers of behaviour than just perception (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016). Interestingly, the explicit instructions by the owners of the IDI instrument to carefully use the IDI score in *contextualized* feedback sessions with the respondents, hints at a comparable caution.

Moreover, it can be argued that repeating the IDI test may profile an individual's self-assessed predominant *perception* of cultural differences once again, but that does not necessarily mean that the differences between the two scores are automatically an indication of (the direction of) *development* of intercultural competence. As discussed above, uncertainty remains over what is causing the differences in scores when the measurement is repeated. Two effects may pull the scores towards a normative average, leaving doubt as to what extent differences in scores on the IDI would express *development* as conceptualized by the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS; Bennett, 1993).

Researchers using the IDI may thus rely in their empirical research on a widely used and validated measure for intercultural competence (Fantini, 2009; Hammer, 2011; Vande Berg et al., 2012; Weber Bosley, 2015) that nevertheless may have some fundamental shortcomings. The IDI single score as a measure of intercultural competence may not be a sufficiently robust instrument for identifying a positive or negative development in the predominant perception of cultural differences between two time-points. It would require additional research, preferably also including qualitative data, for allowing a valid interpretation of a change of scores over time. Interviews or focus group discussions with respondents, after filling out the IDI, may help uncover the reasons as to why respondents may have changed their views on cultural differences as expressed through the IDI (Van der Poel, 2016b). Other qualitative measures, like observations and judgements by relevant others, e.g. teachers, may also be valuable for the assessment of intercultural competence development (e.g. Deardorff, 2009b, pp. 477-491).

Instruments Profiling Capabilities that may Influence Intercultural Competence Development

Apart from measuring existing levels of intercultural competence, for empirical research concerning intercultural competence development, it may also be worthwhile to control for some personal attributes that may be closely related to the propensity to develop intercultural competence. As with the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI) (see above), multiple instruments for profiling such capabilities have been described (e.g. Fantini, 2009).

One of the relatively popular ones, particularly in The Netherlands, is the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC) (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004). This instrument is rooted in the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ) (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra, 2003), which will therefore be discussed first. Relatedly, I will also discuss the short form of the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ-SF; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013), which is a condensed version of the original *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire*, that could be considered when seeking a relatively short measure for assessing relevant capabilities.

The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)

The five dimensions of the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ) are able to predict indicators of intercultural success of respondents, such as adjustment to foreign environments (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2000; Van Oudenhoven, Timmermans & Van der Zee, 2007), and performance of international employees (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004). The five dimensions, or scales, of the originally 91-item (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000) and then revised 78-item instrument (Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002) encompass the following trait dimensions:

Cultural empathy profiles a person's interest in other people and a sensitivity towards feelings, thoughts and behaviours that are different from their own. The scale includes items like: 'notices when someone is in trouble' (+). *Open-mindedness* reflects an open and unprejudiced attitude towards cultural behaviours and habits that are different from own (ibid). One of the items for example is: 'tries out various approaches' (+). *Social initiative* profiles an active approach to social situations and taking the initiative in such situations (ibid), for example: 'is reserved' (-). *Emotional stability* is defined as staying calm and performing effectively under new and stressful situations (ibid), for example: 'is nervous' (-). Finally, *Flexibility* refers to the ability to interpret new situations as a positive challenge and adapt accordingly (ibid), for example: 'works according to strict rules' (-).

The MPQ dimensions were designed to cover the rather broad *Big Five* personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and

neuroticism) more narrowly as “relevant for multicultural success” (Van der Zee, Zaal & Piekstra, 2003, p. S78). In line with this assumption, Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002), and Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000, 2013) demonstrated that the five MPQ dimensions were more powerful predictors of outcomes, such as migrants’, expatriates’, and international students’ successful international orientation and aspiration, than the *Big Five* personality traits.

Van Oudenhoven, Timmermans and Van der Zee (2007) observed that the MPQ dimensions can be divided into social traits and stress-related traits with the first ones (*social initiative*, *open mindedness*, and *cultural empathy*) having a positive influence on reactions to diversity. They further found that *emotional stability* was particularly important at the start of a stay abroad whereas *social initiative* was more helpful later on. Relatedly, more recently, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) made a distinction between stress-buffering traits (*emotional stability* and *flexibility*) which are relatively stable, and social-perceptual traits (*social initiative*, *open-mindedness* and *cultural empathy*) which are more trainable. The first set is linked to a lower tendency to perceive cultural situations as threatening and the latter set to seeing cultural situations rather as a challenge.

In addition, there is evidence that stress-buffering traits correlate positively with the ability to deal with uncertainty and/or a lack of control (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven & De Grijns, 2004) and with more positive responses to cultural differences (Van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2013). Social-perceptual traits were associated with more positive affect regarding members of different cultural groups (Hofhuis, Van der Zee & Otten, 2012) and a higher ease of identifying with a new culture (Van der Zee & Van der Gang, 2007). Based on these findings, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013, p. 928) concluded that, overall, “as a behavioural consequence, ... social-perceptual traits may facilitate cultural learning”, whereas stress-buffering traits “may protect against culture shock”. Consequently, the MPQ (or at least the social-perceptual part thereof) may also be useful for capturing aspects of intercultural competence *development*.

The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire - short form (MPQ-SF)

The *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire - short form* (MPQ-SF) (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013) is a condensed version of the original *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra, 2003). The aim of developing a *short form* was to “optimize subscale length by including as few items as possible within each factor” while maintaining sufficient score construct validity (minimum alpha of .70) (Van der Zee et al., 2013, p. 120).

As a result, a 40-item list was introduced by Van der Zee and collaborators (2013). They derived the list from a principal component analysis (study 1) and confirmatory factor

analysis (study 2), thereby extracting the *short form* from the original 91-item MPQ (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001). The *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire - short form* (MPQ-SF) thus includes the same dimensions as the original MPQ, yet with less items, but still with good validity and internal consistency; "... satisfactory coefficient alphas and high correlations with the original scales were found" (Van der Zee et al., 2013, p. 118).

Consequently, the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire - short form* (MPQ-SF) is a pragmatically shortened, validated 40-item self-assessment questionnaire, conceptually profiling the same five original MPQ dimensions: *cultural empathy* (8 items, alpha = .81); *flexibility* (8 items, alpha = .81); *social initiative* (8 items, alpha = .81); *open-mindedness* (8 items, alpha = .72), and *emotional stability* (8 items, alpha = .82) (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013).

The Intercultural Readiness Check (IRC)

A second, and conceptually closely related instrument to measure personal attributes that are considered relevant for the development of intercultural competence is the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC, Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Brinkmann & Van Weerdenburg, 2014). The IRC profiles people's capabilities to establish and maintain effective (working) relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds. Aiming at profiling the characteristics that may support international aspirations, or an international career, makes the IRC suitable for participants that are "highly representative of the group for which the MPQ was developed" (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004, p. 289).

The design of the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC) started with an evaluation of sets of items and constructs against the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ, Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) as an already validated instrument for assessing intercultural effectiveness (for discussion of the MPQ, see above). As a result, the initial item-pool of 151 was first reduced to 103, then to 60, and the original six dimensions of the IRC were reduced to four. The evolving IRC 1.0 describes 60 concrete behaviours that are considered to be indicative for the following four dimensions: *intercultural sensitivity*, *intercultural communication*, *building commitment*, and *managing uncertainty*. All items are scored in terms of their degree of applicability on 5-point response scale. The pattern of relationships with the scales of the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ) was largely as expected, supporting the construct validity of the IRC 1.0, and the assumption that the IRC relates to the MPQ in a conceptually convincing way (IRC manual, n.d.).

In 2005 the IRC 1.0 was again evaluated (Van Hemert, as cited in IRC manual, n.d.) making use of a sample of 2,656 respondents from 16 different cultural backgrounds. The internal consistency of the four scales was confirmed with alphas of .80 or above, apart from *intercultural communication* with an only modest alpha of .68. The intercorrelations

between the four scales were however high, indicating an insufficient distinction between the constructs.

In 2009 another study was carried out (Beirens, as cited in IRC manual, n.d), and additional analyses were performed (Schoonman, as cited in IRC manual, n.d.), making use of a sample of 13,000 respondents, in order to review the four scales. Making use of principal component analysis the four scales were redefined and the number of items per scale adjusted. The 'new' scales were once again validated against the MPQ. Additional validation was needed for the scale *intercultural communication*, involving another sample of 158 respondents, leading to the decision to use both old and new items for this scale.

The result is the current IRC 2.0 test instrument, consisting of an online 63-item self-assessment questionnaire divided over four scales (Van der Zee and Brinkmann, 2004). The four scales are all internally consistent according to a study by Brinkmann and Van Weerdenburg, 2014: *Intercultural Sensitivity*¹ (10 items, alpha = .73), *Intercultural Communication* (13 items, alpha = .82), *Building Commitment* (20 items, alpha = .87) and *Managing Uncertainty* (14 items, alpha = .78).

Comparing the MPQ with the IRC

Conceptually, the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ) – and more particularly, its *short form* (MPQ-SF) – and the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC) are closely related. Both the MPQ-SF and IRC instruments are derived from the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ). As already reported above, both instruments score well on indicators of internal consistency and validity (for IRC: Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; for MPQ-SF: Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer, 2013). In terms of their predictive focus, they vary to some extent. The five scales of the MPQ are able to predict indicators of *intercultural* (or *multicultural*) success of respondents (Leong, 2007; Mol, Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2001; Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Van der Zee, Zaal & Piekstra, 2003; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002), and their *adjustment* when confronted with intercultural environments (Van Oudenhoven, Timmermans & Van der Zee, 2007). The IRC profiles people's capabilities to establish and maintain *effective (working) relationships* with people from *different cultural backgrounds* (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Brinkmann & Van Weerdenburg, 2014). Hence, while both instruments

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¹ *Intercultural Sensitivity* in the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC) and in the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) refer to different constructs. In the IRC the term refers to levels of cultural (self-) awareness and levels of attending to signals from others concerning cultural norms and values. In the DMIS however, the term stands for the increasingly sophisticated discrimination of cultural differences as a *cognitive condition or precursor* for the enactment of intercultural adaptation (Bennett, 2013, p. 86).

share the goal to predict people's success when operating in an intercultural context, the MPQ-SF does this in a broader manner, while the IRC, with its focus on social relationships and social interactions, particularly in professional context, is more specific.

The two instruments however also differ in another way. The IRC appears to have a conceptual match with Deardorff's (2009) *Process Model of Intercultural Competence*, i.e. learners need to develop an ability to both shift perspective *and* behaviour; the IRC profiles both abilities. Each of the four scales in the IRC 2.0 includes both an 'inward-looking' and an 'outward-facing' facet, in order to cover both the internal reflection and the external testing of assumptions (Brinkmann & Van Weerdenburg, 2014). Such ongoing interplay, or dialectic, between reflection and experiencing was also conceptualized as essential for intercultural competence development by the founders of the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS; discussed above). Bennett (1993) and Hammer, Bennett and Wiseman, (2003) posited that one's competence in dealing with intercultural relations increases when one's interpretations of experiences with cultural differences become more complex and sophisticated (for a discussion, see chapter 2). In brief, more explicit than the MPQ-SF, the IRC measures *readiness* for intercultural competence development.

For the MPQ, rather than tapping into readiness, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013) posit that the social-perceptual traits (*social initiative*, *open-mindedness* and *cultural empathy*) are trainable and may facilitate cultural learning, whereas the stress-buffering traits (*emotional stability* and *flexibility*) are more stable and may facilitate protective behaviour. Consequently, the MPQ-SF (or at least the social-perceptual part thereof) may also be useful for capturing aspects of intercultural competence *development*. Interesting in this respect, however, is that Vander Zee and Brinkmann (2004, p. 289) reported that the IRC explained additional variance above the MPQ scales in international experience. Accordingly, they concluded that the IRC scales *may* "more strongly encompass trainable intercultural competences than the MPQ scales".

In summary, when aiming to control for relevant personal attributes that may affect intercultural competence *development*, both instruments can be considered feasible and well validated means, and both should, according to literature, be closely related to levels of intercultural competence and its development. A choice for the MPQ-SF over the IRC may be motivated by the possibility to also measure change in social-perceptual traits over time, for instance in a pre- and post-test research design. A clearer conceptual match with the DMIS and/or a focus on social interaction in professional context, may motivate a choice for the IRC over the MPQ-SF (discussed above). Finally, a point to consider is that whereas the MPQ-SF is freely available, the IRC is licensed.

Conclusions

I discussed the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) as the underlying concept of the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI), a broadly accepted measure for levels of intercultural competence, and for capturing intercultural competence development, for example before and after study abroad. Based on the relevant literature, I concluded that the IDI is a sufficiently validated and reliable measure of a respondent's predominant orientation towards cultural differences. At the same time, it still elicits scholarly critique, which is mainly related to the procedure for calculating the single score, and in particular to its limited transparency.

I further concluded that the IDI single score is not necessarily an expression of the individual's intercultural *competence*. I concur with scholars (e.g. Deardorff, 2009; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Hofmann & Verdooren, 2018) who posit that for properly understanding intercultural competence, a more holistic approach would be desirable, profiling other drivers of behaviour than just perception. In line with the discussion of various models of intercultural competence (see chapter 2; e.g. Rathje, 2007; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 2011), for instance, *context* may also matter. For example, typical in the context of higher education, and for study abroad in particular, one can imagine that living in an international student house, together with fellow home-country students, compared to living with a host family, could also relate to levels of intercultural competence.

Moreover, the IDI single score may not be a sufficiently robust instrument for identifying a positive or negative *development* in predominant perception between two time-points. It would require additional research, or assessment, preferably also including qualitative data and not only self-reported questionnaire data, to come up with a more valid interpretation of a change of score over time. As discussed, for example, filling out a second test with more modesty, as an expression of increased cultural-relevant insight, could possibly result in a lower score than in a previous test, but may nevertheless be an expression of a positive change.

I further discussed the experiences with the IDI as a selected test instrument in other studies and concluded that the IDI remains a relatively popular instrument for a quasi-experimental research setup with a pre- and post-test design. These studies broadly hint at increasing differences in scores between time-points when participants are involved in some sort of intervention aiming at cultural learning between the time-points. The results are however not always impressive, and the relationship between the type of intervention and the scores is not always clear. For people working in higher education, and with a desire to capture intercultural competence development as an outcome of educational intervention, I concluded that the IDI, as a tool, may help profile the learner's perceptions of cultural differences at various moments in time, but that the differences in scores

between IDI tests should not automatically serve as a sufficient indication of having achieved such learning outcomes. Once again, more research, using multiple methods and measures, is required in order to better understand the relationship between the intervention and the outcome.

I finally discussed two test instruments that can be helpful for controlling some personal attributes that may be closely related to the propensity to develop intercultural competence, namely the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ), including its *short form* (MPQ-SF), and the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC). Based on the relevant literature, I concluded that both instruments are sufficiently validated for that purpose. Furthermore, the two instruments, by measuring 'personal readiness' (IRC) and 'multicultural personality' (MPQ) as sets of abilities or traits, conceptually differ from the IDI, which is a measure of a predominant orientation towards cultural differences at a certain point in time. A key difference between the two instruments is a focus on dimensions that relate to internal reflection and the external testing of assumptions for the IRC 2.0, and a focus on a distinction between trainable and more stable traits in the MPQ. The latter therefore may also be (partly) used for measuring *change* in intercultural competence, for instance along with the IDI.

Chapter 4

Intercultural Competence Development During Study Abroad: Empirical Evidence

The previous chapters have introduced a) the context of internationalization of higher education (chapter 1), b) relevant theories on intercultural competence and its development (chapter 2), and c) an overview of validated measures to assess intercultural competence and changes therein (chapter 3). Against this background, chapter 4 provides a series of empirical tests of whether study abroad will enhance participating students' intercultural competence development. More specifically, this empirical research aims at contributing to the literature on educational (credit) mobility as a means to achieve intended learning outcomes of international higher education, and at making a practical contribution in providing first insights into how to facilitate the conditions that foster intercultural competence development while abroad.

Research Question and Hypotheses

For answering the main research question, i.e. does an episode of study abroad have an impact on levels of intercultural competence, I tested three hypotheses in this empirical part of the dissertation. Based on studies of perceived impact of mobility on cultural learning (e.g. Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Engel, Sandström, Van der Aa & Glass, 2015; Sandström & Hudson, 2018; see also chapter 1), I first of all assume that the levels of intercultural competence after a study abroad are higher than before (*hypothesis 1*). Accordingly, the main dependent variable in this empirical part of the dissertation is the level of intercultural competence after an episode of study abroad compared with the level prior to the study abroad.

I further argue that intercultural competence development can be facilitated by intervening in cultural learning during study abroad (e.g. Hammer, 2012; Vande Berg, Paige & Lou, 2012; Weber Bosley, 2015). My second assumption therefore is that although an episode of study abroad in general should have an effect on levels of intercultural competence (see *hypothesis 1*), this effect should be larger in an intervention- compared to a control group (*hypothesis 2*). In other words, I expect that study abroad in itself may facilitate developing intercultural competence (*control group*), but that students who are, in addition, actively assisted in cultural learning during study abroad (*intervention group*) may – in comparison – eventually arrive at higher levels of intercultural competence.

Furthermore, the present empirical research also considers variations in the qualification of the study abroad supervisors who assist the students in their process of

cultural learning. Some supervisors underwent a training in intercultural competence, others did not (Van der Poel, 2016b). Based on Vande Berg et al. (2012), the assumption here is that there may be a positive supervisor effect on top of an intervention effect. Or more specifically, I assume that a trained supervisor during intervention, compared with a non-trained supervisor, will positively affect student's increase in levels of intercultural competence (*hypothesis 3*).

I tested these hypotheses in a total of four studies with different cohorts of students who spent a semester abroad. The four studies were all based on the same design (see below), all of them comparing an intervention- with a control group. However, the last of the four studies was based on an adapted, intensified version of the intervention used in the other three studies. Finally, a meta-analysis was done to capture the effects from all four studies in a comprehensive way.

Methods and Design

As the four studies are based on identical (study 1-3) or broadly comparable (study 4) methods, the design, procedure and measures are presented for all studies together. The empirical research design consisted of a pre- and post-test setup, using the IDI v3 test instrument (Hammer, 2011) for measuring levels of intercultural competence before and after an episode of study abroad, and involving samples of students who were randomly assigned to an intervention or a control group (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Conceptual framework (Van der Poel, this Dissertation).

Participants

The cohorts of students in this empirical research (i.e. in all four studies) were recruited from third-year students, who were registered and actively attending an ongoing *International Business and Management Studies* (IBMS) programme at a Dutch University of Applied Sciences. During the academic years 2014-2015, 2015-2016, and 2016-2017, respectively, these students studied at (partner-) universities in countries other than The Netherlands for an episode of 5 to 6 months. The study abroad is part of the curriculum in order to achieve a number of intended international learning outcomes that are considered as crucial for the *International Business* (IB) graduate profile, like demonstrating the ability to mitigate pitfalls of cultural differences (IB profile, 2017). Study abroad - in this case - is a compulsory component of the third year of study, of an otherwise four-year Bachelor IBMS programme, the other compulsory component being a 5 to 6 month's international placement or internship (IBMS, 2017). On return a completed study abroad is registered as a Minor of 30 (ECTS) credits.

The distribution of different nationalities was comparable in each selected year of study cohort; approximately half of the students originated from Germany, followed by a quarter to a third from The Netherlands, and around a fifth to a quarter from a country different than Germany or The Netherlands, labelled as 'other'. Foreign students were permitted to stay in The Netherlands as they were already studying abroad. The students who decided to stay in The Netherlands were excluded from the research for reasons of homogeneity of the sample. The distribution of nationality of students per academic year is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Overview of Number and Percentage (..) of Nationality of Students, per Academic Year.

Country	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Germany	93 (43 %)	86 (51 %)	106 (51%)
The Netherlands	63 (29 %)	42 (25 %)	65 (31%)
Other	62 (28 %)	40 (24 %)	37 (18%)
Totals	218	168	208

Note. 2014-2015 for participants in study 1 and 2; 2015-2016 for participants in study 3; 2016-2017 for participation in study 4.

The *International Business School* (IBS) has 61 partner institutions worldwide, with multiple locations on each continent. The allocation of study abroad locations to the students is based on a combination of average study results (GPA) and the preferences of the student: the highest GPA gave the right to go to the most preferred location. Students were offered the opportunity to leave for their study abroad either in September or in February of the academic year.

Participating students were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control groups. From the entire sample of 376 students over four cohorts (being 63 percent of the total number of 594 third-year students in the three academic years), 35 did not complete the IDI v3 test after finalizing study abroad and were therefore excluded from further research. This resulted in a total of 341 valid cases that was included in the research (see Table 4.2 for the numbers per study).

Table 4.2

Overview of Cohort, Academic Year, Episode, Target Group Size, Sample Size, Valid Cases, and Distribution over Intervention and Control Groups (.. /..).

Cohort	Academic Year	Episode	Target Group	Sample	Valid cases	Intervention / Control
1	14/15	Sep. 2014 – Feb. 2015	218	81	71	39 / 32
2		Feb. 2015 – Jul. 2015		86	74	34 / 40
3	15/16	Sep. 2015 – Feb. 2016	168	75	73	42 / 31
4	16/17	Sep. 2016 – Feb. 2017	208	134	123	44 / 79
(totals)			594	376	341	159 / 182

Procedure

Before starting their study abroad, students individually enrolled at partner universities both inside and outside the EU², where they predominantly found accommodation at international student housing facilities. In this empirical research, these factors of individual enrolment, study abroad location and housing were not further considered as variables.

Once enrolled, i.e., once it was clear that the student would actually leave for study abroad, the individual prospective third-year student was approached for participation in the research by sending an invitation by email and asking for consent. After receiving consent from each individual student, the students were randomly assigned to either the intervention or the control group by alternating the allocation to one of the groups in the sequence of receiving the consent confirmation.

In order to make participation in the research attractive it was agreed with the school management that one (ECTS) credit, which students normally earn by writing a reflection report after study abroad (control group), could also be earned by fulfilling the research

² e.g. to EU countries (Finland, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Portugal, France, Austria, Belgium, Turkey, Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Italy), to Asia (South-Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, and China), to American nations (USA, Canada, Argentina, Chile, Mexico), Dominican Republic, and Costa Rica, as well as to Australia and Mauritius.

intervention obligations (intervention group). The idea was that being assigned to the intervention or control group would not make a difference in terms of effort needed for earning one credit. The measure was also aimed at reducing loss of subjects in all studies.

Yet, particularly in study 4, along with giving consent, some students requested not to be allocated to the intervention group; the reason mostly given was the perceived additional workload as a result of the research intervention obligations. Other students indicated that they were looking forward to a semester with minimal contact with the school; some students gave no reason for not wanting to participate in the intervention. It was assumed that, before going abroad, the students that form the intervention group were no different in levels of intercultural competence than the students in the control group, nor – on average – in specific personal attributes, previous experience with and openness for cultural differences, or demographic characteristics. These assumptions were tested in preliminary analyses of each cohort.

Before starting their journey abroad, all students (i.e. both in the intervention- and control group) completed an online questionnaire about their intercultural competence (the IDI v3, Hammer, 2011), including six questions regarding previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences, and an online questionnaire about specific personal attributes (in studies 1-3 the IRC 2.0, Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; in study 4 the MPQ-short form, (MPQ-SF; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer, 2013). On return from their study abroad the students again completed a questionnaire about their intercultural competence, which included all questions from the first questionnaire, except for the six questions regarding previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences. Moreover, and different from the IRC in studies 1-3, in study 4 the MPQ-SF was repeated on return from study abroad (discussed in further detail below).

All communication with the students took place via the student's institutional email accounts. Only in cases of repeated non-response, private email accounts were traced via social media (since public), and reminders to act or to reply were sent. Students received the links, the usernames, and the passwords for the various online tests per email directly from the test administrator, the researcher, or a research-assistant. Most students filled out the tests within the requested 2-week response time; some students had to be reminded and took as long as 3 to 6 weeks to respond.

All tests were taken online. Students were instructed via email to seek access within two months prior to leaving for their study abroad (for pre-test of intercultural competence and for profiling specific personal attributes and previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences) and within two months after returning from study abroad (for post-test of intercultural competence). Due to the spread of start- and end dates of study abroad programmes at the various partner universities, data collection through pre- and post-test

could stretch over a longer period than two months, e.g. from May to August because of students starting already in June, even when registered as part of a September cohort.

Once abroad, the intervention (i.e. for the intervention group only) was split into two series of assignments, i.e. one set during the first half of the study abroad episode and one set during the second half of the study abroad episode. Contact between the student and the student's study abroad supervisor took place at approx. 40 percent and 80 percent of completion of the study abroad episode. The allocation of a study abroad supervisor to each student was based on the language, and country- or regional expertise of the available supervisors. The school's study abroad coordinator allocated a study abroad supervisor to each student several months prior to leaving for study abroad. The tasks and responsibilities of the study abroad supervisors are articulated in the school's study abroad course outline (IBMS, 2015).

In this research, the task of the study abroad supervisors was to make sure that the students were aware of their research participation obligations, to urge the students to complete all tasks in a timely and sufficiently serious manner, and in particular to discuss with the students their reflections on their cross-cultural encounters. Supervisors prepared for having Skype® conversations with each student, by making feasible appointments (e.g. access to reliable internet connection crossing different time zones) and by reading the relevant materials prior to having the conversation (e.g. by reading the assignment products submitted by the student). The Skype® conversations typically took 45 - 60 minutes each.

The arrangements for intervention could not always be strictly adhered to due to the varying start dates of the educational programmes, variations in curriculum structure, varying durations of study abroad programmes, different schedules of Holidays, and different schedules and lengths of examination periods. The second series of intervention tasks did not however start before completion of the first series of intervention tasks; the first intervention tasks always took place in the first half of the study abroad episode, see Figure 4.2.

% of time elapsed	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
1 st Skype® conversation with supervisor on 1 st series of intervention tasks										
2 nd Skype® conversation with supervisor on 2 nd series of intervention tasks										

Figure 4.2. Scheduling of (Skype®) conversations with study abroad supervisor

Control versus intervention condition

The design of the intervention is rooted in the review of various theories and models of intercultural competence and intercultural competence development (Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Kim, 1988, 2001; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), and the related critical discussions summarized in chapter 2. Against this background, I deduced that intervention during study abroad is ideally focused on supporting students in finding and maintaining a dialectic, or 'debating space' with dissimilar others in order to *consciously* develop their intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Mezirow, 2000). The main goal of the intervention tasks therefore was to stimulate students to actively engage with dissimilar others and to reflect on these cross-cultural encounters, thereby generating (new) meaning from foreign (cultural) context for effective and appropriate intercultural behaviour and communication (e.g. Deardorff, 2006; Hammer, 2012; Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018; Killick, 2015; Mezirow, 2000; Shaules, 2015; Vande Berg et al., 2012; Yershova et al., 2000)

The intervention included the following materials and activities: 1) two sets of assignment descriptions, with two components each, 2) the IRC 2.0 test result profile, 3) two online sets of questions directly related to the assignments, and 4) two Skype® conversations between the student and the student's study abroad supervisor. In study 4 a different, more sophisticated intervention was used, which will be presented more in detail when reporting on study 4 further below.

Assignments. All students in the intervention group, irrespective of their pre-test score of intercultural competence, received the same sets of assignments. The assignments involved engaging with dissimilar others, preferably with members of the host country culture, and reflecting on these encounters, guided by example questions (for an overview of the assignments, see Appendix 1).

Profile. The test profile, as a result of the IRC 2.0 test, was shared with the student at the start of the study abroad, along with the request to carefully study the profile prior to having the scheduled Skype® conversations with the study abroad supervisor. The aim of sharing the profile was providing the student with feedback on his or her personal attributes that were measured, and to allow for making connections between the profile and the cultural experiences abroad, e.g. by articulating specific points of attention, or seeking specific cross-cultural interaction.

Questions guiding reflections. To stimulate reflection, I made use of two sets of questions that related to each set of assignments and sent these to the students with the request to answer them prior to the Skype® conversation with the study abroad supervisor. The questions were filled out online, making use of SurveyMonkey® software, and were designed for facilitating the Skype® conversation, hence not for data collection. The study abroad supervisors were instructed to use the answers to the questions for

structuring the conversation, maintaining a focus on the topic of meaningful cultural learning, and for designing probing questions.

Skype® conversations. The first Skype® conversation consisted of five brief discussion elements (5 to 10 minutes each): two about the IRC 2.0 profile and three about the first set of assignments. The second Skype® conversation consisted of six discussion elements (5 to 10 minutes each), one again about the IRC 2.0 profile and five about the second set of assignments. For an overview see Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Summary of Intervention Components during Study Abroad

Study Abroad	Assignments	Profile	Online Questions	Skype®	Content Skype®
First half	Set A1	IRC 2.0	Set Q1	S1	A1+Q1 & IRC 2.0 profile
Second half	Set A2	IRC 2.0	Set Q2	S2	A2+Q2 & IRC 2.0 profile

Note. Abbreviations: A1 / A2 = first and second set of assignments; IRC 2.0 = Intercultural Readiness Check, version 2.0; Q1 / Q2 = first and second set of online questions; S1 / S2 = first and second skype® conversation with study abroad supervisor

Apart from assignments, the intervention thus included the instruction that students should get in touch (twice) with their study abroad supervisor during their study abroad episode. The supervisors were operating relatively independently, primarily in the role of facilitator of reflection on intercultural experiences (see above). The possible input from the supervisors in the form of observations or notes was considered as too prone to subjective biases for reliable data collection and therefore not further analysed. The only sufficiently controlled aspect of supervision that was included in the research included was whether the supervisor was trained in intercultural competence or not. Part of the students in the intervention group had conversations with a study abroad supervisor who served as a *trained* cultural mentor (Hammer, 2012). Supervisors in this category completed a 60-hour training on intercultural competence. Another part of the students in the intervention group had conversations with supervisors who did not attend the training and were therefore considered *untrained* cultural mentors (Van der Poel, 2016b). Whether students had a trained or untrained supervisor was randomly determined. The distinction between trained vs. untrained supervisors applied to the intervention group only. Consequently, the sample sizes per single study were too small to conduct reliable statistical analyses. Accordingly, the effects of supervisor training were tested in a meta-analysis of all four studies together (see *hypothesis 3*).

When students in the intervention group had completed all required (online) tests, had done the assignments, and had engaged in both conversations with the study abroad supervisor, they earned one (ECTS) credit. Students in the control condition earned this

credit by writing a reflection report as part of the regular study abroad course requirements (IBMS, 2015).

Measures

Below, the various measures in the online questionnaire are specified. These include, most importantly, the IDI v3 instrument (Hammer, 2011) to capture intercultural competence development. Demographic characteristics (age, gender and country of origin), specific personal attributes, and levels of previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences, were profiled making use of the standard IDI v3 demographic questions, the IRC 2.0 (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004) test instrument (and the MPQ-SF in study 4), and of six questions that were added to the standard IDI v3 instrument. All these variables were treated as factors that could possibly influence levels of intercultural competence and its development. Therefore, it was important to check whether, prior to the study abroad, the intervention and the control group were comparable regarding these characteristics.

The IDI test instrument. The IDI v3 (Hammer, 2011) was selected as the main instrument for data collection. The use of the IDI v3 instrument, also for a pre-test - post-test research design, was extensively validated by Hammer (2011) and previously used in various studies (e.g. Weber Bosley, 2015; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2012; see also chapter 3). The IDI v3 consists of 50 items tapping into five consecutive stages of intercultural competence, namely *denial*, *polarization*, *minimization*, *acceptance* and *adaptation*. Scores on the IDI can vary from 55 to 145. Scores of 115 and higher (i.e. *acceptance* and *adaptation*) are considered indicative for a predominant ethno-relative worldview. As a licensed administrator (since 2010) I gained ample experience in administering the test and interpreting the results.

Along with the standard 50-item psychometric self-assessment of intercultural competence (referring to the different stages of intercultural competence development), and a set of standard demographic items (age, gender, country of origin), the IDI v3 allows for collecting additional relevant data by adding six items. I designed six questions on 'previous experience with and openness for cultural difference' in order to include variables that, according to the literature (see chapter 2), may influence intercultural competence development. In addition to the standard IDI v3 question about *years lived abroad*, the degree of previous experience with cultural differences (e.g. Vande Berg et al., 2012) was further checked by asking about *years of international education* and *hours of attending intercultural coursework* prior to study abroad. Moreover, I asked participants to score their degree of proficiency in the *language spoken in the study abroad host country* (Byram (1997). Expectations about the relative ease with adjusting to the foreign environment were covered by asking about degrees of *familiarity with the study abroad host country culture* (Kim, 1988). The final two questions concerned degrees of *curiosity*

(Deardorff ,2006, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 1999), and degrees of *caring about cultural differences* as indicative for cultural self-awareness (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) and personal cultural identity formation (Byram, 1997). An overview of all items collected through the IDI v3 instrument can be found in Appendix 2.

The IRC test instrument. The IRC 2.0 (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004) test instrument was selected for profiling participants' personal attributes relevant in intercultural contact (i.e. *intercultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, building commitment, managing uncertainty*) in the first three studies. The 63 items are administered with response scales varying from 1 = totally not applicable, to 5 = completely applicable. As a licensed administrator (since 2014) I gained ample experience in administering the test and interpreting the results.

The 63-item online questionnaire provided data for testing the correlations of these personal attributes with levels of intercultural competence as measured with the IDI before and after study abroad, and for testing whether the intervention- and control groups were comparable at the start of their study abroad. Furthermore, the personal IRC 2.0 profile, as an outcome of the test, provided material for the intervention: the profile was forwarded to the individual student at the start of the study abroad episode and prior to having the first Skype® conversation with the study abroad supervisor. The objective was that the student would have read and understood his or her profile of the personal attributes that were measured prior to carrying out the assignments and having the conversations with the study abroad supervisor. For example, supervisors were instructed to ask the student what they had done with the 'suggestions for development' as articulated in the test profile. Items covered in the IRC 2.0 test can be found in Appendix 3. For a review of the IRC 2.0 instrument see chapter 3.

Data Analysis

The analytical approach was identical for all studies. For each cohort of students, I will first present preliminary analyses, identifying the comparability of groups at the onset of the study abroad. This part is followed by descriptive statistics, predominantly focusing on mean scores and the intercorrelations between the various variables potentially associated with intercultural competence. I conclude each study with inferential statistics, testing the main assumptions of this empirical research, namely whether study abroad has an impact on levels of intercultural competence (*hypothesis 1*), and more so when paired with targeted intervention (*hypothesis 2*).

Finally, a meta-analysis based on the pooled data from all four empirical studies was carried out, mainly aiming at testing for the impact of the intervention on levels of intercultural competence with more statistical power, and for the effects of trained

supervision vs. non-trained supervision on levels of intercultural competence (*hypothesis 3*).

Study 1 - Cohort September 2014 - February 2015

The total number of participants in study 1 was 81, but ten cases were excluded due to incomplete data on the variables relevant for testing the main assumptions in the research, i.e. missing pre- and/or post-test scores on intercultural competence, resulting in a sample of 71 participants for testing the hypotheses. For demographic details of the valid cases in this sample, see Appendix 4, Table 1.

Preliminary analysis: Comparability of groups at the onset of study abroad

A relevant assumption that needed to be tested prior to testing the hypotheses was that students in the intervention- and in the control group had a comparable starting position. Most importantly, I expected that the students, on average, had a comparable level of intercultural competence prior to their study abroad, irrespective of the group they belong to. I further assumed the two groups to be comparable regarding the selected personal attributes³, as well as regarding previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences⁴, and their demographic characteristics. All these assumptions, that applied to all four studies, were tested with t-tests for independent samples, or, for dichotomized data, with chi-square tests.

Intercultural competence prior to the study abroad. The mean score difference on intercultural competence as measured by the IDI between the intervention and the control group at t1 was only 0.61 points; a mean score of 88.82 for the intervention group versus 89.43 for the control group. This mean score difference was not statistically significant, $p = .844$, confirming the assumption that the students in the intervention and in the control group had a comparable starting level of intercultural competence.

Personal attributes. In study 1 the participants' personal attributes were profiled with the use of the IRC 2.0 (for an in-depth discussion of the IRC instrument, see chapter 3). On none of the four IRC scales were there significant differences between the intervention and the control group: *intercultural sensitivity*, $t(66) = .52$, $p = .602$; *intercultural communication*, $t(66) = 1.15$, $p = .255$; *building commitment*, $t(66) = .45$, $p = .654$; *managing uncertainty*, $t(66) = 1.41$, $p = .164$.

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³ With the term 'personal attributes' I refer to personal attributes as measured by the IRC 2.0 test in the studies 1-3, and as measured by the MPQ-SF in study 4, both instruments were discussed in chapter 3.

⁴ For the ease of further reporting I summarize the group of items 'previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences' under the label 'previous experience'.

Previous experiences. On none of the questions regarding previous experiences were there significant differences between the intervention and the control groups: *curiosity*, $t(57,24) = 1.25, p = .216$; *care for cultural differences*, $t(69) = -.49, p = .626$; *time lived abroad*, $t(69) = .74, p = .460$; *years of international education*, $t(69) = .19, p = .849$; *familiarity with host culture*, $t(69) = -.18, p = .858$.

The distribution of answers regarding the questions *host country language proficiency* and *hours of intercultural coursework* was skewed; the first one towards the lower end of the scale, the second towards the higher end of the scale. Therefore, instead of the original scales, dichotomized responses were used. *Host country language proficiency* was recoded into (1) *not at all or a little* (including *totally not* and *hardly*), and (2) *somewhat to fluent* (including *moderately*, *largely*, *fluently* and *mother tongue*). The rationale for this dichotomization was to cover whether the student would be able to have at least a basic conversation in the host country language, or not. *Hours of intercultural coursework* was recoded into (1) *up to 30 hours* (including *zero hours*, *1-10 hours*, *11-20 hours* and *21-30 hours*), and (2) *above 30 hours* (including *31-40 hours* and *41 hours and more*). The rationale for this dichotomization was that 28 hours of intercultural coursework were already formally included in the educational programme prior to leaving for study abroad; hence, more than 30 hours would signal that students were motivated to invest additional time. Chi-square tests did not reveal significant differences between the intervention and the control groups: *host country language proficiency*⁵, $\chi^2(1) = .02, p = .877$; *hours of intercultural coursework*⁶, $\chi^2(1) = .47, p = .495$.

Demographics. Because of the specific sample characteristic of 3rd year Bachelor students, the original (i.e. standard IDI) wide range of answer categories for age (see Appendix 2) has been dichotomized into (1) *21 and below*, and (2) *22 and up*. The variable gender was divided into (1) *male* and (2) *female*. There were no clear differences in the demographic setup of the two groups; i.e. for the age categories, $(\chi^2(1) = .63, p = .429$, and for gender, $\chi^2(1) = .95, p = .329$. For the distribution of country of origin see Appendix 4, Table 1.

Altogether, the tests above implied that the two samples were highly comparable. Accordingly, I did not need to include any of the above variables as covariates in the main analyses on the hypothesized changes in intercultural competence over time.

Descriptive statistics: Means and intercorrelations

The mean scores, standard deviations, ranges of the variables, and the intercorrelations between the variables for the valid sample (N=71) can be found in Appendix 4, Table 2.

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⁵ Intervention group: (1) N=20, (2) N=19; control group: (1) N=17, (2) N=15.

⁶ Intervention group: (1) N=20, (2) N=19; control group: (1) N=19, (2) N=13.

Remarkable was the relatively low score on intercultural competence at t1 ($M = 89.10$, $SD = 12.28$), that remained low at t2 ($M = 90.86$, $SD = 15.84$), also to be seen from a relatively small *change* of intercultural competence over time ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 9.11$). The scores were substantially below 115, i.e. below the starting point of the range for a predominantly ethno-relative worldview (Bennett, 1993, Hammer, 2011; see also chapter 3). Like on the IDI, the scores on the IRC were relatively low; the highest average score was 4.75 on a scale from 1 to 9 (see Appendix 4, Table 2).

There was no significant correlation between the IDI score at t1 and changes in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1), $r(69) = .08$. This suggests that the changes in IDI did not systematically relate to differences in the starting level of intercultural competence.

Looking at the intercorrelations, the scores on all four IRC scales correlated significantly with the IDI-scores on intercultural competence, at both t1 and t2. However, other than expected, personal attributes as measured by the IRC were not associated with *changes* in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1). The same applied to one question tapping into previous experience: *curiosity*. It correlated with the IDI both at t1 ($r(69) = .42$, $p < .01$) and at t2 ($r(69) = .24$, $p < .05$), but not with changes in intercultural competence over time. Hence, the higher the intercultural competence at a certain time point, then the higher the curiosity that participants indicated. One other previous experience question, *care for cultural differences*, correlated significantly at t1 ($r(69) = .26$, $p < .05$), but not at t2, nor with changes in intercultural competence over time. Furthermore, it was remarkable that the other four previous experience questions, including the two questions with dichotomized responses, did not correlate significantly with intercultural competence scores at t1 and t2, nor with the *changes* in intercultural competence over time.

In brief, none of the variables that were expected to relate to changes in intercultural competence over time did so significantly. As a matter of fact, all respective intercorrelations were close to zero.

Inferential statistics

The main assumption in the present research was that a sojourn abroad would have a positive effect on cultural learning, and that this would become visible in a higher score on intercultural competence at t2 as compared to t1. This was supposed to be the case for students in both the intervention and the control group, but more so for students in the intervention group. Accordingly, I expected a main effect of time point, with higher IDI-scores at the end than at the beginning of the study abroad (hypothesis 1), and an interaction effect between time point and condition, with steeper improvement of intercultural competence in the intervention group (hypothesis 2).

These assumptions were tested with a mixed two-way ANOVA with time point (t1, t2) as the within-participants variable, condition (intervention vs. control group) as the between-participants variable and the IDI-scores as dependent variable. The analysis revealed that there were no significant main effects: time point, $F(1, 70) = 2.51, p = .118$; condition, $F(1, 70) = .01, p = .921$. Moreover, the interaction effect (time point x condition) was not significant, $F(1, 70) = .07, p = .792$.

In summary, in study 1, the assumption that the IDI score would improve over time was not confirmed, nor the hypothesis that adding an intervention during study abroad would lead to a significantly higher positive change in intercultural competence than studying abroad without intervention (for the mean IDI scores per group, see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Summary Mean IDI Scores at t1 and t2; Study 1

Group	Valid Cases:	t1 Mean IDI Score	t2 Mean IDI Score	Difference
Intervention	n=39	88.82	90.84	2.02 (ns)
Control	n=32	89.43	90.87	1.44 (ns)
Difference		0.61 (ns)	0.03 (ns)	

Study 2 - Cohort February 2015 - July 2015

The aim of study 2 was to provide a further test of the assumption that study abroad would have a positive effect on the development of intercultural competence, thus expecting higher IDI-scores at the end than at the beginning of the study abroad (*hypothesis 1*), and higher improvements of intercultural competence in the intervention group (*hypothesis 2*). Except taking place half a year later, there were no systematic differences between this study and study 1 regarding the design, intervention and measures, nor for the recruitment of participants.

The total number of participants in study 2 was 86, but twelve cases were excluded due to incomplete data on the variables relevant for testing the main assumptions in the research, resulting in a sample of 74 participants for testing the hypotheses. For demographic details of the valid cases in this sample see Appendix 4, Table 3.

Preliminary analysis: Comparability of samples at the onset of study abroad

Like in study 1, a relevant assumption that needed to be tested prior to testing the hypotheses was that students in the intervention- and in the control group had a comparable starting position. These assumptions were tested with t-tests for independent samples, or with chi-square tests for data that was dichotomized.

Intercultural competence prior to the study abroad. The mean score difference on intercultural competence between the intervention and the control group at t1 was 2.71

points; a mean score of 90.63 for the intervention group versus 87.92 for the control group. This mean score difference was not statistically significant, $p = .360$, confirming that students in the intervention- and in the control group had a comparable starting level of intercultural competence.

Personal attributes. As in study 1, the participants' personal attributes were profiled with the IRC 2.0. On none of the four IRC scales were there significant differences between the intervention and the control group: *intercultural sensitivity*, $t(72) = .11$, $p = .912$; *intercultural communication*, $t(60.25) = -.63$, $p = .534$; *building commitment*, $t(72) = .14$, $p = .886$; *managing uncertainty*, $t(72) = .93$, $p = .357$.

Previous experiences. On none of the questions tapping into previous experience were there significant differences between the intervention and the control group: *curiosity*, $t(72) = .87$, $p = .389$; *care for cultural differences*, $t(71.44) = 1.91$, $p = .061$; *years of international education*, $t(67.82) = -.07$, $p = .942$; *familiarity with host culture*, $t(72) = -.53$, $p = .598$.

As observed in study 1, when checked for normal distribution, two previous experience question scores were skewed; one toward the lower end of the scale, *host country language proficiency*, and one toward the higher end of the scale, *hours of intercultural coursework*. Moreover, in this sample, the answers to the (standard IDI v3) previous experience question *time lived abroad* also revealed a skewed pattern toward the higher end of the scale. Therefore, the scores of all three questions were dichotomized; chi-square tests were used for further analysis. *Host country language proficiency* and *hours of intercultural coursework* were recoded as in study 1 (see above). *Time lived abroad* was recoded into (1) *never and up to max. two years* (including *never*, *less than three months*, *3-6 months*, *7-11 months* and *1-2 years*) and (2) *from two years and up* (including *3-5 years*, *6-10 years* and *over ten years*). The rationale for this dichotomization was that in the sample of 3rd year students attending an *international* programme, most students had already been abroad for two years prior to leaving for the study abroad. Chi-square tests did not reveal significant differences between the intervention and the control group: *host country language proficiency*⁷, $\chi^2(1) = .87$, $p = .351$; *hours of intercultural coursework*⁸, $\chi^2(1) = .46$, $p = .496$; *time lived abroad*⁹, $\chi^2(1) = .40$, $p = .527$.

Demographics. There were no significant differences in the demographic setup of the two groups; i.e. for the age categories, $\chi^2(1) = .80$, $p = .370$, and for gender, $\chi^2(1) = 3.24$, $p = .072$. For distribution of country of origin see Appendix 4, Table 3.

⁷ Intervention group: (1) N=15, (2) N=19; control group: (1) N=22, (2) N=18

⁸ Intervention group: (1) N=16, (2) N=18; control group: (1) N=22, (2) N=18

⁹ Intervention group: (1) N=22, (2) N=12; control group: (1) N=23, (2) N=17

Altogether, the tests above implied that the two samples were highly comparable. Accordingly, I did not need to include any of the above variables as covariates in the main analyses on the hypothesized changes in intercultural competence over time.

Descriptive statistics: Means and intercorrelations

The mean scores, standard deviations, ranges of the variables, and the intercorrelations between the variables for the valid sample ($N=74$) can be found in Appendix 4, Table 4. Comparable to study 1, the relatively low score on intercultural competence at t1 ($M = 89.16$, $SD = 12.60$) was remarkable, and it remained low at t2 ($M = 89.85$, $SD = 13.49$), also resulting in a relatively small mean change of intercultural competence over time ($M = .69$, $SD = 14.02$). The average scores at t1 and t2 were once more substantially below 115, i.e. below the starting point of the range for a predominantly ethno-relative worldview (Bennett, 1993; Hammer, 2011). Like on the IDI, the scores on the IRC were relatively low; the highest average score was 5.20 on a scale from 1 to 9 (see Appendix 4, Table 4).

Different from study 1, there was a significant negative correlation between IDI at t1 and changes in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1), $r(72) = -.49$, $p < .01$. Lower initial scores thus related to larger changes.

Looking at the intercorrelations between the IRC and IDI scores, other than expected, most of the scores on the four IRC scales did not correlate with scores on intercultural competence, neither at t1 nor at t2. The only two exceptions were *intercultural sensitivity* that correlated significantly negatively at t2, $r(72) = -.26$, $p < .05$, and *managing uncertainty* that correlated significantly positively at t1, $r(72) = .28$, $p < .05$. Yet, none of the personal attributes as measured by the IRC were associated with changes in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1).

One previous experience question, *host country language proficiency*, of which the answers were dichotomized, correlated significantly negatively with the IDI score at t2, $p(72) = -.24$, $p < .05$ (the higher the self-rated language proficiency, the lower the IDI-score), but not at t1, nor with changes in intercultural competence over time. Otherwise, it was remarkable that none of the five other previous experience questions, including the ones with dichotomized responses (*time lived abroad*, *years of international education*, *curiosity*, *hours of intercultural coursework*, *familiarity with host culture*, *care for cultural differences*) correlated significantly with intercultural competence scores at t1 and t2, nor with changes in intercultural competence over time.

In summary, as in study 1, none of the variables that were expected to relate to changes in intercultural competence over time did so significantly.

Inferential statistics

The two main hypotheses were tested with a mixed two-way ANOVA with time point (t1, t2) as the within-participants variable, condition (intervention vs. control group) as the between-participants variable and the IDI-scores as dependent variable. The analysis revealed that there were no significant main effects: time point, $F(1, 73) = .23, p = .632$; condition, $F(1, 73) = 2.41, p = .125$. Moreover, the interaction effect (time point x condition) was not significant, $F(1, 73) = .57, p = .455$.

Hence, the assumption that the IDI score would improve over time was not confirmed, nor was the hypothesis that adding an intervention during study abroad would lead to a significantly higher positive change in intercultural competence than studying abroad without intervention (for the mean IDI scores per group, see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Summary Mean IDI Scores at t1 and t2; Study 2

Group	Valid Cases:	t1 Mean IDI Score	t2 Mean IDI Score	Difference
Intervention	n=34	90.63	92.65	2.02 (ns)
Control	n=40	87.92	87.47	0.45 (ns)
Difference		2.71 (ns)	5.18 (ns)	

Study 3 - Cohort September 2015 - February 2016

Study 3 was designed to provide an additional test as to whether study abroad would have a positive effect on intercultural competence (*hypothesis 1*), and whether the improvements of intercultural competence would be higher in the intervention group (*hypothesis 2*). Except for the time of data collection, there were no systematic differences between this study and study 1 or 2 regarding the design, intervention and measures, nor for the recruitment of participants.

The total number of participants, comprising once again of third year students from the 4-year Bachelor *International Business* programme, was 75. With two cases excluded due to incomplete data on the variables relevant for testing the main assumptions in the research, the final sample comprised of 73 participants. For demographic details on the valid cases in this sample see Appendix 4, Table 5.

Preliminary analysis: Comparability of samples at the onset of study abroad

Like in study 1 and 2, prior to testing the hypotheses, the assumed comparability of the students' starting position in the intervention- and in the control group was tested with t-tests for independent samples, or chi-square tests for data that was dichotomized.

Intercultural competence prior to study abroad. The mean score difference on intercultural competence between the intervention and the control group at t1 was 2.82 points; a mean score of 91.98 for the intervention group versus 89.16 for the control group. This difference was not statistically significant, $p = .426$. The assumption that the students in the intervention and in the control group had a comparable starting level of intercultural competence was herewith confirmed.

Personal attributes. As in study 1 and 2, the participants' personal attributes were profiled with the IRC. On none of the four IRC scales were there significant differences between the intervention and the control group: *intercultural sensitivity*, $t(71) = 1.99$, $p = .051$; *intercultural communication*, $t(71) = .34$, $p = .736$; *building commitment*, $t(71) = .03$, $p = .978$; *managing uncertainty*, $t(71) = -.57$, $p = .571$.

Previous experiences. Previous experiences were measured along with the IDI at t1. On one of the questions, namely *care for cultural differences*, there were significant differences between the intervention and the control group, $t(44.83) = 2.45$, $p = .018$. This variable was therefore included as covariate when testing the main hypotheses of this research (see below). On none of the remaining five questions were there significant differences between the two samples (control group versus intervention group): *curiosity*, $t(71) = 1.57$, $p = .121$; *years of international education*, $t(71) = .09$, $p = .931$; *familiarity with host culture*, $t(71) = -.56$, $p = .577$. As was observed in study 2, when checking for normal distribution, the answers to three questions were skewed; for one question toward the lower end of the scale, *host country language proficiency*, and for two questions toward the higher end of the scale, *years of intercultural coursework* and *time lived abroad*. The scores of all three questions were therefore dichotomized in the same way as in study 2 (see above) and chi-square tests were used for further analysis. These tests did not reveal significant differences between the intervention and the control group: *host country language proficiency*¹⁰, $\chi^2(1) = .29$, $p = .590$; *hours of intercultural coursework*¹¹, $\chi^2(1) = .66$, $p = .417$; *time lived abroad*¹², $\chi^2(1) = .55$, $p = .459$.

Demographics. There were no clear differences in the demographic setup of the two groups; i.e. for the age categories, $\chi^2(1) = .47$, $p = .495$, and for gender, $\chi^2(1) = .08$, $p = .779$. For distribution of country of origin see Appendix 4, Table 5.

Altogether, the tests above implied that the two samples were highly comparable. The only variable that was included as covariate in the main analyses of the hypothesized changes in intercultural competence over time was *care for cultural differences*.

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¹⁰ Intervention group: (1) N=23, (2) N=19; control group: (1) N=13, (2) N=18

¹¹ Intervention group: (1) N=19, (2) N=23; control group: (1) N=17, (2) N=14

¹² Intervention group: (1) N=18, (2) N=24; control group: (1) N=16, (2) N=15

Descriptive statistics: Means and intercorrelations

The mean scores, standard deviations, ranges of the variables, and the intercorrelations between the variables for the valid sample ($N=73$) can be found in Appendix 4, Table 6. Comparable to the two previous studies, remarkable was the relatively low score on intercultural competence at t1 ($M = 90.78$, $SD = 14.85$), that remained low at t2 ($M = 92.33$, $SD = 15.77$), and, accordingly, again a relatively small mean change of intercultural competence over time ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 11.42$). Also, in this sample, the average scores at t1 and t2 were substantially below 115, i.e. below the starting point of the range for a predominantly ethno-relative worldview (Bennett, 1993, Hammer, 2011). Like on the IDI, the scores on the IRC were relatively low; the highest average score was 4.84 on a scale from 1 to 9 (see Appendix 4, Table 6).

Like in study 2, there was a significant negative correlation between IDI at t1 and changes in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1), $r(71) = -.30$, $p < .01$, indicating that lower initial scores on intercultural competence related to larger changes in the IDI scores. Other than expected, most of the scores on the four IRC scales did not correlate with scores on intercultural competence, neither at t1 nor at t2. The only two exceptions were *building commitment* and *managing uncertainty* that correlated significantly and positively at t1 with $r(71) = .24$, $p < .05$ and $r(71) = .28$, $p < .05$ respectively. One of the personal attributes, namely *managing uncertainty*, correlated negatively with changes in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1), $r(71) = -.24$, $p < .05$. This was an unexpected association since according to the literature (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004) low levels of managing uncertainty were expected to be associated with low levels of intercultural competence development.

One previous experience question, *care for cultural differences*, correlated significantly with intercultural competence at both t1 ($r(71) = .25$, $p < .05$) and at t2 ($r(71) = .26$, $p < .05$), but not with changes in intercultural competence over time. Hence, the higher the intercultural competence at a certain time point, the higher also the care for cultural differences that participants indicated. Similar to study 2, no further questions tapping into previous experience, including the ones with dichotomized responses, correlated significantly with intercultural competence scores at t1 and t2, nor with the changes in intercultural competence over time.

In summary, only one of the variables that was expected to relate to *changes* in intercultural competence over time did so significantly, i.e. *managing uncertainty*, albeit in the opposite direction as expected. All other intercorrelations were close to zero.

Inferential statistics

A mixed two-way ANOVA with time point (t1, t2) as the within-participants variable, condition (intervention vs. control group) as the between-participants variable, *care for*

cultural differences as covariate, and the IDI-scores as dependent variable revealed that there were no significant main effects: time point, $F(1, 72) = .07, p = .789$; condition, $F(1, 72) = .37, p = .544$). Moreover, the interaction effect (time point x condition) was not significant, $F(1, 72) = 1.07, p = .304$.

In summary, like in the previous studies, the assumption that the IDI score would improve over time was not confirmed, nor was the hypothesis that adding an intervention during study abroad would lead to a significantly higher positive change in intercultural competence than studying abroad without intervention (for the mean IDI scores per group, see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6

Summary Mean IDI Scores at t1 and t2; Study 3

Group	Valid Cases:	t1 Mean IDI Score	t2 Mean IDI Score	Difference
Intervention	n=42	91.98	94.75	2.77 (ns)
Control	n=31	89.16	89.05	- 0.11 (ns)
Difference		2.82 (ns)	5.70 (ns)	

Study 4 - Cohort September 2016 - February 2017

After studies 1, 2, and 3 did not reveal any convincing evidence that a period of study abroad would lead to positive change in intercultural competencies, nor that such change would be facilitated by providing an intervention, study 4 set out to test whether an intensified, different type of intervention would lead to more change. More specifically, the design of the intervention for the fourth empirical study was adjusted as follows:

1. an increased amount of, and gradually more demanding assignments than in studies 1-3, namely ten in total, while at the same time no longer including separate sets of online questions about the assignments.
2. using the MPQ-SF, rather than the IRC 2.0, both prior to and after the study abroad. This way, it was possible to not only control whether the control and intervention group were, regarding relevant personal attributes, comparable prior to the study abroad, but also to potentially capture change, especially on the trainable trait dimensions (i.e., *social initiative*, *open-mindedness* and *cultural empathy* (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013)).

The reason for avoiding the separate sets of online questions was that the workload of carrying out the assignments – since now expanded – would remain comparable with the workload in the previous studies. Moreover, the instructions to reflect on the cross-cultural encounters were now integrated into the assignment descriptions (see Appendix 5 for an overview of the adjusted set of assignments). Having the two Skype® conversations

between the student and the student's study abroad supervisor was maintained. For a summary of intervention components in study 4, see Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Summary of Intervention Components during Study Abroad

Study Abroad	Assignments	Profile	Online Questions	Skype®	Content Skype®
First half	Set A1	MPQ-SF	-	S1	A1 & MPQ-SF profile
Second half	Set A2	MPQ-SF	-	S2	A2 & MPQ-SF profile

Note. Abbreviations: A1 / A2 = first and second set of assignments; MPQ-SF = Multicultural Personality Questionnaire- Short Form; S1 / S2 = first and second skype® conversation with study abroad supervisor

Intensified intervention in study 4

The rationale for changing the intervention in study 4 was testing whether - after the first three studies did not reveal any convincing intervention effect - an intensified, and cross-culturally more demanding intervention would lead to higher levels of intercultural competence. The assumption was that an increased amount of, and gradually more demanding assignments aiming at engagement with dissimilar others, and reflections thereof, may result in more meaningful cultural learning, evidenced by higher scores on the IDI v3 at time 2. Hence, even more than in the studies 1 - 3, the design of the intervention in study 4 aimed at facilitating learners to *consciously* construe differences as *cultural* differences (Bennett, 1993), to actively *construe new interpretations* of the (cultural) meaning of experiences (Mezirow, 2000), and to test assumptions about outcomes of decisions and actions by *contrasting* them to past experiences and future implications (Killick, 2015).

The intervention in the empirical study 4 was thus structured differently from the studies 1-3, namely, with two times a set of five assignments, of which the first set was shared with the students prior to leaving for study abroad, indicating when to do which assignment. The second set of five assignments was shared directly after having had the first Skype® conversation with the study abroad supervisor, with again an indication when to do which assignment (see Appendix 5).

Moreover, in study 4, the first Skype® conversation consisted of five discussions (5 to 10 minutes each), each concerning one of the five MPQ dimensions and the first five assignments. The rationale was that the student would reflect on the possible meaning of the assignment activities in relation to (developing) each of the five MPQ dimension. The second Skype® conversation consisted of three discussions (5 to 10 minutes each), once more concerning the MPQ dimensions, now using the second set of five assignments (same rationale, in a bit shorter timeframe).

Accordingly, along with the first set of five assignments, the MPQ-SF profile was shared with the student at the start of the study abroad episode. As a further practical consequence of this decision, in study 4, personal attributes were measured by using the MPQ-SF test instrument instead of using the IRC 2.0 (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004) at time 1. For this purpose, making use of SurveyMonkey® software, all 40 items of the MPQ-SF were included in an online questionnaire, alternating 1 item per construct in the sequence *flexibility*, *social initiative*, *cultural empathy*, *emotional stability* and *open-mindedness*, and using reverse coding for a total of 17 items in order to produce a consistent profile with higher scores indicating a stronger multicultural personality. The average score of the 8 items per construct were taken as the score per dimension, i.e. a score ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 = low and 5 = high. All items covered by MPQ-SF online questionnaire can be found in Appendix 6.

Other than the described changes, the measures, procedure and the recruitment of participants, were comparable to the studies 1-3. The total number of participants, comprising once more of third year students from the 4-year Bachelor *International Business* programme, was 134. However, 11 cases were excluded due to incomplete data on the variables relevant for testing the main assumptions, resulting in a sample of 123 participants. For demographic details of the valid cases in this sample, see Appendix 4, Table 7.

Preliminary analysis: Comparability of samples at the onset of study abroad

Again, I first tested with t-tests for independent samples whether students in the intervention- and in the control group had a comparable starting position. Like in previous studies, I used chi-square tests for dichotomized data.

Intercultural competence prior to the study abroad. The mean score difference on intercultural competence between the intervention and the control group at t1 was 2.71 points; a mean score of 88.43 for the intervention group versus 91.14 for the control group. This mean score difference was not statistically significant, $p = .265$, confirming that the students in the intervention and in the control group had a comparable starting level of intercultural competence.

Personal attributes. On four of the five MPQ dimensions there were significant differences between the intervention and the control group: on *social initiative*, *cultural empathy* and *open-mindedness* the intervention group scored higher than the control group, $t(119) = 2.09$, $p = .039$, $t(104.13) = 2.38$, $p = .019$, and $t(119) = 3.32$, $p = .001$ respectively. On *emotional stability* the control group scored higher than the intervention group, $t(119) = -2.07$, $p = .041$. Only on the MPQ dimension *flexibility* there was no significant difference between the intervention and the control group, $p = .342$. The four

significant MPQ dimensions were therefore included as covariates when testing the main hypotheses of this study (see below).

Previous experiences. On two of the six questions regarding previous experience, that were asked along with the IDI at t1, namely *curiosity* and *care for cultural differences*, there were significant differences between the intervention and the control group, $t(119) = 2.78, p = .006$, and $t(106.67) = 2.22, p = .028$ respectively. These two variables were therefore also included as covariates in the main analysis (see below). There was no significant difference between the intervention and control group for the four other questions: *years of international education*, $t(119) = 1.35, p = .180$; *familiarity with host culture*, $t(119) = -.87, p = .384$

Like in studies 2 and 3, answers to the same two questions were skewed: *host country language proficiency* (low end) and *years of intercultural coursework* (high end). The scores of these questions were therefore dichotomized in the same way as done in study 2 and 3. Moreover, in this sample, the answers to the (standard IDI v3) previous experience question *time lived abroad* revealed a bimodal pattern (with one peak of scores on *never lived in another country* and one peak of scores on *1-2 years*). The scores on this question were therefore dichotomized in a different manner than in study 2 and 3, namely, into (1) *never and up to max. 11 months* (including *never*, *less than three months*, *3-6 months* and *7-11 months*) and (2) *from one year and up* (including *1-2 years*, *3-5 years*, *6-10 years* and *over ten years*). Chi-square tests were used for further analysis. These tests did not reveal significant differences between the intervention and the control groups: *host country language proficiency*¹³ $\chi^2(1) = .002, p = .965$; *hours of intercultural coursework*¹⁴ $\chi^2(1) = .07, p = .798$; *time lived abroad*¹⁵ $\chi^2(1) = .01, p = .942$.

Demographics. There were no meaningful differences in the demographic setup of the two groups; i.e. for the age categories, $\chi^2(1) = .08, p = .772$, and for gender, $\chi^2(1) = 1.13, p = .289$. For distribution of country of origin see Appendix 4, Table 7.

Altogether, the tests above implied that the two samples were less comparable than in the previous three studies. Therefore, I needed to include six of the above variables as covariates in the main analyses on the hypothesized changes in intercultural competence over time, namely four MPQ dimensions (*social initiative*, *cultural empathy*, *emotional stability*, *open-mindedness*) and two items tapping into previous experience (*curiosity*, *care for cultural differences*).

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¹³ Intervention group: (1) N=26, (2) N=18; control group: (1) N=47, (2) N=32

¹⁴ Intervention group: (1) N=19, (2) N=25; control group: (1) N=43, (2) N=36

¹⁵ Intervention group: (1) N=17, (2) N=27; control group: (1) N=30, (2) N=49

Descriptive statistics: Means and intercorrelations

The mean scores, standard deviations, ranges of the variables, and the intercorrelations between the variables for the valid sample ($N=123$) can be found in Appendix 4, Table 8. Comparable to the previous three studies, the scores on intercultural competence at t1 ($M = 90.17$, $SD = 12.85$) were low and remained low at t2 ($M = 91.31$, $SD = 14.83$), resulting in only a small change of intercultural competence over time ($M = 1.14$, $SD = 12.83$). Hence, again neither the starting level nor the final level of IDI scores was close to 115, i.e. the starting point of a predominantly ethno-relative worldview (Bennett, 1993, Hammer, 2011).

Contrary to the previous three studies, participants' personal attributes were profiled with the use of the MPQ-SF. Different from the IDI, the scores on the MPQ dimensions were moderate; the highest average score was 3.86 on a scale from 1 to 5 (see Appendix 4, Table 8).

Like in studies 2 and 3, the IDI score at t1 negatively correlated with change in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1), $r(121) = -.33$, $p < .01$. Hence, once more, lower initial levels related with higher changes of levels over time. Looking at the five MPQ dimensions, other than expected, yet similar to the IRC-scores in previous studies, almost none of the dimensions correlated with scores on intercultural competence, neither at t1 nor at t2. The only exception was *cultural empathy* that correlated significantly at t1, $r(121) = .29$, $p < .01$. Relatedly, and more importantly, none of the personal attributes measured in the MPQ-SF correlated significantly with *changes* in intercultural competence over time (IDI t2 minus IDI t1) (see Appendix 4, Table 8).

Of the questions regarding previous experience, *care for cultural differences* correlated significantly with the IDI-score at t2, $r(121) = .28$, $p < .01$, and also with changes in intercultural competence over time, $r(121) = .18$, $p < .05$. One question, *hours of intercultural coursework*, of which the answers were dichotomized, correlated significantly with the IDI score at t2, $r(121) = .15$, $p < .05$, but not at t1, nor with changes in intercultural competence over time. No other question regarding previous experience, including the ones with dichotomized responses, correlated significantly with intercultural competence scores at t1 and t2, nor with the changes in intercultural competence over time.

In summary, only one of the variables expected to relate to changes in intercultural competence over time did so significantly, namely *care for cultural differences*. All other correlations were small or close to zero, including those with the five MPQ dimensions.

Inferential statistics

Again, the assumptions that there would be a positive change in intercultural competence over time (*hypothesis 1*) and that this change would be stronger for the intervention-compared with the control group (*hypothesis 2*) were tested with a mixed two-way ANOVA

with time point (t1, t2) as the within-participants variable, condition (intervention vs. control group) as the between-participants variable, and the IDI-scores at t1 and t2 as repeated measure. This time, to control for pre-study abroad sample differences in the two conditions (intervention, control), four MPQ dimensions (*social initiative*, *cultural empathy*, *emotional stability*, *open-mindedness*) and two scores regarding *curiosity* and *care for cultural differences* were included as covariates.

The analysis revealed once again that there were no significant main effects; time point, $F(1, 118) = .67, p = .415$; condition, $F(1, 118) = .14, p = .705$. However, in this fourth study, the expected interaction effect (time point x condition) was clearly significant, $F(1, 118) = 8.98, p = .003$, meaning that the change of intercultural competence over time was significant in the intervention group, whereas this was not the case in the control group. For the intervention group, the IDI score at t2 was 5.73 points higher than at t1. For the control group, however, the IDI score at t2 was even 1.41 points lower than at t1 (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

Summary Mean IDI Scores at t1 and t2; Study 4

Group	Valid Cases:	t1 Mean IDI Score	t2 Mean IDI Score	Difference
Intervention	n=44	88.43	94.16	5.73 (*)
Control	n=79	91.14	89.73	-1.41 (ns)
Difference		2.71 (ns)	4.43 (ns)	

Note. * marginally significant, $p = .067$

Additional analysis: Changes in trainable MPQ traits

According to the literature (Hofhuis, Van der Zee & Otten, 2012; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013; Van der Zee, et al., 2004), the three social-perceptual traits *social initiative*, *open mindedness*, and *cultural empathy* are more trainable than the remaining two stress-buffering traits *emotional stability* and *flexibility*. Accordingly, based on the same hypotheses as formulated for the IDI scores, I explored whether there would be a positive change in the MPQ social-perceptual traits over time, and whether this change would be stronger for the intervention- compared with the control group. These assumptions were tested with a mixed two-way ANOVA with time point (t1, t2) as the within-participants variable, condition (intervention vs. control group) as the between-participants variable, and the MPQ-SF scores for *social initiative*, *open-mindedness* and *cultural empathy* respectively as repeated measures.

For *social initiative* the analysis revealed that there was a marginally significant main effect for time point, $F(1, 111) = 3.66, p = .058$, i.e. a tendency that social initiative at t1 was lower than at t2, and a significant main effect for condition, $F(1, 111) = 4.34, p = .039$, replicating the finding that the intervention group scored higher at t1 than the control

group ($t(119) = 2.09, p = .039$), which was already reported when analysing the comparability of the two samples in the preliminary analyses. The expected interaction effect (time point x condition) was clearly not significant, $F(1, 111) = .22, p = .644$. Hence, in both groups *social initiative* only increased weakly over time.

For *open mindedness* there was no significant main effect for time point, $F(1, 111) = .97, p = .328$, but again a significant main effect for condition, $F(1, 111) = 5.49, p = .021$, replicating the finding that the intervention group scored higher at t1 than the control group ($t(119) = 3.32, p = .001$), and reported in the preliminary analyses. More importantly, the expected interaction effect (time point x condition) was significant, $F(1, 111) = 4.38, p = .039$. Closer inspection of this effect unexpectedly revealed that, in the control group *open mindedness* positively developed over time, $M = 3.75$ at t1 and $M = 3.90$ at t2, whereas in the intervention group it remained unchanged, $M = 4.0$.

For *cultural empathy* there was a significant main effect for time point, $F(1, 111) = 5.83, p = .017$, and a significant main effect for condition, $F(1, 111) = 4.71, p = .032$, replicating the finding that the intervention group scored higher at t1 than the control group ($t(104.13) = 2.38, p = .019$), and reported in the preliminary analyses. The interaction effect (time point x condition) was not significant, $F(1, 111) = .09, p = .767$. Both groups thus developed *cultural empathy* over time, but this applied similarly to both the intervention- and the control group.

Altogether, I did not observe the hypothesized larger development of the MPQ social-perceptual traits over time in the intervention- compared to the control group; rather, *open mindedness* did develop in the control group only, and *social initiative* and *cultural empathy* increased comparably in both groups.

Additional Analyses - Pooled Data from Studies 1 - 4

As the four studies were largely comparable in their samples, their design, and (with a few exceptions in study 4) their measures, it was possible to make a meta-analysis on all studies together. For these additional analyses the separate databases of the various cohorts (empirical studies 1-4) were integrated into one single database ($N=341$). By integrating the samples, I aimed at testing for the intervention effect with enhanced statistical power while simultaneously examining potential differences between the samples. I did this by using ANCOVA, testing the effect of condition (intervention vs. control) at t2 while adjusting for differences in baseline levels of intercultural competence at t1, and now adding an interaction effect condition x cohort to the model, to check whether the intervention effect differed by cohort. Of course, given the adaptations that were made in the intervention in study 4, a relevant question was whether this cohort would significantly differ from all others.

The overall mean score difference in the IDI-scores between the intervention and the control group at t2 was 3.42 (absolute scores were $M = 93.02$ for the intervention group; $M = 89.60$ for the control group). This mean score difference between the intervention- and control group was statistically significant ($F = 7.01, p = .009$). When split per cohort, only the mean score difference at t2 for study 4 was statistically significant ($F = 7.94, p = .006$; see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

Overview of Mean Score Difference, Condition, Mean Scores at t2 per Study per Condition, F-value and Significance

Study	Mean Score Difference	Condition	Mean Score at t2 ¹	F-value	Significance (p)
1	.61	Intervention Control	91.13 90.52	.078	.781
2	3.99	Intervention Control	92.01 88.02	1.94	.168
3	3.56	Intervention Control	93.84 90.28	1.88	.174
4	6.30*	Intervention Control	95.36 89.06	7.94	.006
all	3.42*	Intervention Control	93.02 89.60	7.01	.009

Note. ¹ * significant at 95% confidence interval

The analysis of pooled data further revealed that there was no significant main effect for cohort, $F(1, 340) = .26, p = .856$. The interaction effect (condition x cohort) was also not significant, $F(1, 340) = 1.01, p = .390$. In summary, when controlling for t1 levels of intercultural competence, the IDI score at t2 was significantly influenced by condition (intervention vs. control) but did not differ significantly by cohort (studies 1-4).

Testing for trained supervisor effect

In hypothesis 3, I predicted that a trained supervisor would enable students achieve a more positive change in intercultural competence than untrained supervisors accompanying the intervention. Working with a combined sample from all four studies allowed testing the assumed impact of trained study abroad supervisors. As this analysis refers to the intervention sample only, testing this factor per single study was not possible due to the restrictions in sample size. The assumption tested in the combined intervention samples ($N=159$) was that students who were supported by a trained supervisor acquired higher

levels of intercultural competence than the ones supported by an untrained supervisor. For the distribution of trained and untrained supervisors per study, see Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Overview of Number of Participants in Intervention Group (N=159) with Trained or Untrained Supervisor, Split per Study

Intervention Group in Study	With Trained Supervisor	With Untrained Supervisor
1	24	15
2	25	9
3	31	11
4	30	14
Total (1-4)	110	49

The assumed effect of supervisor training was tested by making use of univariate ANCOVA with the score for intercultural competence at t2 as the dependent variable, trained vs. untrained supervisor as fixed factor and intercultural competence at t1 as covariate. The analysis revealed that there was no significant main effect for supervisor training, $F(1, 155) = .35, p = .556$. Hence, the data did not provide evidence that the intervention effects were stronger if students were supported by a trained rather than untrained supervisor.

Discussion and Conclusions

The two key assumptions for this empirical part of the dissertation were that 1) study abroad leads to higher levels of intercultural competence and 2) that an intervention directed at cultural learning during the study abroad will enhance the levels of intercultural competence after study abroad compared with a study abroad without intervention. In four consecutive empirical studies I expected to find evidence in line with both assumptions. However, the results provided no reliable, statistically significant support for the hypothesized effects of studying abroad, in general (*hypothesis 1*), and in the studies 1-3 also not when supported by an intervention (*hypothesis 2*). Only in the fourth empirical study, i.e. after intensifying the intervention, I observed a statistically significant relationship between the condition (intervention vs. no intervention) and levels of intercultural competence development in line with hypothesis 2.

The findings from study 4 provide a first suggestion that, when accompanied by a proper intervention, study abroad may enhance students' intercultural competence development. However, a meta-analysis on all four studies revealed that the slight overall evidence for positive change in intercultural competence over time cannot be systematically attributed to the cohort in study 4. This may be due to the fact that there is

also substantial variation in the mean change in IDI observed in studies 1, 2 and 3. In fact, looking at the mean change in intercultural competence across studies, I observe that study 1, with the smallest change in IDI-scores, deviates about as much in a negative way from studies 2 and 3 as study 4, with the strongest increase in the IDI-scores, does in a positive way (see Table 4.9). Hence, even though the changes in the intervention in study 4 offer a plausible explanation for this study's stronger effects in line with the two hypotheses, the present evidence does not allow to firmly draw such a conclusion. Rather, the differences between cohorts / studies may have been just by chance, and that study 4's stronger effects might not be the straightforward result of the revised and intensified intervention. Accordingly, more research using study 4's intensified intervention is needed to provide convincing evidence for the possible facilitating effects of an intervention accompanying the study abroad experience.

In all four studies the average levels of intercultural competence as measured by the IDI, both before, and, more importantly, after study abroad, were below a score of 115, namely between 87 and 96. These scores were therefore substantially below the starting point of a predominantly ethno-relative worldview as conceptualized in the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* and operationalized in the IDI v3 test instrument (Bennett, 1993, Hammer, 2011; see also chapter 3, Table 3.2). This is a finding in line with findings in other studies making use of the IDI as the key instrument for measuring intercultural competence as the dependent variable (e.g. Weber Bosley, 2015; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2012; see also chapter 3). The present research thus seems to support the assumption that a predominantly ethno-relative worldview among students, before, and more importantly, also after an episode of mobility, is – in general – not very likely to be observed.

Moreover, in three of the four studies, I found that the initial levels of intercultural competence (i.e. at time 1) negatively correlated significantly with changes of intercultural competence over time (i.e. the scores at time 2 minus the scores at time 1). Lower initial scores thus related to larger positive changes in intercultural competence. Or, said differently, participants with an initial low score on intercultural competence were more likely to score higher afterwards. This is again a finding in line with previous studies (e.g. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016), but it also triggers questions about the conceptually assumed linearity of intercultural competence development as measured by the IDI v3 test instrument in relation to the underlying *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) (e.g. Bennett, 2009; Castiglioni, 2013; Hammer 2011; see also chapter 3 and chapter 5). Moreover, it may suggest a 'regression towards the mean'-effect when making use of standardized data (Pocock et al., 2012), something that can be statistically countered by controlling scores at time 2 for the respective scores measured at time 1.

Additionally, I expected to find evidence that certain personal attributes and previous experiences with cultural differences and openness, may relate to degrees of intercultural competence before and after an episode of mobility, in this case, study abroad. This assumption was based on the work of various researchers who designed models of intercultural competence development (e.g. Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006, 2009; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Kim 1988, 2001; for an overview of the models and their characteristics, see also chapter 2, Table 2.1). However, none of the measured variables related significantly to changes in levels of intercultural competence after study abroad, apart from *managing uncertainty* in study 3, and *caring about cultural differences* in study 4. Likewise, the MPQ dimensions, in study 4, did not systematically relate to changes in intercultural competence. Accordingly, overall the present research provides some support for the idea that certain personal attributes and previous experiences with cultural differences and openness are related to levels of intercultural competence; however, these associations are mostly stable across time points.

Relatedly, I argued, based on the work of Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2013), that higher levels of *social initiative*, *open-mindedness* and *cultural empathy* (i.e. the social-perceptual traits of the MPQ) would be higher at time 2 than at time 1 since – other than the stress-buffering traits *emotional stability* and *flexibility* – they are considered as trainable (e.g. Hofhuis, Van der Zee & Otten, 2012; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013). In line with hypothesis 2 on the development of intercultural competence as measured with the IDI, this gain should be stronger in the intervention group than in the control group. However, there was no evidence for a positive development of the trainable traits over time, and only for *open-mindedness* I found an interaction effect, which – opposite to the expectation – revealed more change in the control- than in the intervention group. In retrospect, I can only speculate that an episode of five to six months may have been too short for developing personal traits, even when conceptualized as social-perceptual, and thus more trainable.

Apart from the key findings above, making use of data in the intervention groups only, I did not find evidence that a trained study abroad supervisor is more effective than an untrained supervisor in supporting cultural learning (*hypothesis 3*) (Vande Berg et al., 2012). Framed positively, this finding may indicate that facilitating transformative learning does not necessarily require field knowledge; good mentoring of transversal skills (e.g. communication skills, innovative thinking, perseverance; UNESCO, 2014b), may possibly suffice. On the other hand, the finding may also signal that the supervisor training has not been sufficiently effective. Given the limited statistical power of this relatively small sample, there is certainly more research needed to draw any firm conclusions on the relevance and effectiveness of training supervisors.

In summary, even though the outcomes of study 4 and its refined intervention are promising, the present research is not conclusive regarding the effects of intervention in cultural learning during an episode of study abroad on levels of intercultural competence. Besides the fact that the positive findings in study 4 can, according to the meta-analysis, also be simply the result of chance, another backdrop is that levels of intercultural competence of students, before, and more importantly also after an episode of study abroad, were not in the realm of what is considered to be a predominant ethno-relative worldview in the literature (e.g. Bennett, 1993; Hammer, 2011; Hammer et al., 2003; Paige et al., 2003). Moreover, and again different from what literature suggests, personal attributes (e.g. Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013; Van der Zee, Zaal, & Piekstra, 2003), and previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences (e.g. Deardorff, 2006, 2009, Kim & Ruben, 1992; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Yershova et al. 2000) did not predict changes in the levels of intercultural competence after an episode of study abroad.

Limitations and Future Directions

The context in which this empirical research took place is one of assumed effects of intervention on levels of intercultural competence directly after the intervention. In study 4, the interaction effect was present. And in the pooled data of all 4 studies the difference over time was significant. But without additional data, concluding that the revised intervention actually did lead to the hypothesized intervention effects is not possible. Moreover, whether the findings would constitute a lasting effect is a question that will also require additional research.

The relatively small size of the samples in this research is a result of situating the four empirical studies in the context of an ongoing educational programme with a fixed student intake each academic year (see Table 4.2). The pooled sample however consisted of 341 valid cases, being 57 % of the target student population, thus providing for more statistical power for conducting the relevant statistical tests. As such, the findings constitute sufficient evidence for the effects within this particular category of business students. The results should not, however, be generalized beyond comparable study abroad curriculum components of comparable educational programmes.

Relatedly, the samples in this research consisted of students attending an international study programme, who may have been attracted to the programme because of its international characteristics. A possible limitation could have been a more than average interest in, or experience with international and intercultural issues of this particular group of students (e.g. possess higher 'mobile capital', see Murphy-Lejeune,

2002). This would apply to both the intervention- and the control groups, and therefore may be a potential reason for the weak differences between these two groups. Whether this possible sample characteristic (i.e. culturally diverse and experienced) would have affected the impact of study abroad on intercultural competence development would require additional research including for instance a less experienced control group. With this possible sample characteristic in mind, however, it is especially noteworthy that the IDI-scores were typically not on the ethno-relative side of the scale.

Almost none of the personal attributes and previous experience variables included in this research that conceptually were supposed to relate with changes in intercultural competence did so significantly (e.g. Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer, 2013; discussed in chapter 3). The present findings tentatively suggest that cognition and experience as such may not always serve as sufficient conditions for cultural learning or for developing intercultural competence. However, this also means, that in this research, no indicators have been found that may predict changes in intercultural competence.

The duration of the sojourn abroad was not included as a possible predictor variable in this empirical research since all students followed the same educational programme with a relatively fixed duration of the study abroad episode, i.e. all went abroad for five to six months. Assumptions whether changes in IDI and/or MPQ-SF would differ per duration of sojourn were therefore not tested. Furthermore, the housing of students while abroad (e.g. international student housing, host family, etc.) was not included as a variable since students resided almost exclusively at international housing facilities due to standing arrangements with the 61 partner institutes (see above). The study abroad target country was only used as a variable for checking comparability of groups. Consequently, these factors of duration, housing, and country, were not included in this research as possible covariates.

A final possible limitation of this empirical research concerns the principal instrument for testing the dependent variable, the IDI v3. This measure was validated for pre- and post-test use, also in cross-cultural context (Paige et al., 2003; Hammer, 2011; see also chapter 3). Nevertheless, the IDI single score may not be a sufficiently robust instrument for identifying a positive or negative *development* in predominant perception between two time-points (e.g. Bennett, 2009; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Pocock et al., 2012). The present findings seem to support such conclusion; in three of the four studies there was an indication of a possible regression to the mean. The findings may also question the linearity of intercultural competence development, or a possible inconsistency between the measure and its underlying concept, the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS). Yet, on the other hand, in study 4, I also did not find

positive change in the trainable MPQ dimensions. These aspects will be further discussed in chapter 5.

In summary, the present research provided little evidence for a general positive development of intercultural competence during an episode of study abroad. However, the last study revealed tentative evidence for a positive effect of an intensified intervention in cultural learning on levels of intercultural competence during study abroad (study 4). Even though this finding cannot be substantiated based on the present data, it signals that it would be worthwhile to further investigate variations in forms and intensity of interventions, and to identify which specific characteristics of an intervention (e.g. number of engagements, duration of engagements, effort put into reflections, etc.) relate to higher levels of intercultural competence development.

Another direction for future research may be to focus on other student samples. In fact, the cohorts of all four studies in the present research were quite specific (i.e. relatively diverse and experienced). Hence, with these cohorts, the degrees of positive change in intercultural competence development after a study abroad may be below average, even though the measured IDI scores were quite low and mostly not on the ethno-relative side of the scale. Still, future studies should also include cohorts that are less diverse, less experienced in cross-cultural mobility or less familiar with cultural diversity to investigate whether in such groups more evidence for positive change can be observed.

Finally, future research may also consider using other measures for measuring intercultural competence development. Whereas the IDI v3 test instrument, used in this research, may measure the participant's predominant orientation towards cultural differences sufficiently well, it may not serve as a sufficiently robust indicator for *change* in the participant's intercultural competence. New research ideally would help identify a measure that may (better) capture the *development* of intercultural competence over time, as for instance, but not necessarily, conceptualized in the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS; Hammer et al., 2003; Hammer, 2011; Paige et al., 2003).

Chapter 5

General Discussion

In chapter 1 I discussed the current understanding of internationalization of higher education (e.g. De Wit, Hunter, Howard & Egron-Polak, 2015) and the role of mobility as a means of achieving its intentions. I concluded that several key factors will need to be taken into account for mobility to be effective, in particular when aiming at cultural learning. A proactive use of the (culturally) foreign environment for learning may depend – among others – on the proficiency of the local language or another foreign language, most commonly English, on the ability to recognize and acknowledge different cultural perspectives, and on the availability of facilitating factors like support from a competent educator and an internationalized curriculum.

With this context in mind, I discussed in chapter 2 various theories and models of intercultural competence and intercultural competence development (e.g. Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Kim, 1988, 2001; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). After also discussing scholarly critique on models of intercultural competence (e.g. Bartel-Radic & Giannelloni, 2017; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Van der Vijver & Leung, 2009), I ended the chapter with the hypothesis that intervention during study abroad ideally supports students in engaging with dissimilar others and seeking ‘debating space’, in order to consciously develop their intercultural competence by reflecting and actively making (new) meaning (e.g. Bennett, 1993; Mezirow, 2000).

In chapter 3 I discussed a measurement instrument and its underlying theoretical model that dominate the field of profiling intercultural competence, namely, the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI) and the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS) (Hammer & Bennett, 1998; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). I further discussed two instruments that focus on measuring personal attributes that may affect a person’s receptiveness to developing intercultural competence, the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (MPQ) (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001), its short version, the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire – short form* (MPQ-SF) (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013), and the *Intercultural Readiness Check* (IRC) (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004). I concluded that both DMIS and IDI are broadly accepted as concept and measure for levels of intercultural competence, for example before and after study abroad. Based on the relevant literature (e.g. Hammer, 2011; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova & DeJaeghere, 2003), notwithstanding some scholarly critique (e.g. Bennett, 2009; Matsumoto and Hwang, 2013; Matveev and Mertz, 2014; Perry and Southwell, 2011), I further reasoned that the IDI is a sufficiently validated and reliable measure for capturing a respondent’s predominant orientation towards cultural

differences. Based on review of experiences with the IDI as a selected test instrument in other studies (e.g. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2012; Weber Bosley, 2016), I concluded that the IDI remains a regularly used instrument for a quasi-experimental research setup aiming at profiling differences in scores between time-points when participants are involved in some sort of intervention between these time-points. Accordingly, I decided to make use of the IDI instrument in the empirical part of this dissertation. Furthermore, based on the relevant literature (e.g. Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001, 2013; Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013), I concluded that both IRC and MPQ are feasible and well validated means to measure relevant personal attributes prior to, for instance, a study abroad. Accordingly, I decided to also make use of these two instruments in the empirical part of this dissertation.

In chapter 4, I reported and discussed my own empirical evidence for intercultural competence development during an episode of study abroad, in particular, when assisted with cultural learning during that episode. All in all, the reported results of four empirical studies and one meta-analysis did not support the idea that the levels of intercultural competence are substantially different after study abroad than before, even when assisted in cultural learning. Nevertheless, study 4 in particular may be considered as promising; an intensified intervention in this study, as compared to the previous three studies, resulted in a more positive change in intercultural competence as measured by the IDI in the intervention- as compared with the control group. Hence, this study provided tentative support for the assumption articulated in chapter 2, namely that stimulated engagement with dissimilar others, and stimulated reflections thereof, may result in higher levels of intercultural competence.

In this final chapter of my dissertation I share my reflections on the theories presented and methods used in this dissertation and will relate the discussion to my empirical findings. Next, I step a bit further away from the theories, models and empirical data, and reflect on the research from an educational perspective. More specifically, in the context of the objectives of internationalization of higher education, I look at the broader implications of this dissertation for the international educational practice.

Reflections on Current Theory on the Development of Intercultural Competence

I started this dissertation with discussing theory of internationalization of higher education as a purposeful process (De Wit et al., 2015). Mobility in particular is seen as a key instrument of internationalization (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Engel et al., 2015;

Sandström & Hudson, 2018), and one purpose for mobility can be sought in developing intercultural competence (e.g. Vande Berg et al., 2012).

I further discussed that multiple scholars group the main constituents of the concept of intercultural competence under *attitudes*, *cognition* and *behaviour* (e.g. Deardorff, 2006; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) and that some scholars argue that *context* would need to be added (e.g. Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018; Rathje, 2007). Furthermore, I argued that, apart from compositional (Deardorff, 2006), co-orientational (Byram, 1997), adaptational (Kim, 1988) or causal path (Deardorff, 2009), multiple models of intercultural competence may also be considered as developmental (Byram, 2009; Deardorff, 2009; Kim, 2001; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). I concluded that theory of intercultural competence contains descriptions of intercultural competence as both an outcome and a process, with a focus on the *continuously* changing levels of the outcome. Some models are explicitly designed as developmental (e.g. Bennett, 1993), and put an emphasis on increasingly sophisticated interpretation of experience, not on experience per se.

In the design of the intervention for the empirical part of this dissertation, I followed the developmental concept by Bennett (1993) and Deardorff (2006, 2009): students were instructed to engage with dissimilar others, seek the exchange of cultural perspectives, and reflect on the meaning of the encounter for understanding the impact of culture on human behaviour. I further derived from theory certain characteristics for developing the intervention, such as being open-minded when exploring unfamiliar context (Deardorff, 2006, Ting-Toomey, 1999), encouraging becoming increasingly cultural self-aware (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Byram, 1997; Sen, 2006), and aiming at increasingly sophisticated ways of navigating cultural differences (Bennett, 1993; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). More theoretical perspectives were taken into account when developing the intervention, namely, students were encouraged to not avoid potentially disconcerting differences (Engle & Engle, 2012), or disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1991); students needed to 'collect' experiences that were sufficiently relevant to reflect upon (Trompenaars & Woolliams, 2009). I further aimed at repeated exposure and engagement (Allport, 1954) in order make students stay in the relationship with others (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016) meanwhile offering sufficient freedom and confidence (King & Baxter Magolda, 2006). This was predominantly done through the design and sequence of the various assignments and through contacts between the student and his or her study abroad supervisor during the episode of study abroad (Lou & Weber Bosley, 2012; for more details see chapter 4).

Overlooking my empirical data, the evidence for the first hypothesis, i.e., an increase of intercultural competence in the course of the study abroad experience, is weak; the difference between IDI-scores measured at time 1 and measured at time 2 was only significant in study 4 and when pooling the data from all studies. Moreover, only in the fourth study, i.e. after intensifying the intervention, I observed that – compared with a

control condition – implementing an intervention directed at more reflection on the international experiences was associated with higher levels of intercultural competence after study abroad. However, a meta-analysis on all four studies revealed that differences between the four cohorts may have been just by chance, and that it would be premature to firmly conclude that study 4's stronger effects were indeed the result of the revised and intensified intervention. The main contribution of this research project may thus be support for the idea that mobility in itself, in this case study abroad, does not automatically lead to substantially higher levels of intercultural competence. The second contribution is that an intervention in cultural learning during an episode of mobility, in this case study abroad, may lead to substantially higher levels of intercultural competence; study 4's results were, though not yet conclusive, promising in this respect. The research project therefore tentatively aligns with theory that for mobility to be purposeful, specific targeted effort during mobility (such as actual engagement with dissimilar others and guided reflections thereof) is required to achieve that purpose (Carroll, 2015; Hudzik, 2016; Jones, 2013; Killick, 2015; Leask, 2015).

Furthermore, I did not find evidence in this research that a trained study abroad supervisor is more effective than an untrained supervisor in supporting cultural learning. This is a finding in contrast to observations made by Lou, Vande Berg and Paige (2012, p. 416) who posited that training will "... ensure ... cultural mentors [are] effective", and also goes against evidence from my own experiences with the so-called *Intercultural Competence Learning Lab* (ICLL), a professional cultural training for educators (Van der Poel, 2014, 2016b). The supervisors who participated in the empirical part of this dissertation, referred to as *trained* supervisors, underwent exactly this professional training, and were all part of the first seven cohorts (N=75) of professionals, for whom I observed increased levels of intercultural competence, immediately after the training, and still two years later (Van der Poel, 2019). Yet, the extent to which enhanced intercultural competence of teachers also translates into more such competence among their students has not been sufficiently tested, so far. Due to the limited statistical power of the relatively small samples in the empirical part of this dissertation, it would be premature to already conclude that such a link is weak or absent. Rather, more research is needed to draw any firm conclusions on the relevance of training of supervisors. Moreover, assuming that such training is worthwhile still raises the question about the relevant characteristics of such training, such as whether it should include providing specific field knowledge or whether more general mentor competencies (such as giving positive feedback, helping the mentee to cope with setbacks, etc. (Clutterbuck, 2005) would also suffice.

Based on literature, I expected to find evidence that students' previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences would relate to degrees of intercultural competence before and after study abroad. These relations were partly observed,

predominantly in study 1. However, none of the measured variables related significantly to changes in levels of intercultural competence after study abroad. A possible conclusion is that the associations may be mostly stable across time points and may not serve as predictors of *change* in levels of intercultural competence after an episode of study abroad. Reflecting further on this, not finding a significant relationship between *international education*, *host country language proficiency* and *intercultural coursework* on the one hand, and changes in scores on intercultural competence on the other hand, may hint at a too easily adopted assumption about the positive effects of international education, language training and intercultural coursework. In line with observations made by Bennett (1993), Passarelli and Kolb, (2012) and Sen (2006), in education, training and coursework, teachers and facilitators may be sharing with learners predominantly the cultural *do's and don't's*, as a form of expectation management about the other. In doing so, they may unintentionally reinforce preconceived worldviews (Osland & Bird, 2000), rather than an ability to reconsider worldviews (Perry; 1970, 1984). In other words, teachers and facilitators may insufficiently equip learners with an ability to actively construe (new) meaning when confronted with a foreign (cultural) environment or a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991).

I used two validated instruments for profiling personal attributes that are conceptualized to relate to people's functioning in intercultural context, the IRC (Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004) and the MPQ-SF (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013). Unexpectedly, the present research did not provide evidence that these profiles obtained with these measures predict receptiveness for developing intercultural competence during study abroad. As discussed in chapter 3, I expected strong relationships between levels of the various dimensions measured by IRC and MPQ-SF, and levels of intercultural competence as measured by the IDI. Especially in study 1, such relationships were observed, albeit not strongly, with the IDI-scores at time 1 and 2. Yet, apart from one dimension in study 3 only, I did not find correlations between personal attributes as measured by the IRC and MPQ-SF on the one hand, and *changes* in IDI scores on the other hand. Hence, levels of abilities or traits predicting behavioural outcomes in intercultural situations did not relate to the degrees of changes in predominant perceptions of cultural differences as inferred from IDI scores at two different time points.

Furthermore, since conceptualized as social-perceptual and trainable (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013), I expected three of the five personal attributes measured by the MPQ-SF (i.e. *social initiative*, *open-mindedness* and *cultural empathy*) to change after an episode of study abroad, and more so when accompanied with facilitation of cultural learning. Interestingly, again, these assumptions were not supported by the present data. Possibly, like I concluded for previous experiences with and openness for cultural differences, even for trainable personality attributes, the time frame of just a semester may

have been too short. I thus speculate that personal attributes are relatively stable and that possibly more time would be needed for these attributes to alter substantially. Even though the intervention in this research included – for instance – taking initiative, another speculation could be that an intervention would need to be more targeted towards the specific attribute in order to observe a change after an intervention.

Finally, concerning the concept of intercultural competence, in all four studies, the average levels of intercultural competence as measured by the IDI, before, and more importantly, both before and after study abroad, were substantially below the defined level of a predominantly ethno-relative worldview (Bennett, 1993, Hammer, 2011; see also Table 3.2). This implies that participants typically interpreted their experiences from a single, most likely their own, cultural perspective. This is a finding in line with results from other studies making use of the IDI v3 as the key instrument for measuring intercultural competence as the dependent variable (e.g. Weber Bosley, 2015; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2012); an ethno-relative worldview is generally not very likely to be observed among students. Such finding may however call for some deeper reflection on the conceptualization of an ethno-relative worldview as done in the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS; Bennett, 1993), compared to the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI; Hammer, 2011). As already discussed in chapter 3, the IDI v3 differs from the original DMIS conceptualization of the developmental stage of *minimization*. Whereas Bennett (1993) theorizes that this stage is intrinsically ethnocentric, Hammer (2011) argues that this stage is transitional, i.e. consisting of elements of both ethnocentric and ethno-relative viewpoints. Consequently, following Hammer's (2011) conceptualization, the observed average scores for all cohorts (i.e. ranging from 87 to 96) would all fall in the range of a transitional worldview (i.e. between 85 and 115 in the IDI v3), albeit all towards the starting point of it. One could thus argue that students participating in the present research started making use of ethno-relative worldviews but that the extent to which they did remains unclear. Consequently, I support the conclusions made by Deardorff (2009) and Gregersen-Hermans (2016) who advised that, along with scores on the IDI, preferably also qualitative data should be collected for a more comprehensive understanding of the students' perceptions of cultural differences.

In summary, if – and only if – future research will manage to substantiate the positive findings of study 4 regarding its revised, intensified intervention, then this research project may have made an early contribution to support the developmental concept of intercultural competence and its condition of targeted effort in the context of study abroad in higher education.

Reflections on Methods to Capture Intercultural Competence Development

In chapter 3 I critically reviewed the design of the *Intercultural Development Inventory* (IDI; Hammer, 2011), its underlying theoretical model, the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS; Bennett, 1993), and evidence from previous research using the IDI instrument (e.g. Vande Berg et al., 2012). In particular, I discussed the calculation of the IDI single score as not necessarily expressing an person's intercultural *competence* (e.g. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016), the observed 'regression to the mean' effect possibly due to the normalization of scores (Castiglioni, 2013; Pocock, Assmann, Enos, & Kasten, 2002) and the IDI v3 test instrument not being a sufficiently robust instrument for identifying a positive or negative *development* in predominant perception of cultural differences between time points (Van der Poel, 2016b). Based on literature, and in line with Paige et al. (2003), I concluded that the IDI is a sufficiently reliable and validated instrument for profiling an individual's *predominant orientation* towards cultural differences.

Rooted in the empirical findings, a contribution of this dissertation may be a call for more transparency concerning the design of the IDI instrument, and its single score calculation in particular. First of all, in three of the four empirical studies the initial scores of the IDI (i.e. at time 1) negatively correlated significantly with changes in levels of intercultural competence (i.e. time 2 score minus time 1 score). Accordingly, lower initial scores related to larger changes. This finding is in line with previous studies (e.g. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016) and may suggest a 'regression towards the mean'-effect when making use of standardized data (Bennett, 2009; Pocock et al., 2012). As argued, see chapter 3, conceptually this could be problematic. Regression towards a certain category could be understood as indicative for a social norm, e.g. set by a social system like a certain society or community, but not towards a calculated mean. Moreover, it may be problematic that scores are normalized, while there is no clear conceptual reason for assuming that intercultural sensitivity would be normally distributed among a population (Castiglioni, 2013). Furthermore, building on Paige and collaborators (2003, p.485), who posited that positions at the ethnocentric side of the DMIS model are "stage-exclusive" whereas positions at the ethno-relative side are "stage-cumulative", I would have expected initial developmental steps to be more demanding than progressing further from already relatively developed positions.

Relatedly, (cultural) learning that takes place between two time points may affect the score at the second time point negatively whereas this could still point at a positive development; 'regression may mean progress'. As I wrote in chapter 3, more modest self-assessment at time 2 as compared to time 1 may result in a lower score at time 2 as compared to time 1, but may nevertheless be an indication of increased sophisticated cognition. Due to learning about culture a respondent may increasingly be aware of his or

her limited understanding of cultural differences and may in retrospect look at the initial self-assessment (i.e. at time 1) as one filled out with naiveté or overestimation of own capability. Conceptually this would constitute an important developmental step (DMIS) that is not captured by the calculated single score (IDI). In brief, to improve the validity of the IDI as an instrument for capturing levels of intercultural competence, and of intercultural competence *development* in particular, more transparency of the design of the IDI single score calculation is needed.

Most studies looking into intercultural competence development make use of a quasi-experimental setup (treatment vs. no treatment) with measures taken at two, sometimes three time points, typically before and after the treatment, plus sometimes in-between (e.g. Weber Bosley, 2015). Yet, conceptualizations of intercultural competence as an attribute that develops slowly, in a life-long process (e.g. Deardorff, 2009), would justify a longitudinal design covering a longer time span. For instance, in the empirical part of this dissertation, the first cohorts of students could have been re-tested along with the following cohorts in order to generate a larger series of measures over a longer period of time in order to assess whether levels of intercultural competence directly after study abroad would be maintained, regress or even develop further.

The desire for longitudinal studies, with more than two waves and covering a longer period than one semester, resonates with the discussion of the assumed linearity of intercultural competence development (see also chapter 2), for instance concerning the conditions for *sustained* intercultural competence (e.g. Deardorff, 2009b). Does intercultural competence decrease over time when not given continuous attention? Is intercultural competence affected by changing contexts, such as a relocation to a foreign country - a fair assumption - (e.g. Acheson & Schneider-Bean, 2019) or do relatively high levels of intercultural competence actually buffer for the effects of (changing) contexts - just as fair an assumption - (Bennett, 1993). Further research involving alumni may provide opportunities for a more extended longitudinal data collection, possibly revealing sustained levels of intercultural competence years after intervention. Moreover, apart from self-assessment instruments like the IDI, future research may also need to include the assessment of actual (professional) behaviour of the (former) participant by relevant stakeholders and peers, and triangulating this with the intercultural competence scores. This would address the desire for a more holistic approach of measuring intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009b; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Fantini, 2009; Hietbrink, 2017).

Comparing different forms of intervention could also be part of future research in order to confirm the tentative impression in this dissertation that the design and intensity of the intervention may influence the degree of change in levels of intercultural competence (see chapter 4, study 4). Interestingly, in the Skype® conversations with their

study abroad supervisors, which were an integral part of the intervention, students particularly from the fourth cohort, confirmed that the assignments generally required a serious effort. Students reported that they found it challenging to initiate contact, explain the objective of an encounter and to arrange a meeting in a foreign setting. They further shared that they spent time and effort on properly articulating their experiences and their reflections thereof. Observations from the study abroad supervisors confirmed the impression that students were actively dealing with the challenges created by the assignments that formed the treatment in the empirical research, and that this especially applied to study 4. Furthermore, quite some students frankly admitted that if they could have avoided the various efforts, they would have done so. But since the assignments were mandatory, related to earning course credits, they felt they simply had to deal with them. Therefore, pending a successful replication of study 4's promising findings, a potential practical implication of the findings may be that, for an intervention aimed at cultural learning to be effective, conditions for serious effort in cultural learning will need to be created. This could for example be realized by incentives in the form of formal credits, and/or by the obligation to articulate the experiences and to reflect about them in a direct contact with peers and/or advisors.

At the end of chapter 4, I suggested that future research may need to include control cohorts of domestic students in order to identify the possible effects of prior international experiences of international students, as compared to domestic students, on intercultural competence development. This suggestion results from a reflection on the sample characteristics of the participants in the empirical part of this dissertation (i.e. skewed distributions for *time lived abroad*, see also chapter 4); students generally possessed some 'mobile capital' (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Not finding substantial (study 1-3) or statistically significant yet still moderate (study 4) changes in levels of intercultural competence after a facilitated study abroad could be due to the fact that the participants, mostly being international students, were already exposed to a foreign (learning) environment for a relatively long time prior to leaving for study abroad. What would however go against this line of thinking is that all cohorts scored relatively low on levels of intercultural competence also, or more specifically, *before* study abroad.

Moreover, in this research, *hours of intercultural coursework* was included as covariate, hence a variable that potentially levels out some differences between domestic and international students, since, in this research, related to at least a (28-hour) mandatory component of the international business programme for all students prior to leaving for study abroad. Further research is needed for identifying differences between domestic and international students on levels of intercultural competence after an intervention in cultural learning. One such study is currently undertaken by Shinnick and collaborators (n.d.) comparing participants in a Dutch and an English stream of an International Business

(IB) programme, making use of the IRC 2.0 for profiling differences in intercultural competence after a year abroad (i.e. internship- and study abroad). Preliminary outcomes are that English stream students, as compared to Dutch stream students, start with higher initial levels of intercultural competence and demonstrate higher changes in intercultural competence after a year abroad.

Reflections on Intercultural Competence Development when Internationalizing Higher Education

Stepping away from the specific empirical findings and the theories and methods used and discussed in this dissertation, I believe it is worthwhile to reflect on the assumption that intercultural competence is a desirable or needed component of internationalization of higher education. In the first chapter I argued, building on Knight's (2004) definition of internationalization of higher education, and in line with De Wit and collaborators' (2015) argumentation, that internationalization of higher education ought to be purposeful; it ideally improves the quality of education and leads to meaningful contributions to society. Hence the question: to what extent is intercultural competence indeed a desired means towards a higher educational and societal goal?

For educators involved with an international business programme, i.e. the predominant context of the empirical part of this dissertation, the answer to the question is fairly clear: intercultural competence is seen as very important, if not crucial, for effective international business. Accordingly, the justification of intercultural competence as a learning outcome of business studies lies in empirically evidenced better business performances (e.g. Adler & Gundersen, 2008; Gesteland, 2005; Meyer, 2015).

Yet, also beyond a business perspective, intercultural competence can be of economic importance. For example, in her Letter to Parliament (June 2018), the Dutch Minister of Education (Ms. I.K. van Engelshoven) stated that graduates need to know how to deal with different perspectives in order to remain employable (Rijksoverheid, 2018) and to have a better chance in a globalizing labour market (Onderwijsraad, 2018). Furthermore, for the Dutch economy the benefits of internationalization of higher education by far exceeds the cost of it (CPB, 2012). These observations of the Dutch Minister resonate with the outcomes of EAIE Barometer studies (Engel et al., 2015; Sandström & Hudson, 2018) and IAU Global Surveys (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014), discussed in chapter 1, indicating that 'preparing students for a global world' is a main goal for internationalization of higher education.

Building further on the above, I would argue that intercultural competence is an increasingly important attribute for getting access to meaningful work, sustained income and welfare. Globalization affects our professional positions in multiple aspects, including

our daily interactions on the work-floor, in the markets for our products and services, in the power structures and ownership relations of our professional environments, etc. Purposefully developing intercultural competence directly touches upon sustainable employability and economic self-reliance (Coelen & Gribble, 2019), since increasingly related to our ability to effectively and appropriately deal with the varying perspectives on professionalism, meaningful work, fair competition, and ethical standards (Kramar & Syed, 2012).

Moving away from the professional field, and more towards society at large, I would argue that the internationalization of our 'daily life', in general, makes human interaction increasingly international, intercultural and complex. The worldwide economic crisis that started in late 2008, triggered critical reflections on the role of economic and financial performances affecting the sustainability and durability of our global society. Seven years later, with the crisis waning, the Paris Climate Agreement (December 2015) echoed a belief that global issues like sustainable energy, pollution, migration, poverty, etc. can only be successfully addressed in a joint effort of *all* global stakeholders (IPCC, 2014; United Nations, 2018; COP24, 2018). Intercultural competence development – in my opinion – thus stands for an increasingly sophisticated ability of interlocutors to maintain durable connections between dissimilar people (for a recent discussion of 'knowledge diplomacy', see Knight, 2019). Developing intercultural competence can therefore arguably be one of the most important outcomes of internationalization of higher education; it helps people regard themselves as responsible *global* citizens.

Future research is however required for a proper valorisation of the intended learning outcomes as the needed conditions for future employability, and for global citizenship behaviour. The goal of such research should be to find out how intercultural competence is related to actual professional behaviour and decision-making that is seen as more conducive for sustainable (business) solutions. Alumni and their employers could be involved in studying the professional behaviours that evidence the helpfulness of the articulated attributes. Stakeholders from a wider spectrum (e.g. politicians, representatives from NGOs, etc.) would need to be involved in articulating the attributes of desired global citizenship behaviour (Lilley, 2014). Such studies may require designing scales for the assessment of actual behaviour with the obvious caveat that the assessment of behaviour in itself is prone to varying cultural perspectives. Future research should therefore not only look into the behaviour *per se*, but also into the rationales given by respondents for behavioural options and choices. To this end, for example, recently a PhD proposal was submitted that aims at designing a valid assessment of behaviours that are considered to be interculturally competent business behaviours (Hietbrink, 2017).

Implications for mobility as an instrument for intercultural competence development

Returning to the starting point of this dissertation, mobility remains a key component of internationalization of higher education practice. In our modern era of internet and globalized societies the premise of mobility may however become increasingly feeble. Particularly in the larger urban environments around the world, mobility as a condition for exposure to cultural differences is eroding quickly; students may increasingly feel 'at home' when abroad. Smartphones allow for instant and easy access to information concerning travel, stay, music, food, and entertainment from a like-minded group. With the use of modern digital media, people who are 'like us' are increasingly 'present' or can easily be traced and contacted.

Consequently, I encourage educators and educational institutes to design mobility as part of the formal curriculum in terms of personal development, or personal growth objectives, rather than in terms of mere exposure or (cultural-specific) knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, I encourage a *culture-general* approach in preparing students for study abroad because such an approach is rooted in understanding the *mechanisms* of culture, rather than mere outcomes. Purposefully preparing students for exploring and experiencing how people *construe* their cultural reality contributes possibly more to a durable competence than helping students merely observe cultural habits and expressions. I am pleading for using mobility predominantly for letting students explore foreign grounds, and for *evidencing* how they, increasingly confidently, are able to attach meaning to their experiences. Such an approach will equip learners with a competence of continually sensing the agility of culture, in taking differences and the 'diversity of differences' as a normality (Sen, 2006). As a result, students may increasingly look at their understanding as a hypothesis "rather than a certainty" (Adler & Gundersen, 2008, p. 89).

Relatedly, if study abroad is to contribute to the achievement of well-articulated intended learning outcomes, then the formative expectations and evaluation criteria should be stated explicitly to the student at the onset of, during, and after study abroad. The student must understand that the mobility component of the curriculum is an integral part of the programme and not a 'leisurely break' in his or her educational trajectory.

While the above concerns the much-needed careful design and desired outcomes of mobility, and the assessment of it, the student should also be supported in achieving the articulated outcomes of mobility. As discussed in chapter 2, multiple scholars evidenced that exposure does not equate competence. On the contrary, the confrontation with unfamiliar ideas and situations needs to be actively sought for, facilitated and discussed in order to create a basis for meaningful or transformative learning. In a way, features of cultural learning do not differ that much from generally accepted key features of critical thinking. "Dialogue with others who are different, [who] have different

worldviews and cultural backgrounds, is an essential feature of critical thinking . . . aimed at overcoming egocentric and socio-centric thinking" (Mason, 2008, as cited in The Higher Education Academy paper on Critical Thinking, 2014). In brief, developing intercultural competence requires intellectual effort; mobility is merely the vehicle.

Yet, some scholars may argue that critical thinking is not universal, but that it is valued more in Western thinking than in non-Western thinking (e.g. Nisbett, 2003). I nevertheless look at the concept of critical thinking as a cultural construct in itself and thus as a concept that may appear in multiple forms. Non-Western ideas about critical thinking may simply not be understood so well by Western thinkers, basically proving the actual importance of the very process.

Implications for teachers involved with international higher education

I wrap up this general discussion with a few remarks concerning teachers' abilities in the context of internationalization of higher education (see also chapter 1). In the past years, I have spoken to many educators who do not feel sufficiently equipped for an internationalized pedagogical demand. They may feel comfortable with their proficiency of the English language during their holidays, but not in front of a multicultural classroom. They may know how to transfer their knowledge and expertise in a local context but are hesitant to relate this to international or intercultural environments. They may have heard or read about foreign students perceiving the classroom differently but feel unable to reach out to the different learning styles and didactical expectations. They may understand Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede et al., 2010) but may lack the abilities to enact this understanding in the classroom. In short, many educators may think of themselves as sufficiently cosmopolitan, only to discover that in the evolving internationalized educational practice that this does not automatically also imply being capable to effectively use their insights (Carroll, 2015; Killick, 2015; Lilley, 2014; Prud'home van Reine & Blom, 2019).

In a way, educators can hardly be blamed for such (perceived) shortcomings, since – like for students – the same assumption is mistakenly made: those who have been exposed are not necessarily (more) competent. The colleague who travels is not automatically sufficiently equipped for the international classroom, and the teacher from abroad is not necessarily a more culture savvy teacher. Having said this, however, I also want to state that some teachers may be criticized for not realizing that being a professional educator also means staying abreast with current developments in the professional field, which for the past three decades simply does encompass internationalized classrooms and education.

Unease with the internationalized educational practice may also been caused by educators and educational institutes that predominantly look at internationalization of

higher education as a matter relating to policy and PR, rather than to the educational practice. For a long time, internationalization simply meant opening up domestic programmes for foreign learners. Or, in the case of outgoing mobility, simply promoting the reverse: the opportunity for domestic learners to be part of a foreign programme. In both cases, nothing really changed: the product of education stayed the same, just the clients might be different.

Nowadays, we have come to realize that such a perspective is increasingly problematic, and in retrospect somewhat naïve. The diversity of our students has changed the dynamics in class drastically, and the ones who are increasingly confronted with the associated complexity of it are the ones who actually deliver the courses and programmes, i.e. the educators. In this respect, it is telling that a relatively recent conference in The Hague (Haagse Hogeschool, September 2017) had the title 'Professional development of lecturers: the *missing link* of internationalization' (italics by author).

Solutions might be found in the design and offer of targeted training of educators like in the *Intercultural Competence Learning Lab* (ICLL), mentioned earlier (Van der Poel, 2013, 2016b). Teachers typically form a community of practice where they learn and test inclusive didactics and develop their personal intercultural awareness as a precursor for competence. Participants in the training (which has been offered since 2011) confirm that their increased sensitivity of cultural complexity has a direct effect on their approach of education (Van der Poel, 2016b). As mentioned in chapter 1, comparable results were recently found in a professional development course for honours programme staff (Heijne-Penninga et al., 2018). Following a set of nine design principles, e.g. 'trainers serve as role models', this training also gives evidence that targeted professional intervention aiming at deep understanding of the key concepts that constitute, in this case, 'honours' was experienced as very beneficial for teaching. Therefore, a prerequisite for successful internationalization of higher education includes the ability of teachers to offer an inclusive pedagogy so that (cultural) diversity is actively being used as key material for learning. Examples of such inclusive pedagogy and intercultural didactics are discussed in the works of multiple authors already mentioned (e.g. Carroll, 2015; Hudzik, 2014 Killick, 2015), and need to be incorporated in the professional training of educators.

Still, additional research is required to learn more about the effects of professional development at the level of *student* learning outcomes. That educators confirm to look at their educational practice from a different perspective does not yet evidence that their teaching is (more) effective, (more) inclusive, or (more) relevant. Concerning the objective of this research, future study would ideally reveal empirical evidence for relations between different levels of culturally inclusive pedagogy and didactics, on the one hand, and students' achieved international or intercultural learning outcomes, on the other hand.

Closing Remarks

If in the coming years the internationalization of higher education continues, and there are no signs it would not, then I hope that this is taking place from the perspective of scholarly underpinned *intended* international learning outcomes, irrespective whether embedded in a curriculum abroad or 'at home'.

I hope that educators and managers of (higher) educational institutes increasingly will agree on intercultural competence as one of the key desired intended learning outcomes of internationalization of higher education. Moreover, I hope they reach agreement from a predominantly constructivist perspective, i.e. from the viewpoint that students ideally self-construe an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the *cultural* meaning and relevance of their experiences, be it at home or abroad.

Furthermore, I trust that educational institutes realize that the shaping of the conditions that enhance the achievement of the intended learning outcomes will only happen if educators are enabled to professionally address the intercultural competence development of students in both the formal and the informal curriculum, and both when at home and when abroad.

Finally, I look forward to future research that will convincingly demonstrate that graduates who are interculturally competent, are also able to deal with (business) relations and social interactions more effectively, and more appropriately, and *therefore* may deal with our planet, and all life on it, more responsibly.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Assignments, Empirical Studies 1-3

Make 'selfies' when you are interacting with people who are culturally different from you. For making the collage you may consider using software that you may find on the web. To help you a bit, consider the following possibilities for interaction:

- *ask a local student to take you around - away from the main tourist attractions - interact with him / her by asking questions about the place, the country, his / her life, etc.*
- *get a meal in a restaurant where the local people go - interact with the local person who you invite for sharing a meal; or chat with the waiter / waitress*
- *be part of a local activity, or an event - interact with other attendants / visitors / spectators (not necessarily local people, it could also be a visitor from yet another country)*
- *buy a local product that is not a typical souvenir - interact with the seller*
- *ask some deeper questions from other international students that you may be going to college with - what is their cross-cultural experience?*

You will need to share your collage with your SAB supervisor before you will have your Skype conversation.

In addition, for this first assignment the student was asked to review his or her personal IRC profile based on the IRC test results. The student was instructed to:

Read the profile, and make sure you understand the 4 competences, the 2 facets of each competence, and your personal score per competence and facet. After making sure you have a good understanding of the profile, please turn to the final page (pg. 11 of the profile) and answer the questions. Next, inform your SAB supervisor of the 2 'pitfalls' that you picked. Also share with your SAB supervisor the 'suggestion for development' that you chose. Make sure you do this before you will have your Skype conversation with your SAB supervisor. Final step for this assignment: turn your 'suggestion for development' into a very practical action that you will execute before you have your Skype conversation with your SAB supervisor.

In study 1 - 3 the second assignment consisted of having a conversation with three different local people about a local event or issue. The student was instructed to:

Follow at least one, but preferably two local, or national (news-) story/-ies; issues that 'everybody' talks about, or issues that are currently dominant topics in the news, or issues that many local people openly show concern about. Discuss the issue(-s) with three different local people. Consider the issue(-s) and the potentially different standpoints of the people that you talk to, and compare this to your own opinion on the issue(-s), OR,

Attend at least one, but preferably two local events or meetings; this should be a truly local happening (something that would not take place in your home country). Discuss the event/meeting with three different local people. Discuss the issue(-s) of the event/meeting and the potentially different viewpoints of the people that you talk to, and compare this to your own experience of the event/meeting.

Make a very brief write-up of your assignment and if possible include an image. Send this to your SAB supervisor prior to the Skype conversation

In addition, for the second assignment the student was asked to once more review his or her personal IRC profile based on the IRC test results. The student was instructed to:

Please go back to your personal IRC profile (in your possession) and read the descriptions of the 4 competences, and of the 2 facets of each. Of the 8 facets in total, please pick 2.

- *You may pick 2 that came out as a 'relative strength', and that you plan to make even stronger, or*
- *You may pick 2 that came out as 'needing attention', and that you plan to give that required attention, or*
- *A mix, or*
- *Any two facets that speak to you most, or you find most relevant for your personal development, irrespective of what the test may suggest.*

In any case, pick two facets that you feel OK with discussing with somebody else.

Then, find a citizen from the host culture (preferably a local student) to discuss the two facets with. Only if the language barrier with people from the host culture is too difficult to overcome, you may pick another international student, but preferably one from a culture that you consider quite different from your own. Together please go through the following steps:

1. *Introduce yourself and clarify that you would like to discuss a learning assignment that you received from your home university*
2. *Explain the 2 facets (as you understand them), where you got them from, and why you picked these 2*
3. *Ask the local person what the 2 facets mean in his/her local culture (how does he/she understand the 2) - does this differ from your own understanding?*
4. *Discuss with the local person how he/she suggests you should develop the two facets - what would you typically need to do in the local context to develop the 2 facets?*
5. *Ask what the local person finds difficult, challenging, funny, irritating, or fascinating about the 2 facets.*
6. *When you conclude your discussion, make a selfie of the two of you*
7. *After your discussion, make a write-up of your findings, include the selfie, and send it to your SAB-supervisor.*

Appendix 2 - Items Covered by IDI v3, at Time 1

IDI v3 at Time 1; Constructs & Items (..), Description / Example, Label, and Measure / Range

Constructs & items (#)	Description / Example	Label	Measure / Range
<i>IDI v3 standard items</i>			
Denial (7)	<i>'too much attention is directed toward other cultures'</i>	dd scale	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = disagree and 5 = agree
Defense (6)	<i>'if only other cultures were more like ours, the world would be a better place'</i>	dd scale	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = disagree and 5 = agree
Reversal (9)	<i>'people from our culture are lazier than people from other cultures'</i>	r scale	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = disagree and 5 = agree
Minimization (9)	<i>'people are fundamentally the same despite apparent differences in cultures'</i>	m scale	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = disagree and 5 = agree
Acceptance (5)	<i>'I am often aware of cultural differences in how decisions are made'</i>	aa scale	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = disagree and 5 = agree
Adaptation (9)	<i>'I can change my behaviour to adapt to other cultures'</i>	aa scale	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = disagree and 5 = agree
Cultural Disengagement (5)	<i>'I do not feel I have a culture'</i>	cd scale	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = disagree and 5 = agree
Developmental Orientation	Single score calculation based on dd, r, m, and aa scale scores (45 items)	DO score	Normalized distribution; score range 55 - 145
Gender (1)		gender	1 = male 2 = female
Age (1)		age	1 = 17 and under 2 = 18 - 21 3 = 22 - 30 4 = 31 - 40 5 = 41 - 50 6 = 51 - 60

			7 = 61 and over
living abroad (1)	Amount of previous experience living in another culture	time lived abroad (LV)	1 = never lived in another culture 2 = less than 3 months 3 = 3 - 6 months 4 = 7 - 11 months 5 = 1 - 2 years 6 = 3 - 5 years 7 = 6 - 10 years 8 = over 10 years
country of citizenship (1)	Country that is considered to be the primary country of citizenship	country	Two-digits unique country code available via pull down menu
<i>IDI v3 customized items / additional questions</i>			
Years of international education (1)	Number of years (rounded down) of international education after primary school and prior to study abroad	IE - years international education	1 = 0 year 2 = 1 year 3 = 2 years 4 = 3 years 5 = 4 years 6 = 5 or more years
Hours of intercultural coursework or training (1)	Number of hours (rounded down) of intercultural coursework or training after primary school and prior to study abroad	IC - hours intercultural coursework	1 = 0 hour 2 = 1-10 hours 3 = 11-20 hours 4 = 21-30 hours 5 = 31-40 hours 6 = 41 hours or more
Host country language proficiency (1)	Proficiency of speaking the (primary) language of the study abroad host country	LA - host country language proficiency	1 = totally not 2 = hardly 3 = moderately 4 = largely 5 = fluently 6 = mother tongue
Familiarity with host country culture (1)	Familiarity with the study abroad host country culture	FA - familiarity with host culture	1 = totally not 2 = hardly 3 = moderately 4 = largely 5 = completely 6 = home culture

Curiosity; Inquisitiveness (1)	The degree friends would consider the respondent generally curious or inquisitive	CU - curiosity	1 = totally not 2 = hardly 3 = moderately 4 = largely 5 = completely
Care about cultural differences (1)	The degree friends would consider the respondent generally caring about cultural differences	CA - care for cultural differences	1 = totally not 2 = hardly 3 = moderately 4 = largely 5 = completely

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Appendix 3 - Items Covered by IRC 2.0, at Time 1

IRC 2.0 at Time 1; Constructs & Items (..), Description, Label, and Measure / Range

Constructs & Items (#)	Description	Label	Measure / Range
Intercultural Sensitivity (10)	The degree to which the respondent takes an active interest in others, their cultural backgrounds, and needs and perspectives	IRC - Intercultural Sensitivity (IS)	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
Intercultural Communication (13)	The degree to which the respondent actively engages in and monitors own communication and communicative behaviours	IRC - Intercultural Communication (IC)	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
Building Commitment (20)	The degree to which the respondent actively influences the social environment, and is concerned with integrating different people and their personalities	IRC - Building Commitment (BC)	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
Managing Uncertainty (14)	The degree to which the respondent is able to manage the greater uncertainty of intercultural situations	IRC - Managing Uncertainty (MU)	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
IRC profile	Score calculation per construct (63 items)	IRC profiles for IS, IC, BC and MU dimensions	Normalized distribution; score range 1 - 9 with 1 = low and 9 = high

Appendix 4 - Characteristics Valid Cases, and Correlation Matrices, Studies 1-4

Table 1.

Study 1; Distribution of Gender, Age and Country of Origin over Intervention and Control Groups (N=71).

	Female	Male	Age 21 and under	Age 22 and up	Country of Origin
Intervention N=39	15	24	17	22	Germany (20) Netherlands (13) Other ¹ (6)
Control N=32	16	16	11	21	Germany (19) Netherlands (8) Other ² (5)

Note. ¹ China, Lithuania, and Romania; ² Bulgaria, China, Moldova, and Russian Federation

Table 2.

Study 1; IDI Test Scores, IRC Test Scores, and 7 Context Question Variables: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (N=71)

Variables	M	SD	range	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 IDI t1	89.10	12.28	55-145 ²	-													
2 IDI t2	90.86	15.84	55-145 ²	.82**	-												
3 Δ IDI (IDI t2 minus IDI t1)	1.76	9.11	-	.08	.64**	-											
4 IRC-Intercultural Sensitivity (IS) ¹	4.63	2.02	1-9	.34**	.30*	.06	-										
5 IRC-Intercultural Communication (IC) ¹	4.75	1.66	1-9	.28*	.27*	.09	.54**	-									
6 IRC-Building Commitment (BC) ¹	4.68	1.42	1-9	.52**	.46**	.10	.59**	.44**	-								
7 IRC-Managing Uncertainty (MU) ¹	3.53	1.82	1-9	.45**	.35**	-.01	-.18	-.18	.10	-							
8 LV - time lived abroad	4.76	1.71	1-8	.10	.13	.09	-.13	.01	.04	-.02	-						
9 IE - years international education	3.06	.10	1-7	-.02	.01	.03	-.09	.16	.03	.04	.23*	-					
10 LA - host country language proficiency	2.68	1.53	1-6 ³	-.10	-.05	.05	.02	-.07	-.04	-.30*	.23	.12	-				
11 CU - curiosity	3.80	0.69	1-5	.42**	.24*	-.15	.38**	.13	.42**	.25*	.20	.04	.02	-			
12 IC - hours intercultural coursework	4.08	1.65	1-6 ³	.04	.02	-.01	.04	.04	.16	.17	-.01	.11	-.08	.15	-		
13 FA - familiarity with host culture	3.54	0.91	1-6	-.04	-.03	.01	-.03	-.01	-.01	-.20	.21	-.07	.55**	.10	-.07	-	
14 CA - care for cultural differences	3.61	0.82	1-5	.26*	.20	-.01	.34**	.36**	.37**	.15	.05	-.01	-.02	.42**	.35**	.19	-

Note. ¹ N = 68; ² range is for IDI 'single score' calculation; range per scale is 1-5 (see also Appendix 2); ³ dichotomized variables, correlations based on the original variables; * p < .05; ** p < .01

Table 3.

Study 2; Distribution of Gender, Age and Country of Origin over Intervention and Control Groups (N=74).

	Female	Male	Age 21 and under	Age 22 and up	Country of Origin
Intervention N=34	15	19	18	16	Germany (12) Netherlands (15) Other ¹ (7)
Control N=40	26	14	17	23	Germany (16) Netherlands (15) Other ² (9)

Note. ¹ Aruba, China, Finland, Moldova, Poland, Spain; ² Azerbaijan, China, Indonesia, Moldova, Romania, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vietnam

Table 4.

Study 2: IDI Test Scores, IRC Test Scores, and 7 Context Question Variables: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (N=74)

Variables	M	SD	range	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 IDI t1	89.16	12.60	55-145 ¹	-													
2 IDI t2	89.85	13.49	55-145 ¹	.42**	-												
3 Δ IDI (IDI t2 minus IDI t1)	.69	14.02	-	-.49**	.58**	-											
4 IRC-Intercultural Sensitivity (IS)	4.80	1.86	1-9	-.05	-.26*	-.20	-										
5 IRC-Intercultural Communication (IC)	4.85	1.80	1-9	-.05	-.16	-.11	.55**	-									
6 IRC-Building Commitment (BC)	5.20	1.79	1-9	.12	-.12	-.22	.49**	.59**	-								
7 IRC-Managing Uncertainty (MU)	3.54	1.92	1-9	.28*	.16	-.11	.06	.10	.26*	-							
8 LV - time lived abroad	4.36	1.81	1-8 ²	.04	.03	-.01	.19	.00	.09	.03	-						
9 IE - years international education	3.36	1.32	1-7	.06	-.01	-.06	-.04	-.03	-.02	-.03	.11	-					
10 LA - host country language proficiency	2.61	1.56	1-6 ²	-.12	-.28*	-.16	.18	.07	.13	-.09	.00	.00	-				
11 CU - curiosity	3.88	.84	1-5	.21	.10	-.09	.19	.16	.35*	.36*	.02	.18	.12	-			
12 IC - hours intercultural coursework	4.38	1.54	1-6 ²	.16	.09	-.06	.00	.09	.05	.07	-.14	.20	.01	.29*	-		
13 FA - familiarity with host culture	3.23	.96	1-6	.03	.00	-.03	.12	.29*	.28*	.00	.00	-.15	.34**	.07	.11	-	
14 CA - care for cultural differences	3.80	.88	1-5	.22	.03	-.17	.29*	.31**	.34**	.13	.12	.14	.01	.32**	.25*	.19	-

Note. ¹ range is for IDI 'single score' calculation; range per scale is 1-5 (see also Appendix 2); ² dichotomized variables, correlations based on the original variables; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 5.

Study 3; Distribution of Gender, Age and Country of Origin over Intervention and Control Groups (N=73).

	Female	Male	Age 21 and under	Age 22 and up	Country of Origin
Intervention N=42	19	23	21	21	Germany (23) Netherlands (13) Other ¹ (6)
Control N=31	13	18	18	13	Germany (8) Netherlands (13) Other ² (10)

Note. ¹ Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Venezuela; ² Bulgaria, China, Hungary, Malaysia, Moldova, Netherlands Antilles, Ukraine

Table 6.

Study 3; IDI Test Scores, IRC Test Scores, and 7 Context Question Variables: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (N=73)

Variables	M	SD	range	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 IDI t1	90.78	14.85	55-	-													
2 IDI t2	92.33	15.77	55- 145 ¹	.72**	-												
3 Δ IDI (IDI t2 minus IDI t1)	1.55	11.42	-	-.30**	.44**	-											
4 IRC-Intercultural Sensitivity (IS)	4.42	2.09	1-9	.13	.11	-.01	-										
5 IRC-Intercultural Communication (IC)	4.84	2.02	1-9	.07	.07	.01	.65**	-									
6 IRC-Building Commitment (BC)	4.68	2.01	1-9	.24*	.17	-.07	.48**	.54**	-								
7 IRC-Managing Uncertainty (MU)	3.62	2.03	1-9	.28*	.09	-.24*	-.12	-.20	.13	-							
8 LV - time lived abroad	4.96	1.62	1-8 ²	-.02	-.01	.01	.18	.17	.17	-.12	-						
9 IE - years international education	3.21	1.00	1-7	.09	.05	-.05	.14	.11	.33**	-.01	.37**	-					
10 LA - host country language proficiency	2.75	1.56	1-6 ²	.05	.06	.02	-.01	-.04	.12	-.11	.13	.10	-				
11 CU - curiosity	3.85	0.66	1-5	.15	.17	.04	.36**	.20	.52**	.17	.07	.13	.13	-			
12 IC - hours intercultural coursework	4.22	1.56	1-6 ²	.08	.11	.05	.27*	.15	.07	-.09	-.09	.24*	-.03	-.02	-		
13 FA - familiarity with host culture	3.36	0.82	1-6	-.04	-.09	-.06	.11	.17	.25*	-.10	.19	-.02	.36**	.25*	-.02	-	
14 CA - care for cultural differences	3.90	0.75	1-5	.25*	.26*	.03	.01	.05	.20	.11	.19	.18	-.12	.22	.09	.17	-

Note. ¹ range is for IDI 'single score' calculation; range per scale is 1-5 (see also Appendix 2); ² dichotomized variables, correlations based on the original variables; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 7.

Study 4; Distribution of Gender, Age and Country of Origin over Intervention and Control Groups (N=123).

	Female	Male	Age 21 and under	Age 22 and up	Country of Origin
Intervention N=44	25	19	29	15	Germany (18) Netherlands (19) Other ¹ (7)
Control N=79	37	42	50	29	Germany (41) Netherlands (29) Other ² (9)

Note. ¹ Bulgaria, Latvia, Lesotho, Poland, Romania, United Kingdom, Vietnam; ² Aruba, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States

Table 8.

Study 4: IDI Test Scores, MPQ Test Scores, and 7 Context Question Variables: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (N=123)

Variables	M	SD	range	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 IDI t1	90.17	12.85	55-145 ²	-														
2 IDI t2	91.31	14.83	55-145 ²	.58**	-													
3 Δ IDI (IDI t2 minus IDI t1)	1.14	12.83	-	-.33**	.58**	-												
4 MPQ-Flexibility (FX) ¹	2.72	.53	1-5	.02	.09	.09	-											
5 MPQ-Social Initiative (SI) ¹	3.62	.53	1-5	.17	.16	.01	-.01	-										
6 MPQ-Cultural Empathy (CE) ¹	3.80	.45	1-5	.29**	.15	-.12	-.01	.44**	-									
7 MPQ-Emotional Stability (ES) ¹	3.34	.68	1-5	-.01	.02	.03	.34**	.19*	-.07	-								
8 MPQ-Open-mindedness (OP) ¹	3.86	.49	1-5	.04	.01	-.03	.06	.34**	.47**	.04								
9 LV - time lived abroad	4.21	2.09	1-8 ³	-.03	-.06	-.03	-.01	-.05	.13	-.19*	.13	-						
10 IE - years international education	3.15	1.24	1-7	-.17	-.09	.06	.07	-.02	-.04	.05	.19*	.17	-					
11 LA - host country language proficiency	2.41	1.40	1-6 ³	.05	.04	-.01	-.04	.13	.05	.04	.17	-.01	.12	-				
12 CU - curiosity	3.91	.76	1-5	.03	.14	.14	-.02	.37**	.43**	-.04	.38**	.18	.09	.09	-			
13 IC - hours intercultural coursework	4.37	1.50	1-6 ³	.15	.18	.06	-.04	-.01	-.12	-.06	.07	-.15	.09	-.04	-.07	-		
14 FA - familiarity with host culture	3.42	.94	1-6	-.14	-.15	-.03	.07	-.02	.02	.10	.04	.04	.29**	.36**	-.03	-.10	-	
15 CA - care for cultural differences	3.73	.81	1-5	.15	.28**	.18*	-.02	.19*	.28**	.07	.18*	-.03	-.07	.03	.20*	.18	-.07	-

Note. ¹ N=121; ² range is for IDI 'single score' calculation; range per scale is 1-5 (see also Appendix 2); ³ dichotomized variables, correlations based on the original variables; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Appendix 5 – Assignments, Empirical Study 4

Assignment 1: [Preparation](#) – week 0

Before you leave: Read about your SAB host country and make a brief political / economical / social profile. List some basic details / demographics / etc. Look up the current political system. How is the country doing economically – what are the key economic sectors / players? How is the country doing in terms of human rights and sustainability or environmental issues? Try to stay away from the clichés and the stereotypes, instead go by facts from renown sources
Product: min. 300 words / max. 500 words country factsheet.

Assignment 2: [On arrival \(A\)](#) – week 1 / week 2

Some people do not like to be referred to as a tourist – others do not mind so much. The word literally refers to making a 'round-trip': we leave and we come back, we make a journey. Start your SAB journey by simply moving about in town – like a tourist; visit the main attractions, go to the key spots / highlights. Meanwhile, try to find out WHY these places are the main attractions, what makes it so historically or culturally attractive to foreigners? Perhaps you can talk to a few other tourists and ask why they have come to see these places.

Product: min. 300 words / max. 500 words about highlights in town. Include at least 1 picture.

Assignment 3: [On arrival \(B\)](#) – week 3 / week 4

Eat a local dish at a local restaurant; let the waiter (or another client) explain what is special about the dish. Learn about the ingredients, or how the meal is being prepared. Have a similar discussion about local drinks, or deserts – if applicable. Compare the food and drinks to the food and drinks at home and find out why you would not (or very much would like to) have this at home.

Product: 300 words only describing your thoughts about the food and drinks + a picture (only if the shopkeeper will allow taking pictures!!)

Assignment 4: [The local buzz](#) – week 5 / week 6

Follow the local news and discover what is 'the talk of the town', or read online news / blogs and find out what news is dominating in your host environment. Find out the opinions of at least 3 local people about this news: what are their standpoints and how may they differ from your own perspective? Can you relate possible different perspectives to differences in cultural background?

Product: 500 words describing the news and the various standpoints / perspectives. Include a reference to the news (link, image, etc.)

Assignment 5: [The local event](#) – week 7 / week 8 (or any other week ...)

Find out about a local event, festivity, or celebration. Attend and participate (if culturally appropriate). Mind you, this is not necessarily a 'big' or 'national' event – also a relatively small or local tradition may serve the purpose. Discover the relevance of the event in the context of the local culture by talking to at least 3 local people about the event. If the event is taking place later, save this assignment for that moment (but make sure you will attend one event + report about it before having your second Skype conversation / ending your SAB)

Product: 300 words text explaining the relevance of the event in local cultural context and at least 1 picture of the event + at least 1 picture (e.g. selfie) of a local person you spoke to.

Skype conversation 1: [week 9 / week 10](#)

Plan a (Skype, Facetime) conversation with your SAB supervisor and discuss the 4 (or 5) products above. Make sure your SAB supervisor has had time to study your products prior to having the conversation. Be prepared to explain (more in detail) what you wrote, but also feel free to add new insights. The conversation will take approx. 45 minutes.

Assignment 6: [Connect \(A\)](#) – week 11 / week 12

(if not already done so yet) Sign up for a local group, club, or association. This can be cultural, sports, professional, etc. If you cannot officially join, ask for a guest membership or to simply be allowed to attend for the rest of your stay in the host country. Talk to at least 3 other 'members' about the role (contribution, importance, etc.) of the club or association in local cultural context. Make comparisons with clubs or associations at home and actively explore the possible differences and similarities. Product: min. 300 words / max. 500 words describing your experiences at the club or association including the information from the other members + add 1 picture, preferably of one of the members you spoke to.

Assignment 7: [Connect \(B\)](#) – week 13 / week 14

Make an appointment with a local person (can be a fellow student from the host country) and ask him or her to take you around town. Ask is you can be shown the places where tourists do not frequently go and that your host thinks are nevertheless worthwhile visiting. So not the main attractions, but the places that your host will identify as important places in town. Let your

host explain his or her choices; why does he or she want you to see it? (and if he or she says: "because its beautiful", then ask WHAT makes it beautiful and check if you can agree)

Product: make a photo gallery (1 page) of what you have been shown, you may add captions + include 1 picture of the one who showed you around.

Assignment 8: [Connect \(C\)](#) - week 15 / week 16

Make an appointment with a local businessperson or a professor in the area of your professional or educational interest.

Research their background, history, area of expertise/company. Develop a challenging set of questions and conduct a brief interview. (Don't forget to write a personal thank you letter or email afterwards!). Examples of questions are: How 'local' is their expertise - how specific is their knowledge to the environment they are in?; What should people typically do to acculturate to the local environment?; What should people do to develop a local network?; What should people do to understand the local culture?; What 5 recommendations would they have for doing business in the area?

Product: 500 words summarizing the answers you received to the various questions + at least 1 conclusion. Add an image of the person you spoke to (e.g. a selfie).

Assignment 9: [A kind advice](#) - week 17 / week 18

Write a brief letter to a second-year IBMS student preparing for SAB in 'your' host country (= your current SAB station). Explain to this student how you learned to look at this country and culture. Avoid writing do's and don't's, rather write HOW you think one best explores this country + give the arguments why you think so.

Product: the letter, 300 words only. Feel free to add an image.

Assignment 10: [Filling your knapsack](#) - week 19 / week 20

Write a brief letter to your SAB supervisor: what are you going to take from this SAB into your professional future? What attitude or skills did you develop? How relevant has this episode been for your professional career? Include in your letter at least 2 experiences during SAB and explain these experiences in terms of cultural learning: what do these experiences tell you, and why do you think they are culturally relevant experiences? What is the advice you are giving yourself for your final year of study?

Product: the letter, min. 300 words / max. 500 words. Feel free to add an image

Skype conversation 2 – week 19 / week 20

Plan a second (Skype, Facetime) conversation with your SAB supervisor and discuss the 5 (or 6) products above. Make sure your SAB supervisor has had time to study your products prior to having the conversation. Be prepared to explain (more in detail) what you wrote, but also feel free to add new insights.

In addition, in study 4, prior to the first skype conversation, the student was asked to review his or her personal MPQ-SF profile based on the MPQ-SF test results. The student was informed that:

After a few general questions, your first skype conversation will consist of five 'brief discussions' (of 5 – 10 min.) each concerning one learning objective, followed by the question: "What experience or assignment supported this learning objective best; please explain how?" The 5 learning objectives relate to the five personality traits of the MPQ-SF test that you filled out prior to leaving for Study Abroad, namely:

- Take novel situations as a positive challenge and adapt to these situations accordingly (coded FX)
- Actively approach social situations and demonstrate initiative in these interactions (coded SI)
- Empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of culturally diverse others (coded CE)
- Stay calm under novel and stressful conditions (coded ES)
- Have an open and unprejudiced attitude toward cultural differences (coded OP)

For your personal MPQ test score: see below

Appendix 6 – Items Covered by MPQ-SF, at Time 1 and Time 2

MPQ-SF at Time 1 and Time 2; Constructs & Items (..), Description, Label, and Measure / Range

Constructs & Items (#)	Description	Label	Measure / Range
Flexibility (8)	People's ability to adjust behaviour to new and unknown situations	MPQ – Flexibility	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
Social Initiative (8)	People's tendency to approach social situations actively and to take initiative	MPQ – Social Initiative	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
Cultural Empathy (8)	People's capacity to identify with the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of individuals from different cultural backgrounds	MPQ – Cultural Empathy	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
Emotional Stability (8)	People's tendency to remain calm in stressful situations	MPQ – Emotional Stability	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable
Open-mindedness (8)	People's capacity to be open and unprejudiced when encountering people outside of their own cultural group and who may have different values and norms	MPQ – Open-mindedness	Likert; 1-5 with 1 = totally not applicable and 5 = completely applicable

Dutch Summary

In dit proefschrift wordt de ontwikkeling van interculturele vaardigheid van studenten gedurende een periode van studie in het buitenland onderzocht. De belangrijkste aanname is dat studenten die worden gefaciliteerd in (inter-) cultureel leren gedurende hun studie in het buitenland een grotere verandering in interculturele vaardigheid laten zien dan studenten die niet worden gefaciliteerd.

Studie in het buitenland wordt in hoofdstuk 1 besproken als een vorm van educatieve mobiliteit voor studiepunten aan de eigen universiteit (credit mobility), die is gericht op het bereiken van doelen gerelateerd aan internationalisering van hoger onderwijs, zoals het ontwikkelen van een internationaal gedachtengoed (international mindset) (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Engel, Sandstrom, Van der Aa, & Glass, 2015). Een veelgebruikte en relatief neutrale definitie van internationalisering van hoger onderwijs is *"het proces van integratie van een internationale, interculturele of mondiale dimensie in het doel, de functie en aanbod van tertiair onderwijs"* (Knight, 2004, p. 11; vertaling MvdP). Op basis van onderzoek onder vakgenoten, en gelijktijdige bestudering van de uitkomsten van onderzoek gedaan door de *International Association of Universities* (IAU; 2014), en de *European Association for International Education* (EAIE; 2015) concluderen De Wit, Hunter, Howard en Egron-Polak (2015) dat het proces van internationalisering van hoger onderwijs meer doelgericht dient te zijn. Internationalisering van hoger onderwijs moet leiden tot het verbeteren van de kwaliteit van het onderwijs, voor alle studenten en docenten, en voor het leveren van een betekenisvolle bijdrage aan de maatschappij. Door de voorgestelde aanvulling op de definitie van Knight (2004) wordt deze meer inclusief (De Wit & Hunter, 2015), meer een middel dan een doel op zich (De Wit & Leask, 2015) en minder neutraal want meer in overeenstemming met de doelen van bijvoorbeeld de EU, zoals het bevorderen van verantwoordelijkheid over grenzen heen (Huisman, Adelman, Hsieh, Shans & Wilkins, 2012).

Factoren die een rol spelen bij het behalen van die doelen zijn de mate van beheersing van een vreemde taal, veelal Engels (Carroll, 2015), de mate waarin culturele verschillen worden waargenomen en gewaardeerd (Bennett, 2013) en de mate van ondersteuning van de student door bekwame docenten, voorafgaand aan, gedurende en na een studie in het buitenland (Vande Berg, Paige & Lou, 2012; Killick, 2015). Overigens wordt mobiliteit slechts door een relatief klein deel van alle studenten benut; een geschat aantal van 7,2 miljoen in 2025 wereldwijd (Hudzik, 2016), ruim onder de 10% van het totaalaantal studenten in hoger onderwijs (Choudaha & De Wit; 2014; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Teekens, 2016). Van deze mobiliteit is weer slechts een beperkt deel educatieve mobiliteit, met name in Europa via Erasmus+ en in de USA via 'studie buitenland' (study abroad). Voor verreweg de meeste studenten is derhalve

'internationalisering thuis' (internationalization at home; Carroll, 2015; Jones, 2013) mogelijk effectiever voor het realiseren van gewenste internationale leeruitkomsten. Een belangrijk instrument daartoe is internationalisering van het curriculum (Brewer & Leask, 2012). Overeenkomstig de voorgestelde bijgestelde definitie van internationalisering van hoger onderwijs, wordt bij internationalisering van het curriculum een *"internationale, interculturele of mondiale dimensie opgenomen in de inhoud van het curriculum, alsook in de leeruitkomsten, in de toetsing daarvan, in het lesgeven, en in de ondersteuning van een programma of studie"* (Leask, 2015, p. 9; vertaling MvdP). Het ontwikkelen van interculturele vaardigheid - de invalshoek van dit proefschrift - kan aldus heel goed (tevens) een doel zijn van een studieprogramma 'thuis'; de aandacht in dit proefschrift is evenwel gericht op de (vermeende) effecten van een (cultureel) vreemde omgeving op het niveau van interculturele vaardigheid, in dit geval, na een studie in het buitenland (credit mobility).

In hoofdstuk 2 worden verschillende gangbare modellen van interculturele vaardigheid en interculturele vaardigheidsontwikkeling besproken (bijv. Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Zo zijn er modellen die bestaan uit verschillende componenten die tezamen (intercultureel) competente interactie ondersteunen (compositional models; bijv. Deardorff, 2006). Andere modellen leggen meer de nadruk op het ontstaan van wederzijds begrip (co-orientation models; bijv. Byram, 1997), op aanpassing (adaptational models; bijv. Kim, 1988), of op de noodzakelijke condities voor effectief en gepast gedrag (causal path models; bijv. Deardorff, 2009). Ik concludeer dat bovenstaande modellen (eveneens) kunnen worden gecategoriseerd als ontwikkelingsgericht; vrijwel alle modellen gaan uit van zowel een proces en een uitkomst waarbij de uitkomst telkens wijzigt door het proces. Dit sluit aan bij een laatste categorie modellen, namelijk die expliciet zijn ontworpen als ontwikkelingsgericht (developmental models; bijv. Bennett, 1993). In ontwikkelingsgerichte modellen ligt de nadruk op de voortdurende ontwikkeling van de *interpretatie en betekenis* van (culturele) ervaringen, en minder op de ervaring als zodanig. Dit in wezen constructieve concept (constructivist theory; Kelly, 1963; Berger & Luckmann, 1966) heb ik gebruikt voor het ontwerp van het empirische deel van dit proefschrift (hoofdstuk 4).

Kritiek op bovenstaande modellen betreft onder andere een te geringe aandacht voor de invloed van (verschillen in) macht, zoals postkoloniale verhoudingen en een overwegend Westers perspectief in onderzoek naar interculturele vaardigheid (Deardorff, 2009b; Hoffman & Verdooren, 2018), van een (te) overheersende notie van 'voortuitgang' in de meeste modellen (Vande Berg, Paige & Lou, 2012), terwijl interculturele vaardigheid ook 'achteruit' kan gaan (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1962; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001), alsook van (neuro-) biologische beperkingen, zoals de werking van het menselijk brein (Kahneman, 2011; Nguyen-Phuong-Mai, 2017). Op basis van de bespreking van en de

kritiek op de verschillende modellen wordt in dit proefschrift interculturele vaardigheid gedefinieerd als een *voortdurend proces van ontwikkeling van kennis, houding en gedrag, met als uitkomst het vermogen om effectief en gepast te communiceren en te handelen in verschillende interculturele interacties en situaties* (bijv. Deardorff, 2006). Vervolgens worden condities voor interculturele vaardigheidsontwikkeling nader onderzocht. Op basis van de literatuur concludeer ik dat studenten moeten worden ondersteund in hun contact (leggen) met mensen die 'anders zijn'. Door contact en nadenken over de hierbij opgedane ervaringen kunnen diverse perspectieven worden bijeengebracht en vergeleken (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Voorts, contact is nodig, maar daarmee nog niet voldoende om tot meer interculturele vaardigheid te komen (bijv. Yershova, DeJaeghere & Mestenhauser, 2000); het contact moet als betekenisvol worden ervaren, of actief als wel of niet (cultureel) betekenisvol worden geduid (bijv. Mezirow, 2000).

Tenslotte wordt in hoofdstuk 2 besproken hoe educatieve mobiliteit voor studiepunten zich verhoudt tot bovenstaande condities, namelijk hoofdzakelijk als een unieke gelegenheid voor studenten om bestaande en nieuwe inzichten te overwegen als input voor (aan-) gepast gedrag (Killick, 2015), of voor het actief (leren) omzetten van (interculturele) sensitiviteit in vaardigheid (Bennett; 2012). Moderne digitale middelen kunnen dat proces hinderen, door 'afwezig aanwezig gedrag' (Schnitzler, 2017), maar evenzogoed faciliteren, door studenten te vragen digitaal bewijs aan te leveren van relevante ontmoetingen en overdenkingen, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van een blog of vlog (Purdue University, 2019).

Uitgaan van interculturele vaardigheid als iets wat kan worden ontwikkeld vooronderstelt dat interculturele vaardigheid kan worden gemeten. In hoofdstuk 3 worden een veelgebruikt theoretisch model, het *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (ontwikkelingsmodel van interculturele sensitiviteit) (DMIS, Hammer & Bennett, 1998; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003) en een instrument dat is gebaseerd op dit model, de *Intercultural Development Inventory* (intercultureel ontwikkelingsprofiel) (IDI, Hammer, 2011; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova & DeJaeghere, 2003) besproken. Diverse kritieken op het IDI-instrument (bijv. Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016) worden besproken. Bij de berekening van de IDI-score trekken twee aspecten in het bijzonder de aandacht: een mogelijke 'regressie naar het gemiddelde' (Pocock, Assmann, Enos, & Kasten, 2002), en de mogelijkheid dat een afnemende score over tijd (een score op moment 2 die lager is dan een score op moment 1) kan samengaan met 'vooruitgang' in interculturele sensitiviteit (Van der Poel, 2016b). Dit roept de vraag op of het instrument (de IDI) *veranderingen* in interculturele sensitiviteit, zoals getheoretiseerd in het onderliggende model (de DMIS), of afdoende valide wijze in kaart brengt. Ik concludeer evenwel dat, ondanks de tekortkomingen, het instrument op valide

en betrouwbare wijze iemands perceptie van culturele verschillen op enig moment meet (Hammer, 2011), en dat het instrument met regelmaat wordt gebruikt voor quasi-experimenteel onderzoek waarbij het verschil in scores tussen twee meetmomenten wordt gezien als indicatief voor verandering (bijv. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2012; Weber Bosley, 2015).

Voorts worden in hoofdstuk 3 twee instrumenten voor het meten van eigenschappen die kunnen duiden op ontvankelijkheid voor het ontwikkelen van interculturele vaardigheid besproken, te weten de *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* (vragenlijst multiculturele persoonlijkheid) (MPQ; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001), de verkorte versie daarvan, de *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire - short form* (MPQ-SF; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013), en de *Intercultural Readiness Check* (toets interculturele gereedheid) (IRC; Van der Zee & Brinkmann, 2004). Op basis van bespreking en vergelijking van de twee instrumenten concludeer ik dat beide valide zijn voor het meten van relevante persoonlijkheidskenmerken voorafgaand aan, bijvoorbeeld, een studie in het buitenland. Keuze voor de MPQ-SF kan bovendien worden gemotiveerd vanuit de mogelijkheid om met de MPQ-SF een verandering in drie zogenoemde trainbare (trainable) sociaal-perceptuele eigenschappen te meten, bijvoorbeeld voor en na een studie in het buitenland.

Hoofdstuk 4 betreft het empirische deel van dit proefschrift. In vier opeenvolgende studies, en één meta-analyse, worden de verschillende niveaus van interculturele vaardigheid voor- en na studie in het buitenland tussen studenten in een interventiegroep en een controlegroep vergeleken. Op basis van discussie van relevante literatuur bestaat de interventie hoofdzakelijk uit gestimuleerde omgang met (cultureel) andere mensen en reflectie op de (culturele) betekenis van die ontmoetingen. Een positief effect van een studie in het buitenland, en meer specifiek van een interventie gericht op cultureel leren gedurende een studie in het buitenland, op het niveau van interculturele vaardigheid na studie in het buitenland wordt in dit proefschrift niet gevonden. Veranderingen op de IDI-scores tussen begin en eind van de studie in het buitenland zijn afwezig of klein, en hetzelfde geldt voor (in studie 4) de aldus de auteurs trainbare MPQ-dimensies (Hofhuis, Van der Zee & Otten, 2012; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2013) voor en na afloop van de studie in het buitenland. Deze bevinding is anders dan op basis van de literatuur werd verwacht (bijv. Vande Berg et al., 2012) en roept vragen op ten aanzien van mogelijke beperkingen van dit onderzoek, zoals de rekrutering van deelnemers onder studenten die deelnemen aan een *internationaal* programma, maar ook ten aanzien van het gebruikte meetinstrument, de IDI (bijv. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016).

Van de in totaal vier studies, geeft de vierde empirische studie een mogelijke indicatie dat een intensivering van interventie tot significant hogere scores kan leiden voor de interventiegroep t.o.v. de controlegroep. Dit effect wordt in de meta-analyse echter

niet bevestigd. Ook deze bevinding is niet in lijn met eerder onderzoek (bijv. Weber Bosley, 2015) en roept vragen op omtrent de specifieke karakteristieken van (effectieve) interventie (zie ook Hammer, 2012). Nader onderzoek met variaties in het ontwerp van interventie als variabele kan hierover mogelijk meer duidelijkheid genereren. Het ontwerp zoals gebruikt in dit proefschrift (het stimuleren van ontmoetingen en reflecties daarop) lijkt veelbelovend, maar vooralsnog mogelijk niet afdoende.

Overige bevindingen betreffen de overwegend lage scores op interculturele vaardigheid voor alle groepen (controle en interventie) en overwegend hogere scores na een studie in het buitenland voor studenten die vooraf relatief laag scoorden. Dit zijn bevindingen in lijn met voorgaande studies (bijv. Gregersen-Hermans, 2016) en roept de vraag op of de ontwikkeling van interculturele vaardigheid wel lineair verloopt, zoals voorondersteld in het onderliggende model (de DMIS) van het gebruikte meetinstrument (de IDI), of dat er sprake kan zijn van een zeker (ongewenst) effect van het meetinstrument zelf, zoals 'regressie naar het gemiddelde' (Pocock et al., 2002).

Voorts, in alle vier studies is het gemiddelde niveau van interculturele vaardigheid zoals gemeten door de IDI voorafgaand aan, maar opmerkelijker nog, ook na de studie in het buitenland, relatief ver onder het niveau van een overwegend multicultureel (ethno-relative) wereldbeeld zoals gedefinieerd in het onderliggende model (de DMIS; Bennett, 1993; Hammer, 2011). Dit laat zien dat bij de respondenten geen sprake is van een sterk ontwikkelde interculturele vaardigheid. Respondenten interpreteren hun ervaringen overwegend vanuit een mono-cultureel (ethnocentric) wereldbeeld. Deze bevinding komt overeen met bevindingen in ander onderzoek dat gebruik maakt van de IDI als instrument voor het meten van interculturele vaardigheid (bijv. Weber Bosley, 2015; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Vande Berg et al., 2012); een overwegend multicultureel wereldbeeld ligt niet voor de hand, ook niet na een periode in het buitenland.

Gebruikmakend van de IRC en de MPQ-SF is er geen systematische relatie aangetoond tussen de hiermee gemeten persoonlijke eigenschappen en mate van verandering van interculturele vaardigheid gedurende studie in het buitenland. De theoretische assumptie dat interculturele gereedheid (intercultural readiness, zoals gemeten met de IRC) of multiculturele persoonlijkheid (multicultural personality, zoals gemeten met de MPQ) cultureel leren faciliteert, wordt in deze studie, op basis van metingen met de IDI, niet bevestigd. Hetzelfde geldt voor eerdere ervaringen met en openstaan voor culturele verschillen; significante relaties met verandering van interculturele vaardigheid gedurende studie in het buitenland zijn niet aangetoond. De voorlopige verklaring is dat persoonlijke eigenschappen relatief stabiel zijn en dat een periode van 5 tot 6 maanden in een andere culturele omgeving te kort is voor het veranderen van persoonlijke eigenschappen. Deze bevinding roept echter ook de vraag op of internationaal onderwijs, taaltraining en intercultureel lesmateriaal wel voldoende

effectief zijn. Onderzoekers zoals Bennett (1993) en Passarelli en Kolb, (2012) gaven reeds aan dat in educatie en training onderwijzers en trainers mogelijk te vaak spreken over de culturele 'do's and don'ts', als een vorm van verwachting-management. Daardoor, en hoogstwaarschijnlijk zonder enige intentie daartoe, worden stereotype beelden over 'de ander' bestendigd (Osland & Bird, 2000). Onderwijzers en trainers zijn mogelijk te weinig bezig met het faciliteren van een vaardigheid om wereldbeelden te (her-) overwegen (Perry, 1979, 1984) en om (nieuwe) betekenis te verlenen aan ervaringen die zich in eerste instantie als 'ontregelend' aandienen (disorienting dilemmas; Mezirow, 1991).

Tenslotte, in hoofdstuk 4 wordt niet aangetoond dat studenten met begeleiders die zijn getraind in interculturele vaardigheid hoger scoren op interculturele vaardigheid na een studie in het buitenland dan studenten met niet-getrainde begeleiders. Een bevinding die niet overeenkomt met bevindingen in eerder onderzoek (bijv. Hammer, 2012) en die er op kan duiden dat facilitering van cultureel leren mogelijk geen (cultuur-) specifieke kennis vereist, maar mogelijk vooral generieke mentor vaardigheden (zoals actief luisteren). Het roept echter ook vragen op omtrent de gewenste kwaliteit en karakteristieken van de betreffende training (Van der Poel, 2014, 2016a).

In het laatste hoofdstuk 5 worden de theorieën en de methodes zoals gebruikt in dit proefschrift besproken. De bevindingen zoals gepresenteerd in dit proefschrift ondersteunen de theorie (Morais & Ogden, 2011; Vande Berg et al., 2012; Yershova et al., 2000) dat een verblijf in het buitenland, in dit geval, een studie in het buitenland, niet vanzelfsprekend samengaat met een relatief hoog niveau van interculturele vaardigheid na de studie in het buitenland. Dit is mogelijk een belangrijke bevestiging in de context van internationalisering van hoger onderwijs: voor het realiseren van internationale leeruitkomsten, zoals de ontwikkeling van interculturele vaardigheid, is een studie in het buitenland niet automatisch afdoende. De bevindingen geven tevens eerste aanwijzingen (studie 4) dat specifieke inspanning gericht op cultureel leren (interventie), ook gedurende een studie in het buitenland, mogelijk kan leiden tot hogere niveaus van interculturele vaardigheid (Carroll, 2015; Hudzik, 2016; Jones, 2013; Killick, 2015; Leask, 2015); de resultaten uit de laatste empirische studie in dit proefschrift zijn in deze niet sluitend, maar wel richtinggevend. Opmerkelijk is hierbij dat studenten, met name in studie 4, aangeven dat de verschillende (interventie-) opdrachten een serieuze inspanning vergden. Studenten vonden het uitdagend om contact te leggen met een 'vreemde' en om de bevindingen uit dat contact goed te verwoorden naar derden, zoals bijvoorbeeld naar hun mentor. Studenten gaven voorts aan dat de verplichting om alle opdrachten uit te voeren voor het behalen van 1 studiepunt hielp om de interventie niet voortijdig te beëindigen. In de veronderstelling dat studie 4's bevindingen kunnen worden herhaald, dan kan een mogelijke praktische gevolgtrekking zijn dat voor een effectieve interventie in cultureel

leren er aan (vergelijkbare) condities voor serieuze inspanning moet zijn voldaan, zoals bijvoorbeeld het behalen van studiepunten.

Voor wat betreft het meten van interculturele vaardigheid concludeer ik op basis van de literatuur en het eigen empirische werk dat het gebruikte meetinstrument, de IDI, mogelijk een onvoldoende robuust instrument is voor het meten van positieve of negatieve *ontwikkeling* van interculturele vaardigheid. De berekening van de IDI-score, waarbij gebruik wordt gemaakt van gestandaardiseerde data, is onvoldoende transparant en conceptueel discutabel. Zo is er bijvoorbeeld geen overtuigende reden om aan te nemen dat interculturele vaardigheid normaal verdeeld is onder een populatie (Castiglioni, 2013). Bovendien, een voor de respondent mogelijk belangrijke positieve stap in interculturele ontwikkeling, zoals het inzien van initiële zelfoverschatting van interculturele vaardigheid, blijkt niet vanzelfsprekend uit een lagere score op de IDI op moment 2 in vergelijking met moment 1. Voor een meer omvattend begrip van een iemands interculturele vaardigheid is het mogelijk raadzaam om naast een kwantitatieve score, zoals op de IDI, ook kwalitatieve data te verzamelen, zoals bijvoorbeeld de beoordeling van de interculturele vaardigheid van studenten door relevante anderen (Fantini, 2009; Gregersen-Hermans, 2016; Hietbrink, 2017).

Nader onderzoek is nodig voor valorisatie van leeruitkomsten gelieerd aan internationalisering van hoger onderwijs, zoals de ontwikkeling van interculturele vaardigheid, voor een vermeende betere toegang tot de (mondiale) arbeidsmarkt (European Commission, 2014) en voor wereldburgerschap (global citizenship) (Lilley, 2014). Dergelijk onderzoek zou bijvoorbeeld de vraag kunnen omvatten hoe niveaus van interculturele vaardigheid zich verhouden tot besluitvorming en (professioneel) gedrag dat kan worden gezien als ondersteunend aan duurzame oplossingen voor mondiale vraagstukken (global issues; SDG, 2019). Een belangrijke uitdaging hierbij is het ontwerpen van meetinstrumenten voor het toetsen van daadwerkelijk gedrag wat veelal uitsluitend vanuit *bepaald* cultureel perspectief begrepen kan worden. Toekomstig onderzoek kijkt derhalve mogelijk niet uitsluitend naar gedrag, maar bovenal naar de achterliggende (culturele) motivatie voor de keuze voor bepaald gedrag.

Los van de professionele context ben ik van mening dat de internationalisering van het dagelijks leven menselijke interacties in toenemende mate internationaal, en daarmee intercultureel en complex maakt (Appiah, 2006; Sen 2006). Interculturele vaardigheid is, in mijn opinie, een vaardigheid die in toenemende mate nodig is om duurzame relaties aan te gaan met mensen die 'anders zijn', ongeacht onze locaties. Daarmee is interculturele vaardigheidsontwikkeling mogelijk een van de belangrijkste uitkomsten van internationalisering van (hoger) onderwijs; ze helpt mensen om zichzelf te zien als verantwoordelijk mede-wereldburger (knowledge diplomacy; Knight, 2019); het verschil tussen buitenland en thuis vervaagt (De Wit & Leask, 2019).

Afsluitend, (educatieve) mobiliteit is liefst geen doel op zich, maar vooral een middel voor – onder andere – het ervaren en onderzoeken van culturele verschillen en het actief verlenen van betekenis aan deze verschillen. Een studie in het buitenland voor studiepunten, als een vorm van mobiliteit, en als integraal onderdeel van internationalisering van hoger onderwijs, vereist, net als alle overige onderdelen van het curriculum, een heldere formulering van de gewenste (internationale) leeruitkomsten, van de formatieve activiteiten en verwachtingen, en van de toetsingscriteria, voorafgaand aan, gedurende en na een studie in het buitenland (Carroll, 2015; Hudzik, 2014; Killick, 2015). Aandacht moet daarbij worden geschonken aan diegenen die bovenstaande in praktijk brengen: de docenten en onderwijsontwikkelaars. Veel docenten zien zichzelf mogelijk als voldoende bewust van culturele verschillen om pas in de internationale klas te ontdekken dat dit geen garantie is voor een effectief (educatief) gebruik daarvan (Carroll, 2015; Killick, 2015; Lilley, 2014; Prud'home van Reine & Blom, 2019). Net zoals voor studenten geldt ook voor docenten dat buitenlandervaring of een 'andere' culturele achtergrond niet vanzelf gelijkstaat aan een zekere mate van interculturele vaardigheid. Meer onderzoek is nodig om overtuigend aan te tonen hoe inclusieve pedagogiek en didactiek uitgevoerd door vaardige docenten samenhangt met de gerealiseerde internationale of interculturele leeruitkomsten van studenten. Dit proefschrift geeft daartoe hopelijk een goede aanzet.

About the author

Marcel H. van der Poel (1962) is a senior lecturer, researcher and professional trainer in intercultural relations. He is involved in the internationalisation of higher education and intercultural competence development at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen. Marcel's ongoing work includes NRO-Comenius funded research on the international classroom at three educational institutions. He is the co-initiator and a core facilitator of the award-winning Intercultural Competence Learning Lab (since 2011); he published a document about his experiences with the Lab in 2016. Marcel is not only a freelance trainer at other institutes of higher education but also occasionally at companies and NGO's.

Marcel worked for over 20 years in managerial positions, ten years of which were in East-Africa, predominantly in healthcare related projects. During his years abroad, he also taught at the Uganda Martyrs University and was a member of the Uganda National Drug Authority. A sociologist by training (RUG, 1988), he earned another Master degree in Intercultural Relations (MAIR, Stockton, USA) in 2013. During the past six years Marcel has worked on his dissertation research on 'intercultural competence development during study abroad'.

Marcel is married to Lotty Sierink; together they have three children, Job, Mark and Ileen, whom all appear to have inherited a keen interest in foreign affairs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the input and support from various people in accomplishing my research and writing this thesis. Without the contribution and encouragement from many people around me this book would not be lying in front of you now.

First of all, Sabine, thank you very much for having been my supervisor. I am thankful for your personal dedication to completing this project together with me. I am aware that you put more effort into it than you had anticipated. Please rest assured that I admire your patience, your meticulous screening of all my draft texts, and your ever frank and professional feedback.

I thank Hans, my co-supervisor, for helping me with understanding the rich field of internationalization of higher education. Thank you for facilitating access to so many knowledgeable and kind people active in this field. Particularly at difficult times during the project, your feedback has been essential for reassuring me that one day it will be completed.

The team in 'Fryslan', Robert, and fellow PhD students; thank you for welcoming me into the research group and for sharing your ideas about (measuring) intercultural competence. Your contributions and critical comments were candid and rigorous; the quality of this book also improved due to your input.

My own IC team at Hanze UAS deserves recognition. Peter, Hanneke, Gemma, Reina, Teodora, Louisa and Paul, you have all been wonderful throughout the years. You always allowed me to bounce off new ideas, or to air my frustrations. Your honest accounts of your IC experiences with both students and staff were valuable moments of inspiration for looking into issues from yet another angle. You are a fine lot to work with!

All colleagues and friends whom I was able to consult when I needed technical advice, expert input, a critical view, or simply some encouragement to continue: thank you all. Colleagues participating in my research in the capacity of a study abroad supervisor, taking notes during the multiple Skype conversations with students residing abroad: thank you for your valuable input and evaluations.

All students who participated in the research; thank you for being frank about your experiences abroad and being candid about your excitement, fears and doubts when sojourning in a foreign environment.

Gemma, thank you so much for going through my text during one of the most stressful moments in our academic schedule. Any linguistic flaws still to be found in this document may be consequence of not listening to you carefully enough.

Nico, in ample 2-week time limit, you designed the most creative cover image I could have wished for. Thank you for your colourful, witty and mind-provoking illustration, I feel it gives the book the character it deserves.

A final word of thanks, naturally, to my family. All of you, Lotty, Job, Mark and Ileen, you have been supportive and understanding throughout. I am so thankful that we kept on celebrating life, together, as the most important thing to do. Let no dissertation ever stop us from doing so.