

Blogging about Acculturation:
Analyzing Acculturation Strategies in Sojourner Blogs in Western
Europe and East Asia

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Abstract

This Master's thesis offers insight into the world of acculturation strategies of sojourner bloggers from the United States living in capital cities in both Western Europe and East Asia. Blogs have become a popular online resource for people residing abroad. These blogs function as a source of information as well as a site of community building within the expat and sojourner communities. However, these blogs have not been researched in the context of acculturation. The majority of previous research regarding acculturation has been done using surveys, but as blogs are becoming important to these communities it is necessary to look at how these blogs portray acculturation strategies. Hence, this thesis examines how these acculturation strategies are portrayed in these sojourner blogs with particular attention paid to the differences between those sojourners living in Western Europe and East Asia.

In order to examine this a qualitative content analysis was conducted. A brief quantitative content analysis was also performed to assess if there was a statistically significant difference in the portrayals by region. The study showed a variety of different ways in which acculturation was portrayed, with the most common being descriptions of food, daily life, and language. This analysis also revealed some categories for understanding acculturation that had not been found using survey research such as host culture awareness, entertainment, and advice. The largest differences between the regions were in general less reporting of interaction with the host culture in East Asia. Additionally, those sojourners from the United States living in East Asia expressed feeling othered by their host culture, which was not reported by those residing in Western Europe. The quantitative analysis showed statistically significant differences in contact and participation between those bloggers located in Western Europe and East Asia but no difference in cultural maintenance. The results of this study show promise in further exploring blogs in the field of acculturation and cross-cultural studies.

KEYWORDS: Acculturation Strategies, Cultural distance, Sojourner Blogs, Americans Abroad, Blogging

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years more and more Americans are considering taking the plunge and moving to another country. Especially with the changing political tides in the United States. This trend is not limited to only Americans, as our world is becoming more connected in business ventures in the age of globalization. People are leaving their home countries to experience new cultures and life in a new place. Regardless of their personality, these people are faced with challenges and changes they do not experience in their home country. The people that move to another country are expatriates (expats) and this process of psychological and cultural modification when a person moves to a foreign place with a different culture is called acculturation.

Those expatriates that make these moves for business, academic, or personal reasons on a non-permanent basis are labeled as sojourners (Bochner, 2006). Acculturation research into North American sojourners abroad began in the 1950's predominately in management literature focusing on American managers being sent overseas to head offices internationally (Tung, 1998). Other research into the acculturation of sojourners has found that there are a variety of factors that influence their acculturation- one key factor is their environment, which includes both the cultural distance and the pressure to conform to that culture (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000).

Understanding the process of how people fit into another culture is becoming increasingly important with more people moving around the globe. Individuals who live in a new culture face challenges that they have not met before. How they choose to fit into the new culture that they live in- their acculturation strategies- have direct consequences on their psychological well being and their success at either work or school. This phenomenon makes understanding acculturation strategies of different groups increasingly important to ensure that people who are moving abroad can be successful in their move. Additionally, looking at the acculturation strategies of the North Americans abroad at this point in time is especially interesting when combined with ideas of globalization, which have been more thoroughly researched far after the beginning of acculturation literature (Berry, 2008). With many globalization scholars citing the proliferation of American culture worldwide (Crane, 2002) it is interesting to see if this spread of American culture will affect how

Americans acculturate since there are traces of American culture around the globe. It is particularly compelling to consider this globalization of American culture when looking at different regions of the world. Cultural distance has been cited as a critical issue in how people can acculturate, and previous survey research of various groups abroad found that those acculturating in a more culturally distant place have more difficulties and were more likely to separate themselves from their host culture (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000). Has globalization of American culture lessened the effects cultural distance for sojourners, particularly when looking at those sojourners in a region that are more culturally similar- Western Europe and more culturally distant- East Asia?

The majority of research focused on sojourners acculturating has been done using surveys, but recently a new avenue of research is starting to emerge. Nardon and Aten's (2016) look into the blogs of expats living in Canada found that blogs offered expats a source of online support, as well as help to create communities amongst those that are living abroad. If these blogs function as a place for expats to create communities, then it is important to research these spaces in the context of acculturation. Additional research has found that international students use online forums including blogs to find more information about their destination and also make a connection to other international students. (Mikal, 2011) These sites are important to the expat & sojourner communities, but they have not been explored deeply regarding acculturation strategies in academia. Researching intercultural communication theory including acculturation is just starting. Contemporary studies into the blogs of an American in Zimbabwe found that sojourner's blogs display a wealth of researchable regarding intercultural communication including acculturation (Malleus & Slattery, 2014). Thus far almost all of acculturation research has relied on survey data as a tool to look at acculturation strategies. As it has been discovered in more recent studies that blogging is an important part of the lives of people living abroad it is important to look at these blogs more carefully. Blogs have been a great source of data for researchers, specifically qualitative research and they provide researchers with a first hand account of peoples experiences written in their own words. Additionally, writers of blogs can stay anonymous and still share their feeling with the rest of the world. Because of this, I am choosing to analyze blogs, because they can offer greater insight into people's authentic experiences because the stories are told in their terms as opposed to

Likert Scale questions in a survey. In summation, new research into sojourner blogs and the popularity and use of them in the sojourner community make research into these blogs as a site of acculturation important.

Following all the previous studies and ideas mentioned above, I will ask the following as my research question and sub-question.

Main - question:

How do sojourner bloggers from the United States living in Western Europe and East Asia portray their acculturation strategies through their blog?

Sub-question:

How are these portrayals of acculturation strategies different between those sojourner bloggers from the United States living in Western Europe and East Asia?

To answer this research question and sub-question I will use qualitative content analysis to get a better idea of how acculturation strategies are being discussed in these blogs. The majority of this thesis will rely on qualitative content analysis to answer both the main research question as well as the sub question. However, a quantitative analysis using a researcher created survey will be used to measure the two dimensions of acculturation present within the blog posts. This self-created survey data will then be analyzed to see if there is a statistically significant difference in the acculturation strategies between sojourners from the United States living in Western Europe and East Asia.

Following this chapter, a theoretical framework and background will be given to explain better what a sojourner is and what they mean in the expatriate framework. Then an in-depth explanation of what acculturation is and current studies into acculturation of sojourners have shown, with particular attention paid to cultural differences in regards to acculturation. Finally, the last section of Chapter 2 will provide background on the phenomena of blogging and what motivates bloggers to share their experiences online. Also, any related research in the international field related to acculturation and blogging will be discussed. Chapter 3 will present the methodology used to answer the research question and sub-question above. It will also provide a detailed description of the process

of selecting the blog posts chosen for the final sample. Chapter 4 will show the results of the analysis described in the previous chapter and work to answer the research questions. The last chapter will include both a discussion of the results including a summary of the findings and a reflection on what those conclusions mean outside of the context of this thesis. This section will also include the conclusion with discussion the limitation of this research as well as ideas of future research following the results of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Background

2.1 Sojourners Within the Expatriate Frame Work

In order to answer the research questions it is important to define what a sojourner is and how they are currently classified in the literature to better understand their situation. To look at the sojourner population it is important to first look at the expatriate (expat) community as sojourners fit inside the expatriate framework, as they are a particular type of expatriate (Furnham, 1988). The most basic definition of an expatriate is “a person who lives outside their native country”(Oxford Dictionary). In past academic research, the term expatriate has been used in a variety of confusing ways being used to explain a variety of different international experiences ranging from short study periods of international students to refugees fleeing their native country. Most recent research classifies an expat as someone who has moved to another country for his or her work. The time in which they remain in their new country can vary as well as the reasons why they are there (Hippler, 2014).

Another important distinction in recent literature expatriates is the difference between self-initiated expatriates and work -initiated expats (Hippler, 2014). A self-initiated expat is someone who chooses to leave their country to either search for a job abroad or someone who looks for a position that would station them abroad (Hippler, 2014). A work-initiated expat does not have a choice in the matter if they want to keep their job. A job requires them to move for a work assignment – such as military or other multi – national companies (Hippler, 2014). Research into these two different groups has found that those expats that self-initiate their move to another country are more likely to be successful in their job and happier with their lives abroad in general (Demes & Geeraet,

2015). They tend to be more likely to want to join in with the culture of their new home (Demes & Geeraet, 2015). Sojourners can exist within both of these types of frameworks with some sojourns being self-initiated and some dictated by work (Furnham, 1998). The significant variation in the terminology regarding different types of expatriation makes research into certain populations such as sojourners difficult. Relevant findings regarding sojourners can be found in research labeled under expatriates as well as self-initiated and work-initiated expatriates. Thus, different disciplines and different studies will use different words to define the same population. The most arching definition of a sojourner is a resident that is temporary and has the intention to return home after some goal or contract has been completed (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). This definition from Ward and Kennedy will be used in this research. If a person has moved to another country to a position or project that is supposed only last a year they would be classified as a sojourner. International students are additionally classified as sojourners as well as English as Second Language (ESL) teachers. It is important to note that with a person that sojourns there is always the possibility that they will move and then end up staying. This could change their status making them no longer a sojourner, but just an expat (Bochner, 2006). The intention of going and then returning home eventually or then moving on to another location are essential to the classification.

Research specifically looking at sojourners has found a variety of motivations behind their sojourn. Including work opportunities, interest in other cultures, interest in travelling amongst other things (Furnham, 1988). Sojourners that were self-initiated also show better adjustment into their new lives abroad that those that were placed for work (Demes & Geeraet, 2015). Following these findings my sample of blogs will contain both sojourners that choose to move to another country freely as well as those who were did not self-initiate their move.

In popular language the word expat is used to describe both expatriates as well as sojourners. Academically, these are two different populations with the main difference being that sojourners do not make the move to a new place permanently. Additionally many of the blogs analyzed for this research also identify themselves as expat. For the purposes of this thesis, sojourners will be classified as of course as someone who is living outside of their native country who will be living there from a range of time from six

months to five years following Furnham's 1988 definition. Sojourners in the context of this study will include international students as well as people working internationally in a variety of positions in order to better understand a larger variety of sojourner experiences and not to bias the data with more experiences from a certain type of sojourner.

2.2 Acculturation Theory

When sojourners move to a new country, they are faced with a cultural transition and must make decisions about their behaviors and attitudes in how they will deal with these changes (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). These decisions regarding how they fit into their new home can have consequences on their psychological well-being, the success of their adaptation, as well as job performance and other factors (Demes & Geeraet, 2015). These sorts of decisions regarding behaviors and attitudes in their new country fit into the theory of acculturation.

The term acculturation and the theories surrounding it have been used to describe a variety of different changes when new cultures come into contact with each other. Conceptualization of acculturation began in the 1930's by social anthropologists in the United States. They defined acculturation as "phenomena, which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups," (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p. 149). Further investigation into acculturation used this definition until the 1970s, when John Berry a Canadian psychologist and his colleagues developed the acculturation model (Navas et. al, 2005) to explain how a person entering a new culture functions. The acculturation model focuses on psychological acculturation and focuses on changes to the individual, while previous acculturation research has focused on changes to institutions or ecology (Berry, 1997).

The framework in which Berry theorizes acculturation consists of two dimensions that have continued to be used into acculturation literature today. The first dimension is cultural maintenance. Cultural maintenance refers to what extent the original cultural identity of the person and the native cultures characteristics are considered to be important – and most importantly the extent that their maintenance is strived for (Berry, 1997). Cultural maintenance can be seen in a variety of different areas in a person's life.

These include cooking of food from one's native country, speaking one's native language, significant amounts of communication with one's native country, and actively identify with one's native culture (Navas et. al, 2015)

The second dimension is contact and participation. This dimension takes into account how much one is involved in the culture of the country in which they are currently residing in (host culture). As with cultural maintenance, contact and participation also looks at speaking the language of one's host country, developing relationships with natives of the host country, eating the host country's food, and the effort of actively engaging with the host country's culture (Navas et. al, 2015).

These two different dimensions help to identify four different acculturation strategies that create a 4-way matrix* (see Appendix 7.1). They hinge on the importance that cultural maintenance or contact and participation hold for the person in their new home (Berry, 1997).

2.2.1 Cultural Maintenance and Contact and Participation

Cultural maintenance refers to how a person engages with their native culture and how much they maintain aspects of that culture. Contact and Participation, on the other hand, relates to the extent in which someone interacts and takes part in there is host culture. Scholars have conceptualized different aspects of life experiences of expats and sojourners that are measured both as cultural maintenance and contact and participation. In Ward's ABC's of Acculturation, she outlines three distinct parts of the life experiences of those moving to a new country that is connected to their acculturation. The first of the ABC's is Affect, which describes who newcomers deal with adjusting to the new culture as well as their stress level and mental well-being. This part of the ABC's of acculturation cannot be sorted specifically into contact and participation or cultural maintenance, but it has been observed that those that engage in cultural maintenance as well as contact and participation are more likely to be less stressed and have better mental well-being (Swagler & Jome, 2005).

The B in the ABC's of Acculturation stands for behavioral. Behavior is the part of acculturation that can easily be sorted into cultural maintenance and contact and participation. There are many aspects of behavioral acculturation that have been identified

including but not limited to food, language, media usage, relationships, religious practices, celebrations, and others (Ward & Kennedy, 1993, Raman & Harwood, 2016). Sojourners make decisions on how they will behave when they move to a new country they can either behave in the way they do in their native culture (cultural maintenance) or behave in the way of their host culture (contact and participation).

The last part of the ABC's of Acculturation is cognition- this has to do with the way people self-identify describe themselves. This part of acculturation can also be divided into cultural maintenance and contact and participation. Those sojourners that see themselves as members of their host culture and identify with that culture are engaging in contact and participation. If they consider themselves as not belonging or identifying with the culture that they are living with and instead choose to identify with their native culture they are engaging in cultural maintenance. Regardless of the classification of what part of acculturation a sojourners experience can be classified they all come together to form the acculturation strategy.

2.2.2 Four -Way Acculturation Strategy Matrix

If a person deems it important and wants to participate in the host culture they will either engage in assimilation or integration (Berry, 1997). When a person engages with the host culture but does not engage in any type of cultural maintenance in their native country that strategy would be labeled as assimilation (Berry, 1997). But if the person engages in cultural maintenance of their native country as well as participations in the culture of the new home, that strategy would be identified as integration (Berry, 1997). If a person does not deem it important to participate and does not want to participate in their host culture, they are engaging in either separation or marginalization. If no cultural maintenance were taking place as well as any contact and participation with the host culture, that strategy would be labeled as marginalization (Berry, 1997). If contact and participation do not take place and are not important to a person but they still engage in cultural maintenance of their native culture, they are engaging in a separation strategy (Berry, 1997). It is important to note that this model was created from the perspective of that person entering the new culture and not the host culture adjustment to a new culture entering theirs. This model functions solely around the person choices within each both of the two dimensions

(Berry, 1997) and is “based on the assumption that non-dominant groups and their individual members have the freedom to choose how they want to acculturate”(Berry, 1997 p. 9). More recent research into acculturation has taken the host culture into account and how the hosts’ countries willingness to accept those from foreign cultures can affect the strategies chosen by expats because they are not given the option to participate in the host culture (Navas et. al, 2005).

Various studies into wide ranging groups of people acculturating to different cultures found that the most commonly found strategies were integration and separation (Demes & Geereat, 2015). With integration leadings to better adaption and well being amongst expatriate, immigrants, and sojourners (Ward & Searle, 1991).

2.2.3 RAEM (Relative Extended Acculturation Model)

The acculturative strategies as well as the acculturation model explained above was introduced to the world of cross-cultural psychology and intercultural communication by John Berry in 1997 and have continued to be crucial in the field of acculturation studies (Navas et. al, 2005). In recent years researchers have created new models based on Berry’s original acculturation strategies. The most popular model in the past few years in the Relative Acculturation Extended Model or RAEM, the RAEM is focused on taking into account the strategies in which immigrant populations involved in versus the actual strategies that they do indeed engage in (Navas et. al, 2005). The RAEM takes into account both the host society and what type of involvement it allows immigrants to have in their country as well as looking at the ideal situation that the immigration has a preference for versus the real situation they are faced with. The RAEM also pays close attention to both the immigrant’s preferences as well as the preferences of the host society and how those two preferences interact with each other (Navas et. al, 2005).

Additionally, the RAEM takes into account seven different domains in which to consider acculturation. The areas examined by RAEM are political and government system, labor or work, economic, family, social, religious beliefs or customs, and ways of thinking. Each domain is considered in regards to the immigrant's society of origin as well as their host society and how much the immigrants wants to maintain their native culture for each

domain as well as how much they want to adopt that of their host society (Navas et. al, 2005).

While this model is more specific and takes into account the different areas that are important for acculturation, the conceptualization of the acculturation strategy that an immigrant is involved in follows the same two-dimensional matrix as Berry. Each immigrant falls into the same four categories of acculturation strategies being assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Navas et. al, 2005).

Other research regarding acculturation strategies of immigrants, sojourners, and expat always adopt these first four categories to operationalize acculturation strategies that were first identified by Berry. For my research, I will continue this tradition and use these four categories to classify the acculturation strategies seen in the blogs researched. Additionally, I will use the seven domains employed in RAEM to better understand the different avenues that are essential for acculturation and consider them when exploring the various ways that sojourners portray their acculturation strategies in their blogs.

2. 3 Cultural Distance

In both the RAEM and Berry's four- way matrix explained above there is a negotiation involved in acculturation, the negotiation between the expat/ immigrant/ or sojourner's host culture and their native culture. As described above the way of looking at the acculturation strategies is to decipher how much a person in a new country retains their native culture versus engaging in their host culture (Berry, 1997 & Navas et. al 2005). But, of course, there are obstacles in the way for those newcomers in engaging in this host culture. Cultural distance is one of those obstacles (Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2009). If a culture is similar-closer- to the expat's native culture- it is easier to become a part of that culture. If the culture is different- more distant- it is harder for the newcomer to take part in that culture (Kashima & Abu-Rayya, 2014). Better understanding the effects of cultural distance on acculturation strategies is relevant to this thesis specifically to answer the sub research question that focuses on better understanding the differences in the portrayals of acculturation strategies of those sojourners in Western Europe versus those in East Asia.

2.3.1 Dimension of Cultural Difference: Individualism vs. Collectivism

Cultural distance has widely been accepted in international business literature as the “ extent to which different cultures are similar or different” (Shenkar, 2001, p. 519). This definition originally comes from Hofstede who created four different dimensions of national culture to show how close or distance cultures are from each other. (Hofstede, 1984). These dimensions originally included power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculine-femininity. Later Hofstede added long-term vs. short-term orientation and self-indulgence vs. serve restraint to fully encapsulate cultural differences. The “West” and “East” have differences in all of these six dimensions, but the most commonly cited dimension between the two places is individualism vs. collectivism in reference to the group dimensions in society (Hofstede, 1984).

Western cultures such as North America and Europe are more individualistic in nature. Meaning that the culture, in general, focuses more on the individual and those close to them and places emphasis on “I.” As opposed to a collectivistic society like those in East Asia, that place emphasis on “We” and relationships are viewed as important extend past just family but encompass the society as a whole (Hofstede, 1984). Individualism vs. collectivism is cited as being the largest difference between Western and Eastern cultures (cite). It has also been used to explain difficulties that Westerners have living in the east. This is the most broadly cited difference between Western and Eastern cultures and is referenced as a reason why the adjustment is harder to make for westerners who are living in the East. Because those that come as immigrants, expats, or sojourners are not members of that group and since the society itself is more focused on the group mentality, and the collective and newcomers to that society are not a part of that collective and are then separated further.

2.3.2 Cultural Distance and Acculturation

Past research into the acculturation of sojourners have found that there are a variety of factors that influence their acculturation- and a key element is their environment, which is described as including both the cultural distance and the pressure to conform to that culture (Ward, 1996). This difficulty in adjustment for sojourners with a further culture distance prompted further research. Ward & Kennedy (1993) examined the importance of culture when considering cultural transitions. They looked at the culture of

both the host society and also the culture of the individual's native culture, following the research focusing on the ability to predicting socio-cultural adaption by cultural distance by Furnham (1983). They studied the adjustment of Malaysian and Singaporean students in New Zealand and Malaysian students in Singapore. They found that the Malaysian students in New Zealand had a more difficult time socially adjusting than those in Singapore and concluded that the shorter cultural distances from Malaysia and Singapore as compared to the cultural distance of Malaysia and New Zealand led to this difficulty in adjustment. More survey research focused on cultural distance and the acculturation strategies of international students in Russia who originated from Africa, Latin America, East Asia, the Middle East, and countries from the former Soviet Union. Suanet and Van de Vijver (2009) found that those students with the most cultural distance from Russia suffered from more homesickness and also were less likely to engage with the local culture. Additionally, they found that those from a more distant culture were less likely to develop relationships with other Russians. Other research looking at Chinese international students attending schools in Germany found that the most predominate acculturation strategies of students were integration as well as separation and noted that the students were not able to use the assimilation strategy because the German culture was too culturally distant from the Chinese culture (Yu & Wang, 2011).

With this research in mind, I expect there to be a difference in the way that American sojourners in Western Europe portray their acculturation strategies in their blog versus those in East Asia. Following the results described above it is hypothesized that those sojourners residing in East Asia will express more difficulty taking part in their host culture and may instead focus on maintaining their native culture.

2.4 Blogging

In the past, the most common avenue for researching acculturation strategies has been surveys. With more and more sojourners sharing information online through blogging can we also see the same patterns within blogs? A blog – short for weblog refers to a genre of online texts started as personal diaries or journals online. Since the inception of blogging, blogs have been used for a variety of applications beyond just as an online journal (Rettberg, 2008; Wakeford & Cohen, 2008). Blogs have become an increasingly popular

object of investigation for research in a variety of disciplines. Rettberg's work also focuses on the creation of communities from this blogging world. The community created by the blog is made up of both the writers, the audience they are writing the posts specifically and also the unintended audience that stumbles across their blog (Rettberg, 2008). Researchers have studied the content within blogs, readers of blogs, as well as the writers of blogs, to better understand different communities from a first-hand account. Research using blogs has also investigated how communities can be created and maintained on the web. As the research using blogs is wide so are the different types of blogs. A cursory search of the Internet can show blogs ranging in topics from politics to zoology and everything in-between. Blogs have also given researchers an avenue to investigate people's feeling and experiences in their own words (Chenail, 2011) and are now just starting to become a place for researchers to look at intercultural dynamics, living abroad, and acculturation (Nardon & Aten, 2016).

The experience of the writers varies as well with platforms such as Wordpress, BlogSpot, and Tumblr making it easy for almost anyone with an active Internet connection to start their own blog. From a uses and gratifications perspective, bloggers use the writing of their blogs to satisfy their own needs (Papacharissi, 2004). Those needs vary by blogger, so there are different reasons and motivations for why each blogger writes and shares what they do. When looking at sojourner's blogs, it is important to consider the context in which these blogs exist and why these blogs are being written to better understand them. Papacharissi's (2004) research into blogs showed that the average blog featured a personal account of the author's life and functioned much like that of a diary and was used by the writers to fulfill their need for self-expression. Blog writers have a variety of motivations behind creating their blogs and these motivations behind writing blogs have been studied by various scholars. For example, Nardi et. al (2004) found five key motivations in their research into the subject. The first and most common motivation found was "blogs to document my life. This documentation was both for the writers of the blog themselves to have a way to remember what they were doing at a particular period, but also functioned to let friends and family know what the blogger was doing, and this documentation worked as a way of keeping those close to them updated on their lives. Next was labeled by Nardi et. al (2004) as blogs as commentary, which was explained as the motivation of bloggers to

express their opinions and share them with the world via their blogs. Bloggers that were motivated in this way an outlet to voice their viewpoints. The next most frequent motivation for their blogger was labeled as blogging as catharsis. Bloggers that were motivated to write in this category wrote their blog as a means of self-expression and also to get to know one's self better. This motivation was similar the regular journaling or diary style to vent one's emotions and become more self-aware. Blog as muse was the next motivation. For bloggers with this motivation, the writing was a way for them to process their thoughts. They also functioned as a way to motivate people that were already writers- such as those working on a Ph.D. or those who writers as a profession to keep themselves motivated and get their writing out there for the world to see. Lastly was blogging as a community forum. Blogs with this type of motivation were set up to function as space for communities to get together and discuss similar interests. Some of these blogs had multiple authors, some only had one, but those bloggers were keen to interact with people that commented on the blog and shared their knowledge and chat with each other.

Trammel et al. (2004) also looked for at bloggers motivations in a study of Polish Bloggers and found similar classification categories of bloggers in Poland. The six categories Trammel et al. (2004) found were, self-expression, social interaction, entertainment, passing time, information, and professional advancement. These categories vary slightly from those found in by Nardi et. al (2004). The biggest difference comes in the form of professional advancement which was not noted in the motivations of bloggers Nardi et. al (2004) studied, but all other categories found by Trammel et al. (2004) could fit into those previously mentioned.

2.4.1 Blogging from Abroad

All these previously discussed motivations have also been found in research into the international blogging community in a variety of ways fitting Nardi's et. al (2004) and Trammel et al. (2004) conceptualization of blogging motivations. The predominant motivation found in blog writers was sharing their personal experiences as well as the exchange of information with other people- fitting into the section of motivations of blogs as commentary found by Nardi et. al (2004). Blogging from abroad has gained popularity with the majority of these sites leaning towards travel sites (Mikal, 2011) with a variety of

researchers from different disciplines using travel blogs as a place to explore information that bloggers share, the creation of social identity through blogging, as well as cross-cultural interaction and differences. In a comparison of bloggers from the United States and South Korea writing about different travel destinations, Lee and Gretzel (2014) found that those writers from the United States were far more likely to be writing their blogs for an audience that was already known to them such as family and friends. Not for an audience that they did not know. This motivation of the bloggers from Lee and Gretzel's (2014) study connects to the idea of blogging as a way of documenting my life. It is important to note this finding when looking at the blogs of other expats and see if the motivation and the style of writing are the same for those living abroad versus those Americans only traveling.

Another study into the travel blogging community looks at why bloggers are willing to share their experiences and thoughts. Ting & Ting (2014) found that there were a variety of reasons behind those travel bloggers willing to share their ideas via a personal travel blog most commonly a sense of perceived usefulness and a sense of altruism. This finding is also important to note in better understand the topics that those bloggers in the expat community and why they share what they share. This can help to better conceptualize the how bloggers write about acculturation with noting that other research to American travel bloggers showed that they chose to write their blogs to be useful to others and saw the act of their blogging as something altruistic can demonstrate the start of a developing community for those Americans abroad.

While the majority of internationally focused blogs tend to be concentrated on travels, those living abroad have used blogs for a variety of reasons. One avenue that has been researched as a cause for Sojourners and expats writing these blogs is the idea that by writing they can reflect on their experience of living in another culture and better make sense of that culture through writing. Nardon & Aten (2016) found that these blogs are an important site for exploring sense making in Sojourner communities as well as other segments of intercultural studies.

These blogs have also been investigated not only as a place where sojourners and expats can make sense of their experience but share those experiences with others who are living a similar experience. These sites can be used as a place to create a shared connection between other people residing in the same situation and helps to develop a community

(Nardon et. al, 2015). This community building aspect of blogs is an example of the blogging motivation blogs as a community forum (Nardi et al., 2004). More specific motivations for those sojourners in the international blogging realm include keeping in contact with family members, sharing experiences, using the space as a place to inform others about locations in the area where they live as well as keeping track of their experience living in another country (Nardon et al., 2015).

These blogs also can be used as a source of social support for other sojourners that are going to the same location as the blog writer. Past research has looked at a variety of ways in which these blogs work in the sojourner communities. This research has found that these blogs have functioned to create a network and online community between sojourners allowing them to feel closer to others who are experiencing the same situations (Nardon & Aten, 2016). They also have been looked at a way of preparing students studying abroad as these blogs provide them a look into the experience they will be having in the future, as well and getting information about their destination or program from someone who has experienced it first hand (Mikal, 2011). Research into the study abroad students internet usage found that many students used the internet and different online social networks such as blogs to lessen their feelings of acculturative stress both pre-departure and during their time abroad and also allowed them to feel more connected to those friends and family back home as well. The use of the internet during their study abroad experience enabled them to connect with others with similar interests as well as find support for answering questions that those who had already been living abroad had already experienced and could offer help in answering those question.

Since online social networking sites and expat or sojourner blogs have been shown to be a site of community building and a place were sojourners turn for the support it might sense to investigation acculturation, and acculturation stratifies in these blogs.

Furthermore, a recent study by Malleus & Slattery (2014) into the blog of an American sojourner in Zimbabwe focused on the possibility of personal travel blogs as a source for intercultural communication data. They found that indeed these blogs were a good site to investigate culture shock, cross-cultural comparison, intercultural adaption, as well as acculturation. Blogs written by Sojourners are a great resource to examine acculturation strategies as they are created as first-hand experiences of expats and have a variety of

motivations behind their creation and show a lens into their experiences in a fuller way than typical survey research.

Chapter 3: Methods

This section details the reasoning behind employing a mixed method content analysis– to investigate how U.S. born sojourner bloggers in both Western Europe, as well as East Asia, portray their acculturation strategies through their blogs and how those portrayals differ. After the chosen method of analysis has been described the process of data collection will be described in length. Once the data collection process is described and the final data set is presented the data analysis process will be described in depth.

3.1 Method Selection

The research method that can best answer and is most well suited for this study is firstly a qualitative content analysis that will make up the bulk to the research. Once a qualitative analysis has been conducted to illuminate key themes in these sojourner blogs, a researcher created scale will be applied to the blogs to analyze the differences between the two groups with themes discovered through the qualitative content analysis taken into account. By using qualitative content analysis to develop an acculturation scale for these groups more full analysis can be achieved. These two methods combined will work to answer this research question and sub-question entirely.

Qualitatively based research focuses on the meaning that researchers give to the data, instead of the numerical importance and frequencies within a dataset (Gilbert, 2008). Specifically, the qualitative content analysis focuses on interpretation rather than quantification. As explained by Schreiner (2013) it “helps with reducing the amount of material” (p.2) and data being analyzed by focusing on their meaning and significance in regards to a proposed research question. Qualitative content analysis exists to analyze texts more in depth. Such analysis does not aim to be representative of a general population but specifically focuses on specific situations and their respective context, which is appropriate regarding this research question as acculturation experiences are dependent on the environment in which they are taking place, meaning where the

sojourner comes from and also where they are now residing. Additionally, qualitative content analysis is suitable for answering more exploratory research questions to better understand new phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) This suitability towards exploratory research makes this the ideal method for this thesis. Previous research focusing on acculturation of Sojourners and expats alike has relied on surveys to first find aspects of cultural maintenance as well as contact and participation and then used that data to create items relating to these dimensions that were considered to be important. Once those items were found, surveys were developed to measure sojourners cultural maintenance strategies and contact and participation and then sorted the response into Berry's four acculturation strategies.

Qualitative content analysis was selected as the principal methodology to answer the research question: How do United States born sojourner bloggers in Western Europe, and East Asia portrays their acculturation strategies through their blog and the sub-question of how these portrayals are different between those living in Western Europe versus East Asia. A qualitative content analysis was selected because, firstly, it allows myself the researcher to systemically analyze blogs in a way that is accurate and detailed that allows me to explore the nuance of meanings in each blog post correctly. Qualitative content analysis will also enable deeper analysis into the acculturation dimensions in sojourner's words that have not been analyzed qualitatively. Once the qualitative analysis has been completed a quantitative analysis will be used to provide any empirical evidence of differences in the portrayals of acculturation strategies between those sojourners living in Western Europe and East Asia. A quantitative analysis has been selected to add more depth to the overall research and function to partially answer the sub research question that focuses on how the representations of acculturative strategies differ between those sojourners in Western Europe versus East Asia. A quantitative content analysis has been selected to bring depth to this research sub-question as it focuses on a numerical description of text (Gilbert, 2008). Quantitative content analysis puts focus on the number of times an individual topic is present, and the frequency of the topic then determines its importance (MacDonald, 2008). This sort of analysis will help to answer the sub-question as it takes into account the frequencies of certain topics and those frequencies can be compared to show the difference between sojourner blogs in Western Europe and East

Asia. For this quantitative content analysis, a self-created scale will be used to take into account newly discovered items that are relevant to the bloggers will be added, and filled out by the researcher to compare the differences between North Americans in East Asia versus North Americans in Western Europe to more fully understand these populations.

3.2 Data Collection Process

The data collection for this thesis took part in two phases. The first involved a more passive reading stage in getting a better understanding of the sojourner blogging community. This process is described as blog trawling by (Hookway, 2008). Blog trawling is used as a first step in the data collection process to learn more information about blogs that exist before selecting a final sample for research (Hookway, 2008). This blog trawling was taken out to get a better understanding of the blogging community that exists, as there is insufficient research into the sojourner expat blog population. Blogs that were read in this trawling process were first selected by their location. As the focus of this research is sojourners in Western Europe as well as East Asia blogs from these regions were the only ones trawled through. Firstly, the website expatblog.com was used to get an idea of locations with larger amounts of bloggers. Three large cities in Western Europe and four large cities in East Asia were selected to complete the sample. More major cities were chosen firstly for the greater number of blogs written by sojourners living in the major cities, there were also selected as a baseline to make a balanced comparison between the different regions, as well as to limit the amount of available data. Cities in both Western Europe and East Asia were selected for their large expat communities and accessible locations for Sojourners. Additionally, these cities were chosen because of their high number of bloggers. The cities chosen in Western Europe were Brussels-Belgium, Madrid-Spain, Berlin –Germany, and Paris-France. In East Asia the cities selected were Shanghai-China, Tokyo-Japan, and Seoul-South Korea.

Blogs were discovered from the trawling step using three separate methods. First, the website expatblog.com was used. This site was selected because of its importance in the Sojourner community as well as the ability to search for bloggers by their country of origin, which is an important parameter as my research is focused on bloggers from the United States. The blogs on this website were recognized by expatblog.com for their importance in

the expat community as a larger reader base. Secondly, the website expat.com was used for their directory of expat blogs. The blogs listed in this directory were also searchable by city and also noted the country of origin, making it easier to find correct blogs that could fit within my sample for my analysis. Lastly, as the expat.com and expatblog.com did not include student's additional Google searches were completed using search terms such as "international student blog Tokyo" or "study abroad blog Paris" and similar phrases for each location. The addition of international students was necessary to answer my research question better, as international students are an important part of the Sojourner category. This original data collection returned a total of 517 bloggers. Before the posts from this bloggers were trawled for content other important parameter were set in place to have a comparable sample. All bloggers firstly had to originally come from the United States. All bloggers also had to fit into the sojourner definition put forward by Furnham (1984) and widely used in Sojourner research. In his definition, a sojourner is someone who has lived in another country for a five month to five-year period and has the intention of eventually moving on (Furnham, 1984). Additionally, I selected only to include blogs there were hosted independently on a website of the writer's creation, BlogSpot, Word Press, or Tumblr. Any blogs with sponsored content or bloggers that used the blog as their source of income working as a travel writer were removed from the sample to find honest reflections and thoughts about their experience as an expat. Finally, any site that was sponsored by a university or was a website that was made up of the experiences of lots of people were removed from the sample.

With these parameters taken into account, trawling began with a sample of 264 bloggers. To further refine the further sample blogs that were only travel focused were removed as well as strictly photography blogs. Resulting in 103 bloggers and 700+ posts. From that point, all posts were read, and an original theme was assigned to every post to better understand and start conceptualizing what topics were relevant to this population as well as assessing the variety of posts that existed. The first read through of the 700+ posts resulted in nine different themes. Cultural observation/comparisons, description of day-to-day life, reflection on experiences, travel posts, short descriptions of cultural maintenance/ contact and participation, homesickness, thoughts about leaving, suggestions/advice, and finally photos. Blogs that only included one or two of these types

of posts were removed to focus on bloggers that reported a variety of different things on their blog. This narrowed down the pool of bloggers to 49 bloggers. From that point blogs with less than ten posts were also eliminated resulting in 32 bloggers. While all these bloggers showed promise in having appropriate posts they needed to be refined to have a comparable number of bloggers from each region as well as accounting for the different types of Sojourners and various types of posts that were represented all of the blogs that were trawled through previously.

3.3 Final Sample of Bloggers and Final Data Set

This final sample of bloggers included 13 bloggers from the United States living in Western Europe and 11 bloggers also from the United States residing in East Asia. In the sample of bloggers from Western Europe, five were students, and eight were temporary workers. Three bloggers came with family or a significant other. Nine of the bloggers were self-initiated sojourners, and four were work initiated. In the sample of bloggers from East Asia, four were students, and seven were temporary workers. Four bloggers came with family or a significant other. Eight of the bloggers were self-initiated sojourners, and three were work initiated.

In order to make a final selection of blog posts, the entirety of these 24 bloggers posts were read again, and the themes were refined from nine themes to three that fully encompassed the different types of posts while still leaving room for variety. Posts that were travel focused or personally centered in a way that was not related to their experience in their host country were automatically excluded. The three themes were daily existence, reflection, and advice. While a post fell into a theme during this data selection process, new themes will be created in the data analysis portion, as there may be a post that fit into the daily existence category during this process that is still reflective in nature. The majority of the posts from these bloggers focused on the day-to-day life in their new country, followed by reflective posts, and the least common was advice posts. Each bloggers experience is represented from four to seven posts as well as posts from the beginning of their sojourn and the end or their most recent post. The numbers of posts selected from each region have been chosen to reflect the different themes found as well as their relative frequencies.

The final data for this research consists of 140 posts 72 from Western Europe and 68 from East Asia. Of these posts, 76 posts focus on daily existence, 38 from both Western Europe and East Asia. 36 were reflective evenly divided between the two regions. Lastly, 18 posts were advice based with 11 coming from Western Europe and 7 from East Asia.

3.4 Data Analysis

The underlying goal of all different varieties of all qualitative content analyses is first to organize and then elicit meaning from the data that is collected. After data is organized and the meaning has been obtained conclusions are drawn (Bengtsson, 2016). Qualitative content analysis regarding acculturation is a very new subject, but constructs discovered in previous research will be applied to my coding making this a summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) A summative qualitative content analysis uses previous theories and brings them into the coding frame. A summative content analysis starts with identifying content within the text to better understand the utilization of the content. This identifying and counting of content in a qualitative content analysis is known as manifest content analysis. Manifest content analysis takes previous theories and constructs into account and code content based on these previous theories and constructs.

The most relevant theoretical background that will be taken into consideration during the coding process are the two dimensions (cultural maintenance & contact and participation) that are used to make up Berry's four-way acculturation model. Berry defines cultural maintenance as engaging in behaviors that relate to the Sojourners' native culture and contact and participation as engaging in behaviors that connect them to their host culture (Berry, 1997). With these constructs in mind, different activities that emerge in the blog will be coded as cultural maintenance strategy or contact and participation strategy as well as noting what exactly that activity is. Additionally, the Acculturation Index (see Appendix 7.2) created by Ward and Kennedy (1993) will be used as a guide for identifying different types of acculturative behavior. This index was selected as it discusses numerous types of ways of categorizing cultural maintenance and contact and participation that can help in identifying categories in the blogs. Also, the participants measured by the Acculturation Index are the most similar to my data set- as they are sojourners and also the

index was used in looking the acculturation strategies of culturally distant compared to culturally non-distant sojourners (Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

Scheier (2013) as well as Hseui and Shannon (2005) outline seven steps in order to complete a thorough analysis. First is the development of a research question and selection data for the analysis. Both these steps are described in depth previously in this thesis. After the question and data are prepared a coding frame must be built. A coding frame is at the heart of qualitative content analysis. A coding frame is constructed after the selection of material by “structuring and generating categories, defining categories, revising and expanding the frame”(Scheier, 2013, p. 7). To build a coding frame blogs will be read for their most current content and searched for relevant posts that have information about their acculturation strategies. Also, following the two dimensions of Berry’s matrix it is important to pay attention to not only posts where the writer talks about him or herself but also if they speak about the host country in general as this could point to contact and participation. It is also important to pay attention to any posts regarding commentary of their home culture as that would point to cultural maintenance. Additionally different scale items from the acculturation taken into account to help identify possible items that could fit into the cultural maintenance and contact and participation framework. Sentences that are relevant to the topic of this research will be copied and pasted into a spreadsheet where a code will be attached. Berry’s four-way acculturation matrix and his predetermined acculturation strategies (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization) will be used as the overarching main themes/ codes of the analysis. In addition to Berry’s four acculturation strategies – the two matrices that are used for Berry’s four-way model- contact/ participation and cultural maintenance will also be used as main themes/codes. They will be used for instances that arise in the blog where a sojourner could be partaking in cultural maintenance – by cooking Thanksgiving dinner for example- which does not offer a description of their contact/participation strategies in every single post. These six categories will serve as a start to the coding process. While blog content is analyzed, new categories will be created that are generated in a data- driven manner- in order to include both previous theoretical background and new information found within the posts. Once the main categories have been established, content will be read again to develop subcategories. For example, an important part of contact/ participation is learning the

language. Depending on the content of the blogs this sort of activity made become a sub-category or theme. The blogs will be coded into subcategories until saturation has been reached and no other subcategories have been defined or discovered. The blogs will be read again and coded until saturation has been reached. From this point, major categories and subcategories will be defined – with a name, a description of what the name was given to the category means, and the decision rules behind placing data into these categories. Once the defining state is finished the data will be read through once more, and the coding frame will be revised to make sure there is no overlap of concepts in the categories and expanded to best fit the data. A description of all main categories and their subcategories and well as well as examples will be discussed in the findings section.

While the majority of this thesis will rely on qualitative content analysis as a way to explore the different ways, acculturation strategies are presented and also how those presentations differ to answer both the central research question as well as the sub question. A quantitative analysis will be used to highlight key differences in the acculturation strategies between North Americans sojourners in Western Europe and East Asia to emphasize these differences in a statistical way, adding depth to the overall findings of this thesis research. The quantitative part of this analysis will consist of a researcher created survey. First general questions in the survey will be filled in for each blog author. These general questions will include their country of origin; country sojourned to, age, gender, length of stay, and number of words. These different categories will be noted in case of any potential difference between gender and length of stay depending on the results of the survey. To add depth to the qualitative answer of the research sub-question the difference that will be taken into account is the location and those sojourners that are located in Western Europe will be compared to East Asia. To statistically assess the differences in the acculturation strategies between these groups I will use the Brief Acculturation Orientation Scale (BAOS) a measure developed by Demeš & Geeraert (2015) (see Appendix 7.3). The BAOS was created to be used as a baseline scale to measure the acculturative behaviors of expatriates in a variety of different countries, as the questions are very basic in nature. The scale consists of eight questions four which focus on the contact and participation dimension of acculturation and the other four-question focus on cultural maintenance. The researcher will assign a value to each from 1-5 based on

information gleaned from the qualitative analysis of the text. Once all these statements have been tallied an average score for both cultural maintenance and contact and participation will be calculated for all of the bloggers living in Western Europe and also those in East Asia. The combination of the score of cultural maintenance and contact and participation will be used to categorize each group into an acculturative strategy. The average scores will then be compared between the group living in Western Europe and East Asia using an A-NOVA to see if there is a statistically significant difference between those two groups.

Chapter 4: Results

The results of the different analyses are described in this chapter. First, the results of the qualitative analysis will be discussed in how they answer both the main research question as well as the sub question. After that, the quantitative analysis results will be discussed concerning how they answer the sub-question as well.

4.1 Sub Categories – Qualitative Analysis

The four-acculturation strategies and the main categories serve as an anchor for this analysis, the subcategories are equally as important in explaining how these acculturation strategies are being portrayed in the blogs and provide insight into assessing their acculturation strategies. While each post can fit into a wider main category, there are moments in each post that can be related to a more than one of these strategies or also offer an insight into the sojourner's experience. These moments do not necessarily directly correlate with previous research into acculturation strategies that were unique to these particular sojourners experience and also were important enough to the bloggers that were selected to be fundamental ways that they describe their experiences existing within a new culture and how those experiences have affected them.

During the coding process, 18 subcategories were found. The subcategories can be divided into three different types. The most common subcategory is one that is either pointed towards cultural maintenance or contact and participation – there are nine of this kind of subcategory. The next most common type of subcategory is one that does not have a particular direction, but function on its own. Six subcategories fit into this kind of

subcategory. The last type of subcategory is the least common only encompassing only three different subcategories. This sort of subcategory is one that is a feeling either pointed towards the blogger's native culture or to their host culture.

The results are outlined in a table and described below in the order of their frequency to answer both the main research question and the sub-question. Each subcategory code is also explained, as well as examples given and direct quotations from the blogs when needed to explain the different subcategories more fully.

Sub Categories (Total)

Sub-Category	Definition of the Sub-Category	Cultural Maintenance	Contact and Participation	Native Culture	Host Culture	Total
Food	Text that included mention of food and eating habits	37	64	-	-	101
Daily Life	Descriptions of daily habits and routines	28	24	-	-	52
Language	Text that mentioned language acquisition and using native language	13	37	-	-	50
Entertainment	Descriptions of how sojourners entertained themselves – including media consumption	27	17	-	-	44
Socializing	Descriptions of more causal interactions with others	26	14	-	-	40

Relationships	Text that described the deeper interactions with others	23	17	-	-	40
Host Culture Awareness	Text that showed knowledge of the host culture	-	-	-	-	27
Cultural Comparison	Text with direct comparisons of native and host culture	-	-	-	-	27
Opinions of Host Culture	Opinions of host culture- both positive and negative	-	-	-	-	25
Traditions	Text that described participation in different traditions including holidays	12	8	-	-	20
Interest in Cultural Difference	Expressed interest in the cultural differences in the host culture	-	-	-	-	19
Advice	Advice offered to other travels and expats	9	8	-	-	17
Homesickness	Descriptions of dealing with homesickness	-	-	-	-	13
Connection	Descriptions that pointed to a connection to a culture	-	-	8	2	10

Belonging	Text that expressed feeling like a part of a culture	-	-	5	4	9
Feelings of Otherness	Description of feeling ostracized	-	-	1	8	9
Expat Relations	Descriptions of the relationships between the native population and foreigners as well as within the expat community	-	-	-	-	3
Politics	Text that commented on the politics of the sojourners native or host culture	2	-	-	-	2
Total						507

4.1.1 Food

The most common subcategory in all of the posts was Food, with a total of 101 posts split between both East Asia and Western Europe. In Western Europe, there were 19 pieces of text coded as food cultural maintenance and 33 as food contact and participation.

Almost identical numbers were found in the blog posts with 18 pieces of text coded as food-culture maintenance and 31 coded as food-contact and participation.

The Food subcategory is as it sounds moments where the bloggers write about food, this encompasses the restaurants they visit outside their home, as well as the food they cook or buy in the grocery store. A section of the text was coded as food-cultural maintenance when a blogger mentioned food from their native culture. A section of text was coded as

food – contact, and participation when a blogger mentioned food from their host culture. Food has been noted to be important to acculturation strategies in previous research (Ward, 1993). This was also found in these blogs. Americans are known to talk about food more than other cultures, and this followed in their blog posts. Some posts were dedicated solely to new restaurants they were trying both with American food as well as their local food. Food was the way in which every blogger interacted with their host culture explaining how they enjoyed these new “authentic” foods that they had never experienced before. Many bloggers also wrote about their cravings for certain foods from home and suggested places where others could find these American foods. Regarding food, all bloggers followed an integration strategy in the sense that they tried local foods, but at the same time looked for foods from the US to comfort them.

4.1.2 Daily Life

The next most prevalent subcategory was daily life with a total of 52 segments. In Western Europe the code daily life –culture maintenance was used 14 times and daily life – contact, and participation 16 times. This was different in East Asia however with 14 segments of text coded as daily life-cultural maintenance and only eight as daily life - contact and participation. This subcategory refers to descriptions of day-to-day tasks taken described by the blogger. These include transportation, the daily parts of their work life, crossing the street, going to the store, as well as their styling choices for the day, their small daily interactions and other daily tasks similar to these. These experiences were put together into the daily experience category as they were infrequent individually and came up when the blogger specifically noted that they were explaining their day-to-day experiences in their blog. A piece of text was coded as daily life- cultural maintenance if these small tasks throughout the day functioned to maintain the blogger's native culture. Conversely, a piece of text was coded as daily life- contact, and participation if these small tasks throughout the day worked to advance the bloggers contact and participation with their host culture.

For example the way one blogger in Paris described how she had been styling her hair to emulate French women saying, “ I find myself coveting some beautiful French woman’s messy bun here in Paris. I’m obsessed with their twists, chignons and braids...I

tried this one out today” (Perpetual Passenger). A blogger living in Seoul explains how her daily habits have changed once living in Korea. She explained that taking off her shoes before she enters her house has become a habit that first started at her work as something that she had to do, now she also does at home. Showing a moment in her daily life where she is participating in the Korean culture. The way in which bloggers maintained their native culture in their daily life was usually by Skyping with their family and friends back home or adhering to a more classically American schedule.

4.1.3 Language

Following next was Language with a total of 50 coded items. In Western Europe, four items were language-cultural maintenance and 25 as language – contact and participation. These numbers varied massively from East Asia where nine were coded language-cultural maintenance and 12 as language- contact and participation. This subcategory referred to instances when the blogger noted themselves using the native language, explaining the ways they are learning the language, struggles with learning the language, as well as moments when they specifically noted the importance of their native language. Parts of the text that were related to the host language were coded as language-contact and participation and those coded language- cultural maintenance when related to the blogger's native language. Language has also been noted as an important part of acculturation and learning the local language usually allows for sojourners to develop stronger relationships with local people as well as complete day-to-day tasks more quickly. Those sojourners who were in Western Europe spoke more about language than those living in East Asia. This could be because of the extreme differences between the languages. If someone's native language is English learning, another language with basically the same alphabet is easier than languages in East Asia that function differently. But bloggers in both regions still wrote about their struggles as well as their triumphs with language. For example, how they could order food in the local language, or how they would manage to say some of the words correctly but the grammar was off, and it caused some confusion. Almost all of the bloggers residing in Western Europe mentioned that they were taking part in some sort of language class and those who were not enrolled in classes mentioned different language learning software or apps they were using to try and learn the language.

In East Asia, this was not the case with many of the bloggers not attempting to learn the language. One blogger in Taipei wrote “ Study a little Mandarin before you arrive. This doesn’t have to be much—just enough to learn about the four tones and maybe a little about the history of the language. Learning a few basic phrases, such as how to properly say ‘hello,’ ‘thank you,’ ‘this one’ and ‘I want/I don’t want’ wouldn’t hurt either.”(Cracking the Egg) This recommendation is very different from those living in Western Europe who write in detail their experience with trying to learn the language while American In East Asia sort of defaulted to accepting that they wouldn’t ever learn the language and just focused on getting by with only English. This was only different with those who already had learned the language. One blogger had already studied Japanese for many years so when moving to Tokyo to study abroad for one year he continued to take Japanese classes and improve his speaking.

Language was also used as a way of maintaining their own culture and something that made them feel more comfortable in their host country. Bloggers wrote about how they were delighted to speak to people in English. One blogger in Brussels wrote, “Everyone spoke English and even in American accents, so that was comforting”(Blogging in Brussels). Bloggers who wrote about language regarding cultural maintenance a sense of relief and contentment when they heard their native language being spoken, showing that this is an important part of them feeling connected to their old way of life and native culture.

The portrayals of acculturation strategies also varied in other ways. Language played a much larger role in the lives of those sojourners living in Western Europe than those living in East Asia. More bloggers wrote about their experiences speaking and learning the local language. Bloggers in East Asia also wrote about language – but it was limited to those who had already had some experience with the local language continuing to learn it. Other moments discussed by other bloggers is the struggle that they had communicating in the local language and never mentioned the ways in which they were attempting to learn their host countries language.

4.1.4 Entertainment

Entertainment was next with 44 segments of text. In Western Europe 16 were coded entertainment-cultural maintenance and ten as Entertainment –contact, and participation. In East Asia 11 were coded as entertainment- cultural maintenance and seven as contact and participation. This subcategory refers to both the way in which the bloggers explain what they were doing for entertainment- like going out as well as other activities that were chosen for fun; it also refers to media consumption. As the title suggests, it refers to the things the bloggers did for entertainment. A post that was coded as entertainment- cultural maintenance refers to a segment of text that showed the bloggers choosing entertainment options from their native culture. A post coded as entertainment- contact, and participation show the bloggers choosing entertainment from their host culture. For example, something that was coded as entertainment-contact and participating in East Asia was visiting a Norebang which a popular thing to do in South Korea. One blogger writes about her experience with Norebangs saying, “ So, it has recently come to my attention that my friends and I are quite spectacular at norebang. What is norebang? 노래방 translates to "song room, " and it is just that – so think karaoke, but not at a bar in front of tons of strangers, but a private room with your friends/coworkers. AND WITH TAMBOURINES” (Zannah in Korea). Sojourners have a variety of ways that they can spend their free time and them choosing to do activities from their host culture shows contact and participation in that culture. Bloggers also wrote about listening to the music from their host country or watching movies also from their host culture, but media consumption as a form of entertainment tended to be a way for sojourners to maintain their native culture. One blogger in Madrid wrote about her day explaining, “ I’m sitting in bed, listening to Michelle Branch and relaxing. I just finished watching Pretty Little Liars”(Get at Mel).

Entertainment also varied differently between the two regions. In Western Europe, more bloggers wrote about the ways in which they engaged in entertainment forms that connected them to their host culture, while those in East Asia also wrote about some of the things they did for entertainment, particularly their media consumption from their native country.

4.1.5 Socializing and Relationships

The next two subcategories were Socializing and Relationships each with 40 segments coded. In Western Europe, 15 sections of text were coded as Socializing- Cultural Maintenance and 12 as Relationships-Cultural Maintenance. Seven segments were coded as socializing-contact and participation and eight were coded as relationships- contact and participation. In East Asia, both Relationships- cultural maintenance and Socializing-cultural maintenance has 11 segments of text. Nine pieces of text were coded as relationships- contact and participation and seven as socializing contact and participation. In the first round of coding, Socializing was included with Relationships- the subcategory that will be defined below. These were separated, as there are fundamental differences between the two. Socializing refers to more casual relationships and brief mentions of time with people. Text coded, as socializing- contact and participation were an explanation of times spent socializing with natives of their host culture. In contrast socializing – cultural maintenance refers to the recounting of times spent socializing with other expats or sojourners also from the United States. For example, a student on study abroad in Tokyo explained, “ I joined a literature circle called the Lit Soc. If you don’t know what circles are, they’re basically Japan’s version of clubs, but with more drinking. However, this circle isn’t really a legit circle because it’s all international students and we all speak English the whole time” (My Year in Tokyo). Here this blogger is taking part in activity where he is socializing with others from his native culture as well as well as internationals- spending time with other Americans is a way that sojourners can maintain their culture. Another interesting aspect about socializing is when it comes to real vs. expectations which Naves et. al (2005) explains in the RAEM model of acculturation, how there are differences between those strategies that expats engage in versus the ones that they want to engage in. A blogger in Berlin explains that she, “ I am hopeful though that as time goes on, I will be able to meet a few locals and get to know them as well”(Megnanimously). While she was not currently socializing with any locals her wanting to do that shows at least a want be in contact and participate in her host culture. A blogger in Madrid notes how she can socialize with her Spanish colleagues, explaining, “ Coffee break-time, on several occasions, has served as an icebreaker between my colleagues and me “ (Sincerely Lynette). These daily interactions and more basic relationships that these bloggers write about shows different

strategies and ways in which they are either interacting with their host culture or only their native culture.

The subcategory Relationships, on the other hand, refers to deeper friendships or other relationships and denotes a type of closeness with this other person. Text coded as Relationships – contact and participation denotes relationships and development of relationships with those from their new host culture. Relationships-cultural maintenance refers to text describing those relationships with other expats also from the United States as well as relationships with those who are living in the United States. Some bloggers wrote extensively about their relationships with locals, especially ones that took part in a home stay program, which lived in a house with a local family. A student in Tokyo wrote about a party at his home and explained: “Even though everyone spoke Japanese the whole time so I couldn’t really follow the conversations, it was still nice to be among family.” (My Year in Tokyo) Moments like these in which bloggers express such closeness with local people show a deeper level of contact and participation with their host culture. While there were many moments where bloggers expressed their deep relationships with locals many moments in the blog posts especially those of study abroad students mentioned time spent with other study abroad, students. As well as the relationships they developed during their time abroad was only with those from their own native culture which could be thought of as a strategy for them to maintain their native culture.

4.1.6 Host Culture Awareness, Cultural Comparison, and Opinions of Host Culture

The next section of subcategories are those that did not have a clear direction such as cultural maintenance or contact and participation but was still valuable in understanding the different ways in which these bloggers were able to acculturate. In order of frequency they were Host Culture Awareness at 27, Cultural Comparison also at 27, and Opinions of Host Culture at 25. In Western Europe, there were 16 segments coded as cultural comparison, 12 as opinions of host culture and eight as host cultural awareness, differing substantially from East Asia with 19 sections coded as host cultural awareness, 13 as opinions of host culture and nine as cultural comparison.

The most frequent of these subcategories was Host Culture Awareness. Segments of text that were coded in this subcategory were instances when bloggers explained different

things about their host culture. They did not express an opinion towards it or say that they took part in it in this category. This subcategory refers to moments in the blogs that were more observatory of the host culture. In a way, this denotes some sort of contact and participation, and it shows that the blogger is at least aware of the host culture and different aspects of it, but since there is no active participation or contact with it, I decided to separate this code without that type of identification. Many posts with segments of text coded as host culture awareness took the time to explain the way things were in the country they were residing in. For example, one blogger in Berlin explained the background of the May Day festival including some history behind the holiday and then went on to explain how those in Berlin celebrate the day. While she did not write about her joining in on the festivities her awareness to this certain aspect of German culture shows a type of knowledge that borders on participation. While this awareness has not been a dominant finding in previous survey research about acculturation, it functioned as an important part of the blogger's representations of their experiences spent abroad. Also, this subcategory appeared far more often in the blogs of those sojourners living in East Asia. This could be because of how different the cultures are, and it is possible bloggers felt like to adequately explain their experiences to those outside of the region it would require including more information about their host culture and the things that are standard for their host culture.

The next subcategory was Cultural Comparison. Text that was coded in this subcategory directly compared the blogger's native culture to their host culture. In text coded this way, there was no preference stated for either cultural just the awareness that there was a difference between their native culture and the new culture they existed within. Text that was coded this way also always offered a comparison. If a particular part of their native culture was mentioned, it was followed right away but the comparison of the culture they were now living in. A blogger in Madrid is talking about going out for tapas and explains, "I would probably compare it to the Happy Hour festivities we partake in the States" (Lady in Spain). In segments of text that were coded in the cultural comparison, subcategory bloggers showed that they were aware of the happenings in their host culture and were able to make a connection to their native culture which notes a sense of understanding and some sort of living between two cultures. But, this continual comparison to their host culture could reflect a way of viewing things only in opposition to

their native culture and could be seen, as a sign of cultural maintenance is everything is compared back to that native culture.

The Opinion of Host Culture is how it sounds. It refers to moments in the texts when bloggers offered opinions on the things that they either liked or did not like in their new culture. Both were coded into one subcategory. These moments were not added to cultural maintenance or contact and participation because blog posts or segments of blog posts in this subcategory took a more observatory viewpoint of the culture instead of noting if or how they were being involved in it. If it was in a negative view they did not mention doing things in a more “American way” but just that they did not enjoy certain aspects of the culture they were living in. This subcategory was most commonly found in blog posts that were titled: “Top 10 things I love about Korea” or “5 things I dislike about China”. This was a popular type of post and bloggers were able to reflect on the things they had noticed about their host culture. They did not just note something like in the host culture awareness category – they also shared how they felt about it. They can reflect on the culture they are living in but moments like these are more from an observer perspective as opposed to the view of someone being a part of the culture. For example one part of the culture in East Asia that many bloggers in Shanghai, Seoul and Hong Kong noticed that it was prevalent for people to spit on the streets- something that is considered impolite in the United States. All of the bloggers noted this as something that they did not like about the culture. While bloggers may have some negative feelings towards part of their host culture such as spit it did not stop them from engaging the culture in other ways.

4.1.7 Tradition

Following these, the next most common category was Tradition with a combined 20 segments of text. In Western Europe, there were seven segments coded tradition-cultural maintenance and two segments coded as tradition-contact and participation. In East Asia five segments were coded as tradition-cultural maintenance, and six segments were coded as tradition -contact, and participation.

Traditions refer to the engagement of different traditions – such as holidays and religious traditions. Portions of text that were coded as traditions-cultural maintenance refer to moments when bloggers noted taking part in traditions that belong to their native

culture. Conversely, text coded as tradition – contact, and participation refer to those moments when bloggers write about taking part in traditions that belong to their host culture. A commonality found through a large majority of the blogs was the mention of Thanksgiving celebrations. Moments in the text that specially referred to Thanksgiving food were coded into that subcategory, but many bloggers wrote about coming together with friends and family either in person via Skype. An important part of celebrating Thanksgiving in the United States is sharing what you are thankful for that year. One blogger in Berlin took time in his blog to express what he was thankful for and participated in that tradition via his blog. He wrote, “ But since this is a very special Thanksgiving in my household, I wanted to take a few moments to reflect on what I am thankful for” (Relocation Chronicles). It was uncommon for bloggers in Western Europe to write about taking part in traditions that were native to their host countries. Bloggers in East Asia, on the other hand, were more likely to write about their experience partaking in the traditions of their host culture. One blogger in Shanghai wrote about Chinese New Year and how it was a tradition in China to redecorate one's apartment during this time of the year including handing red pendants local to Shanghai.

4.1.8 Interest in Cultural Differences

The next subcategory found was Interest in Cultural Differences with a total of 19 segments, nine in Western Europe and 10 in East Asia. This subcategory is similar to the previous subcategory of cultural comparison or host culture awareness but was separated as posts that specifically referred to having an active interest in how the culture in their native different could or could not be different. Text that was coded in this subcategory also specifically noted that their host culture was not “weird” or “bad” but different. A blogger in Taipei perfect illustrates this subcategory saying, “ We all come from our own different cultural backgrounds, so naturally our experiences among new cultures will also be different, she goes on to explain this idea as “cultural empathy” and explains “Cultural empathy refers to the ability to accurately understand the experiences of people from diverse cultures and to convey that understanding responsively. When you are empathetic, you are able to develop an emotional and psychological bond with another person or social group” (Clear Jade Cinnabar). This interest in culture’s being different and not putting a

negative weight onto these differences may not show direct contact and participation but shows a certain amount of understanding that would be necessary for authentic participation to take place. So it is interesting to see a fair amount of bloggers writing about their interest in the ways that cultures are different.

4.1.9 Advice

Advice was next with 17 segments of text coded in this subcategory. In Western Europe, four sections of text were coded as advice-cultural maintenance and six as advice – contact, and participation. In East Asia with five segments coded as advice-cultural maintenance and two as contact and participation.

The subcategory advice was used to code moments in the text where bloggers gave explicit advice to other readers of the blogs. This advice was targeted for both temporary visitors such as tourists but also to others that were also currently expats or those looking to move to the city where the blogger was located. Pieces of text that were coded as advice-cultural maintenance tended to refer to things that other expats should bring to feel more comfortable in their new country. These pieces of advice were also about the expat community and where to find others from the United States. Interestingly those bloggers in East Asia did not mention pieces of advice on how to participate in the host culture. This could be because it is perceived by them to be harder to do this and since they aren't spending that much time participating in the host culture themselves, it is not something that they can advise. In general, more bloggers in Western Europe were more likely to engage in contact and participation so it would make sense for them to also encourage this sort of activity.

4.1.10 Home Sickness

With 13 segments of text, the next subcategory was Home Sickness. In Western Europe, five sections of text were coded this way and in East Asia almost twice as many segments of text with eight. I did not code this as cultural maintenance as the description of this homesickness varied. Moments of homesickness that were described in the blog did not necessarily follow some advice or mention of a strategy in dealing with homesickness but more just noting that homesickness was there. This was a common thing for bloggers to

write about and is something that has been found in the literature regarding culture shock. While homesickness is not precisely included in previous acculturation since it was something that came up frequently in the blogs it has relevance for the findings of this research. Bloggers noted many things they missed from home, while they might have missed these things they were not engaging in them per say, so it does not necessarily point more towards cultural maintenance. Bloggers explained that they missed certain things that they could do in the United States but continued to write about things that they enjoyed in the country they were living in. This combination of things points towards an Integration strategy reflected in these blog posts.

4.1.11 Connection, Belonging and Feelings of Otherness

The next most common subcategories were also divided into two other sections of Host Culture and Native Culture. First was Connection with ten segments followed by Belonging and Feelings of Otherness both with nine sections each. In Western Europe, the most frequent of the three was Belonging with one segment coded belonging-native culture and five as belonging-host culture. Next was Connection with three segments coded as connection-native culture and two as connection-host culture. The least frequent in this region was Feelings of Otherness with one moment coded as feelings of otherness-native culture and two moments of feelings of otherness-host culture. In East Asia, the most frequent of the three was feelings of otherness with six segments coded as feelings of otherness – host culture and zero as feelings of otherness- native culture. Next in this region was Connection with five segments coded as connection-native culture and zero as connection- host culture. The last frequent was belonging with two segments coded as belonging- native culture and one coded as belonging-host culture.

The first most frequent of this type of subcategory is Connection. Connection was used to refer to moments in the text when bloggers were expressing connection to either their native culture or to the host culture of the country they were living in. So a piece of text that was coded as connection-native culture refers to a moment when they blogger noted that they were in some way connected to the United States in an emotional sense. Oppositional text that was coded connection-host culture, when the blogger expressed feeling a connection to the host culture. Moments in text where a blogger noted a

connection to the host culture were focused mainly on enjoying the city where the city where they were located. While bloggers may have noted a connection to the place to was not necessary to the culture inherently. Other segments of text focused on the lifestyle of their host culture with bloggers expressing that the lifestyle was for them and that they were meant to be living there for some amount of time. Also, bloggers that wrote about their connections to their host city or their host culture were more likely to express other avenues for contact and participation within the host culture.

Following connection was belonging, the belonging subcategory is similar to the previous subcategory of connection but instead of just expressing a connection to either culture text that was coded into this subcategory expressed a feeling of belonging to either country. In text that was coded as belonging – native culture refers to moments when bloggers mentioned that they felt they belonged in the United States. These sorts of comments usually came from explaining a trip they had made home during the holiday season or them reflecting on their experience being abroad once returning home. On the other hand, text that was coded as belonging- host culture were moments when bloggers noted that they felt as if they belonged to their host culture. For example, bloggers wrote about how they felt they were truly in the place in the world they meant to be, or that what every country they were residing in currently was a better fit for them than the United States and that they were supposed to be there. Moments that were coded in this way also included times when the bloggers self-identified as a person from that area- for example a blogger in Madrid referred to her as a “true Madrileña”(Get at Mel), and another blogger in Hong Kong wrote a blog titled “Ten Signs you are True Hong Konger”(This Girl Abroad). By self-identifying as a person from the area, it shows that the bloggers feel a sense of belonging towards their host culture. The feeling of belongingness was far more common in Western Europe showing more of Assimilation or Integration and more of a trend toward separation from those in East Asia, which was found in other categories as well.

The last subcategory in this typology was feeling of otherness. This subcategory was used for instances when bloggers wrote about feeling like the other. Those from their native culture used text that was coded as feelings of otherness-native culture to describe when a blogger wrote about feeling of being othered. This was not common but there was one reflection written by a blogger in Brussels who expressed seeing Americans as foreign to

her. She described an altercation she had with fellow expats from the United States in an English bookshop. She began her explanation of the incident by saying “ In an incident that left me literally shaking afterwards, I was reminded why Americans sometimes deserve the bad rap they get overseas”(Kate Gilette). In this quote, she refers to Americans as they instead of we showing that she is not included in that group showing that she is othered from the American culture/ and community in Brussels. On the other hand, text that was coded as feelings of otherness- host culture described moments when the blogger felt as if they were being othered by members of their host culture, or othered by the culture in general. In Western Europe bloggers noted feeling like outsiders when they weren't able to properly communicate in their countries native language. But, this was more frequent in East Asia and moments like these bloggers noted looking aesthetically different. With some bloggers noting how they felt othered when locals would stop to take pictures of them, as they were some attraction or zoo animals. Another blogger in Seoul explain, “ As a foreigner and no matter what you look like, if you don't look Korean, you will get stared at. When you come to Korea, especially after living in the States where it is very culturally diverse, you will notice that first, everyone is Korean (well duh..we are in Korea, but when you are living somewhere where you see so many different races and ethnicities, it's a bit of a shock) and second, you stand out” (Peace, Love Kimchi). This is one of the only pieces where race is discussed explicitly while other bloggers have hinted at the idea but not blatantly said anything. This piece of text shows the difference between feeling othered in Western Europe and East Asia is that in East Asia. It is based solely on appearance before one even opens their mouth, in Western Europe, one can pass as a native as Europe is slightly more multicultural. In East Asia, it is not possible for an expat who is not of Asian decent to pass as a native even if they are fluent in the native language, as they will also be seen as different.

Also, bloggers in Western European noted how they felt othered by their native culture when having experiences with tourists or other expats in the community. They expressed moments when they felt they did not feel like they were really America or did not feel at home while they visited America and felt ostracized there.

This feeling of otherness was not displayed on the blogs of those living in East Asia and in their case all moments of feeling othered was coming from their host culture which

adds to the bigger divide from the culture. They expressed that they felt othered in small interaction but also by the country as a whole and that they did not fit in.

4.1.12 Expat Relations and Politics

The next two subcategories were infrequent but still noteworthy for this analysis. The next most common was Expat Relations. This subcategory was only found in East Asia with three segments coded as this subcategory. The least frequent subcategory was Politics, which was only found in Western Europe with two segments coded as politics-cultural maintenance.

The last subcategory in this theme was the most infrequent in all of the data regardless of the type of subcategory. The first is expat relations. Segments of text that were coded into this category were moments when bloggers wrote about the expat community in their city. These three moments in the text were negative, and they expressed that they were not happy with the expat community. However, the expat community is not made of people from these bloggers native culture. Also, moments that were coded in this way did not offer a comparison with their experiences with locals- so this did not fit into the specific framework of cultural maintenance and contact and participation. The Expat Relation subcategory was only found in East Asia. One blogger in Taipei expressed her dislike expats sticking together saying, “ This leads a lot of expats to gather together. I used to scoff at this; people who flee their country only to set up a facsimile somewhere else”(Cracking the Egg) While this blogger noted her dislike for these small expat communities. A blogger in Shanghai wrote about how she loved her neighborhood that was full of expats since the area housed the embassies. Expat relations only being mentioned in East Asia could be explained by biases in the bloggers and that bloggers in Western Europe could see a group of people walking together and not realizing that they are indeed expats because they are the same race as the local population. In East Asia, if someone is a different race than the local people it is more apparent, and that way these expat communities are easy to see and in turn are written about more. This difference is also reflected in the expat relationship subcategory – writers in East Asia made a point to explain the relationship between the expat communities in their country –

while this was not a topic of discussion in any of the blog posts written by those sojourners in Western Europe.

The last subcategory that could be understood as either cultural maintenance or contact and participation was politics. The politics subcategory only had text that was coded as politics-cultural maintenance. These sections of the text included the writer's thoughts about the current political climate in the United States. While they might not have been positive about said climate they still took the time to write about it showing that politics in their home country is still important for them and so they are still engaging in cultural maintenance. Politics were only mentioned by two bloggers, one located in Madrid and one located in Paris. I do not think that this reflects a difference between bloggers in Western Europe and East Asia but just a difference in the interests of the different bloggers.

4.2 Main Categories – Qualitative Analysis

As discussed in the methods section the posts that are included in this data analysis were selected to reflect the type of amount of posts present within the blogging community of Americans in Western Europe and East Asia. The main categories were constructed before coding. These four categories were the four different acculturation strategies outlined by Berry (1997). These main categories serve as a way to first understand the various types of strategies that are represented in the blogs. The posts were coded into the four acculturation categories as opposed to the two matrices because the posts included information and descriptions that aligned with both cultural maintenance and contact and participation and the combination of both was used to categorize each post into one strategy. The subcategories were used to define these strategies and what parts of their experience better as a sojourner are important to the extent to which they include them in a blog, but a full coding was done to make sure any other main categories could be identified.

It is also important to note that in some of these blog posts there are smaller moments in the posts that point to one strategy but the overwhelming content of the post lends its self more to another category. Each blog post was put into one of these categories following the two dimensions explained by Berry (1997). Following this framework the four main categories of this analysis are Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and

Marginalization. Below are three tables of the frequencies of these categories in total as well as for Western Europe and East Asia.

Total

Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization	Total
35	49	42	4	140

Western Europe

Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization	Total
20	32	17	3	72

East Asia

Assimilation	Integration	Separation	Marginalization	Total
15	27	25	1	68

4.3 Quantitative Analysis

Each post was coded as one of Barry’s acculturation strategies. The most common code for the posts was Integration with 49 of the 140 posts. The next most common was Separation with 42 posts. 35 of the posts were coded as Assimilation. By far the least most common was Marginalization with 4 out of 140 posts. In Western Europe, there were 72 posts. The most frequent category was Integration 32 posts. The next most common was Assimilation with 20 posts, followed by Separation with 17 posts and lastly Marginalization with three posts. In East Asia, there were 68 posts. Similarly to Western Europe the most common post for East Asia was Integration with 27 posts. Coming very close next was Separation with 25 posts. Then, followed by Assimilation with 15 posts and Marginalization with one post.

A post that was put into the Assimilation category showed high degrees of contact and participation with the host culture and low to a non-existent degree of cultural maintenance strategies. A post that was put into the Integration category showed high

degrees of contact and participation with the host culture as well as high degrees of cultural maintenance of the blogger's native culture. A post that was put into the Separation category showed a low to non-existent engagement in contact or participation with the host culture but showed high degrees of cultural maintenance. A post that was put into the Marginalization category showed neither engagement in cultural maintenance or contact and participation with the host culture.

Already from the main categories of the posts can start to see home differences in the portrayals of acculturation strategies between those sojourners living in Western Europe as opposed to those living in East Asia. In both countries, the most common category for a blog post was Integration, which shows both attention to cultural maintenance of their native culture while still participation in the host culture. Both, the two regions differed in their next most frequent strategies. Those bloggers in Western Europe wrote more about their participation in their host culture, which meant they had more posts that were categorized as Assimilation. While those bloggers in East Asia differed and wrote more about how they attempted to maintain their native culture, which meant more posts, were categorized as Separation.

While the majority of the work and research of this thesis was qualitative in nature, a brief quantitative analysis was taken out to partially give an answer for the sub-question which was: How do sojourner bloggers from the United States portray their acculturation strategies differently in Western Europe and East Asia?

In order to answer this question in a more quantitative way, the BAOS scale was used and made into a survey that I filled out myself after analyzing the blogs qualitatively having a better understanding of their contents. The BAOS scale was created by (Demes & Geeraet, 2015) to measure the acculturation strategies of people regardless of their native culture or their host culture. The scale is made up of eight items in total four for each dimension of the acculturation matrix. The scale items are as follows: for cultural maintenance: have home country friends, take part in home country traditions, hold on to my home country characteristics, do things the way home country people do. For contact and participation, the second part of the acculturation matrix the scale items are the same but focus on the host country instead. They are as follows: Have host country friends, take part in host country traditions, develop my host country characteristics, and do things the

way host country people do. Each statement is rated on a scale of 1 to 5. With one meaning not doing the thing mentioned in the statement and five being very heavily engaging in the activity of the scale item.

The qualitative part of this research was focused on the posts specifically, and as it was discovered through the analysis described earlier, all bloggers wrote posts that included a variety different way they displayed their acculturation. While one post might have been focused solely on food and cultural maintenance, a blogger could write another post later about food and contact and participation. So this quantitative analysis looks at the experience of each blogger on a larger scale and takes into account a fuller account of their experience. After all blog posts included in the sample were read and analyzed qualitatively the posts were revisited and read again for the quantitative analysis. I assigned a score after reviewing the blogs again. So a score was given for each blogger for each item of the scale. These scores were divided into the two matrices of acculturation: cultural maintenance and contact and participation. The lowest possible score for each dimension is four, and the highest possible score is 20, below are two tables summarizing the scores.

Cultural Maintenance

Region	Number of Bloggers	High Score	Low Score	Average Score
Western Europe	13	18	9	13.23
East Asia	11	18	11	14.27

Contact and Participation

Region	Number of Bloggers	High Score	Low Score	Average Score
Western Europe	13	17	9	13.15
East Asia	11	16	6	10.09

For 13 sojourner bloggers located in Western Europe, the average score for Cultural Maintenance was 13.23 with the highest score given being 18 and the lowest 9. Regarding Contact and Participation, the average score was 13.15. The highest score gave being 17 and the lowest nine.

For the 11 sojourner bloggers located in East Asia, the average score for Cultural Maintenance was 14.27 with the higher score given being 18 and the lowest 11. Regarding Contact and Participation, the average score was 10.09. The highest score gave being 16 and the lowest six.

By looking at these numbers, it seems as though bloggers located in East Asia were more likely to write more about their engagement in cultural maintenance and less likely to write about their involvement in contact and participation.

To see if this was just do to chance and better understand the relationship between location and cultural maintenance and contact and participation strategies in these bloggers representation of their time abroad two one-way ANOVA's were conducted. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of location on Cultural Maintenance in Western Europe and East Asia conditions.

There was a not a significant effect of location on cultural maintenance at the $p < .05$ level for the two conditions [$F(1, 22) = .909, p = .351$].

Another one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of location on Contact and Participation in Western Europe and East Asia conditions. There was a significant effect of location on contact and participation at the $p < .05$ level for the two conditions [$F(1, 22) = 8.389, p = 0.006$].

Based on these results we can say for this set of bloggers that bloggers did not differ in their portrayals of cultural maintenance strategies in statistically significant way, but they did differ in their contact and participation strategies. We can see that location does make a difference in regards to contact and participation, but not cultural maintenance. The sample is clearly not large enough to make generalized claims about the greater population of Sojourner bloggers from the United States living in Western Europe and East

Asia, but in terms of this sample, we can see that there was a statistically significant difference in the representation of contract and participation regarding location. From this analysis, we can conclude that sojourners from the United States living in East Asia portray their acculturation strategies differently from those in Western Europe as they portray more moments of contact and participation with their host culture.

Chapter 5: Discussion & Conclusion

This chapter of the thesis will summarize the results from the last chapter and also reflect on those findings and what they mean outside of this thesis. It will also provide answers to both the main research question as well as the sub research question. After that avenues for further research will be discussed as well as the limitation of this thesis.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

5.1.1 Main Research Question: General Portrayals

The main research question of this thesis was: How do sojourner bloggers portray their acculturation strategies in their blogs? Bloggers portrayed their acculturation strategies in many different ways through discussing a variety of subjects, which can be seen in the results section above. Overall the most common acculturation strategies found in the blog posts were Integration followed by Separation, Assimilation, and Marginalization. The results above show the frequency each subcategory came up which is important to understand the different ways in which acculturation is being portrayed in these sojourner blogs. The frequencies described in the results section are critical to getting a better understanding of the various topics that are discussed because the choice of these subjects shows the aspects of their experience that are essential to their sojourn. The strategies that were the most commonly found – Integration and Separation are similar to previous survey research which also found these two strategies to be the most commonly found (Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2009, Swagler & Jome, 2005, Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000). However, to more fully answer the research question is it necessary to look at the blogs more fully beyond just the numbers, and also go deeper into understanding what those results actually mean. While certain categories may not have been the most

frequent the inclusion of them in the blogs is important. By writing about their experiences and reflecting on their thoughts about their experiences abroad, we can better understand their process of acculturation. The different way in which they portray these different strategies. As can be seen in the results section there were a variety of different ways in which the sojourners could portray their acculturation strategies, and they used their blogs in a variety of ways.

While blogs can function as a personal journal and a place to vent they are also an important place to share information and that is important to take into account when analyzing the results of this study. One major finding from this qualitative study is that the sojourner bloggers that were studied in these cases did not necessarily portray their acculturation strategies in a way that could be easily defined by the two axes of cultural maintenance and contact and participation. They described their time experiences and the things that they were doing in a way that was more complicated than that. Especially when it came to describing their feelings and reflecting on how they felt about becoming a part of a new culture. More detailed description of emotions are not easily put into these two different matrices defined by Barry (1997), but still pointed towards various areas of acculturation- such as the ABC's of Acculturation described by Ward (2008). Certain aspects of the acculturation process that were noted in previous research such as religion, food, and language that appeared as important elements of the acculturation process in the research of Ward & Rana-Deuba (1999). The more easily measurable aspects of acculturation strategies such as behavior were found both in previous survey research (Ward & Kennedy, 1993, Yu & Wang, 2011) as well as in this thesis research with the most common topics being food, daily life, and language. However, the way that the acculturation strategies were portrayed in the blogs of these sojourners differs from previous research as the blogs showed more of the cognitive and affective part of the process. Bloggers are more able to reflect on their experiences through their writing and offer more of a reflective space to explain these concepts better.

Since it is writing of their own creation and not based on survey data with limited options, it is not so simple as it is with other research to say that something is one way or the other when the respondent to a survey only has a few options to choose from. A blog is full of possibilities, and the results of this research show that the way in which bloggers

portray their acculturation strategies do not fit exactly within the defined part of Acculturation as outlined by Berry (1997), while still reflecting how they went about acculturating.

5.1.2 Sub Research Question: - Difference in Portrayals

The sub research question of this thesis was focused on the difference in the acculturation strategies of those sojourners in Western Europe versus East Asia. In both regions the most common category and acculturation strategy was Integration. In general, those sojourners located in East Asia wrote more posts that were labeled as Separation, whereas in Western Europe bloggers wrote more posts that were categorized as Assimilation. In general, the biggest difference between the two regions is that those living in Western Europe were more likely to write about and share their experience with contact and participation with their host cultural, while those living in East Asia were more likely to write about how they were able to maintain their native culture.

The first most important is the difference is the feeling of being othered in East Asia that did not happen in Western Europe is the feeling of otherness. This was touched on in the results section, but this shows a notable difference between the experiences of those sojourners in Western Europe and East Asia. While many sojourners in Western Europe noted having difficulties with language or funny moments of not understanding something or making some mistake but shrugged it off as just a problem with language and not as feeling other.

The way in which those sojourners experienced being othered was very different by those living in East Asia. One blogger who wrote her experience- saying that she felt like a monkey in a zoo. She wrote a reflective sarcastic piece on her experience with this in Taiwan saying that the Taiwanese government should create a zoo of foreigners for locals to visit and take all the pictures they want so that in their daily life they no longer have to deal with always being asked to take pictures and feeling like some sort of animal as opposed to a person. The American sojourners in East Asia overall had a more difficult time becoming a part of their host cultures. This has previously been attributed to the idea of cultural distance particularly between the differences of the west's individualistic culture versus the east's collectivist culture. However, the experience reported by the blogger

above touches on an issue that is not explicitly mentioned in the blogs of these sojourners or discussed in previous research focus on American expats abroad specifically in Asia is race. In the sample of 140 blog posts, only one blogger wrote specifically about race when she explained how she felt mentioned feeling othered while living in Seoul, South Korea. The idea of race was no outright discussed by others, but it was pointed to heavily that appearance factors into this experience significantly. All of the bloggers included in this data section were white or looked as if they were of European descent. If someone of European descent goes to Europe as a sojourner, they can walk down the street and easily be confused as a European citizen. The same is not the case in Asia where it is evident to all locals that this person is not Asian and automatically separates them from the group and makes the transition into the Asian culture more difficult because they are already viewed as an other.

Previous research focused on the acculturation strategies of those living in different places is that the process of acculturation is more difficult in a culture that is more distant to your native culture. Regarding the sojourners in Western Europe and East Asia, it has been described that American culture is much closer culturally to that of Europe and more distant to the culture in East Asia. Specifically, it has been noted that the culture in East Asia is harder to become a part of because the Asian culture based on collectivism while most of Western Europe and the US are individualistic (Hofstede, 1984). Collectivism is described as a culture that values the group and focuses more on the group in general instead of focusing on the individualism. This can cause issues when it comes to acculturation strategies if foreigners are not considered as a part of this group. A culture that is more focused on the group mentality is usually harder to break into than one that focuses on the individualism because they are a part of that group and based on the reflections on of feeling othered by the host culture. It is harder to become a part of that culture especially when race is involved, as it is another factor that can make an expat or sojourner more clearly outside the group. This applies in particular to countries in Asia where the idea of racial purity is stressed as a way to maintain culture (Watson, 2010). Beyond writing about feeling othered, many of the post written by the residing in East Asia were more from an outsider perspective – with fewer moments of connection noted and were written a way that was more like reporting on the culture instead of being actively

engaged in it. This could be done to with the sojourners in East Asia also noting fewer moments of socializing and fewer relationships with those from their local culture. Since they were not able to actually interact with those from their host country to would be difficult to really feel like they are a part of that culture and are in turn not really able to write about their experience is any way other than as an observer.

Another interesting difference in portrayals of their acculturations strategies beyond the differences in the frequencies is how in Western Europe many people noted about how they did not want to seem like Americans- or in some way wanted to feel distanced from their American identity. This was not the case in East Asia however. But, this ties back to the idea of race and one blogger noted that if you are white and foreign people automatically assume you are American even if you are not. For those in Western Europe, they can more easily pass as a local.

5.2 Reflection on Findings

Throughout the process of doing the analysis, there were certain thoughts that I think are important for the overall process and results of this thesis. The first is the difficulty of categorizing a particular action as cultural maintenance- when those items could also be potentially seen as contact and participation in the age of globalization. With certain categories that were found most frequently such as food and entertainment, it is not so easy in a more globalized world to determine if specifically, a sojourner from the United States is not engaging in contact and participation with the host culture while still engaging in cultural maintenance. For example going to eat a hamburger at McDonald's many years ago might have been seen as a distinctly American thing, but that is not the case any more Ideas of culture are changing, and it is not so easy to put things into these categories especially when it comes to food and entertainment, sometimes even holidays.

For example one blogger who was working as an English teacher in South Korea was told that the school would be having a Halloween party- full of the stereotypical "American" traditions such as trick o treating and dressing up in costumes. So if the English teacher in this situation is taking part in these traditions in the way of course she is maintaining her native culture- but she is doing this at her school with her Korean students in a way that is

not her decision. She and her students are taking part in this tradition together so in a sense she is also participating in her host culture by celebrating with her students. Trying to separate the actions described in the blog posts is not so easy especially when it is sojourners from the United States being researched. Regardless for the worse or, the better American culture has proliferated the world and some things that might have been deemed quintessentially American can no longer be labeled that way, as they have become integral parts of other countries culture as well. Previous research into the acculturation strategies of Sojourners has mainly been focused on people that are not from the United States. This makes sense, as these strategies are more important/ complicated for those who are coming into a culture that is maybe not used to their native culture. For example, the research into Chinese students in Germany, while there is certainly a Chinese population in Germany and ways for the Chinese students to be involved in their native culture it is more clear when these students are engaging in cultural maintenance as aspects of Chinese culture have not entered the mainstream German culture. This is not the case for many parts of American culture, which has its hold on many aspects of cultures around the world. So, it is not so clear cut in saying when someone from the United is engaging solely in cultural maintenance is that something from their native culture has also become a part of their host culture as well. This is especially true for biggest cities around the world. Entertainment, for example, is also challenging to make so clear-cut. It is extremely common in theaters across the world to play movies from the United States and watching those films from the United States has become part of different cultures around the world.

Another interesting topic that comes up in these blog posts were writers speaking about the expat community and how they are interacting and making relationships as well as socializing while living in their new country. Spending time with other expats is interesting to think about regarding acculturation, as this is not necessarily a cultural maintenance strategy but still not actively participating in the host culture itself. But these expat communities are relatively common in the main cities around the world. If the expat community is important enough to the experience of the sojourner that they take the time to blog about the community then maybe this should be looked at more in depth as the expat community in many places are almost a subsection of the culture. Especially in cities

such as Hong Kong with such a high population of a foreigner, while yes Hong Kong is Chinese in heritage it is a place that is also well known for its expat community and what those expats bring and that blend has come to represent Hong Kong culture better. For example, one blogger living in Hong Kong wrote a post called 10 Ways to know you are a true Hong Konger where she listed certain activities Hong Kongers take part in. If one participates in these activities, it makes them a true “Hong Konger.” While this a more humorous style post and shows more of foreigners view on what it means to be a Hong Konger is important to take this into account when looking at acculturation that depending on the culture and the place a blend of other cultures could be integral to making up the local culture. In the case of Hong Kong, the expat community has created its separate culture that is a blend of the different expat native cultures and the original culture of Hong Kong. This sort of expat culture exists between contact and participation and cultural maintenance strategies and makes it harder to categorize sojourner activities into one of those boxes.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 Limitations

As with any piece of scientific research, there are some limitations to these findings. While many blogs posts were read to get a better understanding of this space, of course not every blog article written by a sojourner from the United States is included in this sample. There are of course so many other ways that different bloggers could write about their experiences with acculturation, and this thesis research is only a start for this type of research into acculturation strategies and how they are written about in blogs. Additionally, this research was limited to those sojourners that were living in major cities in both Western Europe and East Asia, residing in these areas made engaging in cultural maintenance strategies easier for them, as there were more opportunities for these sorts of activities. This was selected to create a baseline in which the experiences of all those sojourners could be compared to each other in every country but also between the two different regions, but as mentioned above this would be an attractive option for future research.

Lastly, another limitation that is important to discuss this research is the coding. As with all qualitative research, the researcher plays a significant role in the coding and interpretation of coding. In some ways, the coding is biased in the sense that it depends on what the coder assume other cultures to be like. Of course, moments where bloggers wrote that the culture where they lived was a certain way then that was taken into account but to separate certain activities or actions into cultural maintenance and contact and participation is largely based on the way they researcher- myself sees both of these cultures. As someone who is originally from the United States, there is a particular way in which I understand “American culture” that may not be as obvious to someone who has not lived in the United States. I also have been a sojourner myself in both Western Europe and East Asia, so there is a level of lived experience that I can take with me into the coding process and a deeper understanding of what each of the bloggers is going through because it is something that I have lived myself as well. But, as research it is, of course, important to stay objective and not have your experiences influence the way in which you interpret the data – there is a particular connection that automatically exists that can bias the data.

5.3.2 Avenues for Future Research

Following the findings of this research I think there are two interesting avenues for future research. Firstly I think it would be interesting to research these same populations, but those who live in rural areas or smaller towns to see how the responses may change. Sojourners living in large cities may have more opportunities to maintain their native culture, as there are usually more options in larger cities. So it would be interesting to see if those sojourners living in different areas portrayed more experiences that related to interacting with their host culture or if they would still find other ways to maintain their native culture, even though they are not as convenient as they are in a larger city.

Another interesting avenue of research may be to include the blog writers in the research as well through interviews. It would be interesting to compare how the blog writers believe they are portraying their acculturations strategies versus how researchers view those strategies. It would also be interesting to receive information from the writers how they intend to use their blog and if there is certain information that is being purposefully withheld in order to create a certain narrative of their time abroad for their

readers or for themselves. This could be done by conducting interviews with the writers themselves to try and get a better understanding of their experience as a whole as a sojourner. Following these interviews blogs could be analyzed to see the differences in how the bloggers portray their acculturation strategies during interviews versus how they write about them in their blogs.

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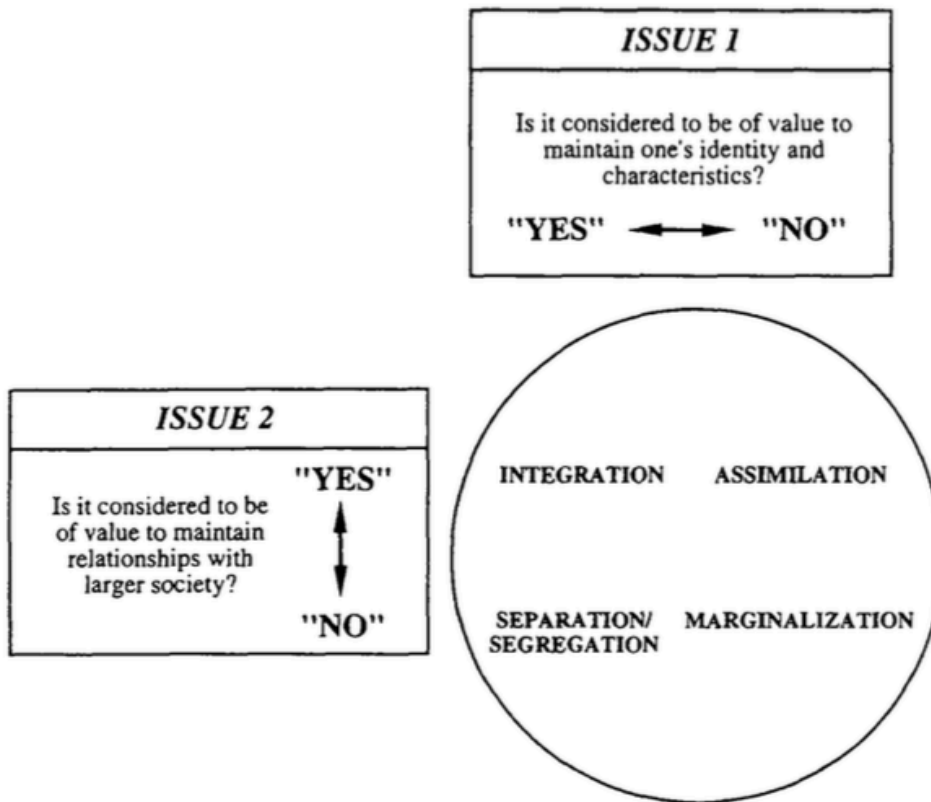
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Appendix A: Four-way Acculturation Matrix



Found in:

Berry, J.W. (1997) Immigration, acculturation, and adaption. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46, 5-68.

Appendix B: Acculturation Index

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

not at all similar *very similar*

Enter your response (1,2,3,4,5,6, or 7) in the parentheses. Please respond to all items.

	Singaporeans	Australians
1. Clothing	()	()
2. Pace of life	()	()
3. General knowledge	()	()
4. Food	()	()
5. Religious beliefs	()	()
6. Material comfort (standard of living)	()	()
7. Recreational activities	()	()
8. Self-identity	()	()
9. Family life	()	()
10. Accommodation/residence	()	()
11. Values	()	()
12. Friendships	()	()
13. Communication styles	()	()
14. Cultural activities	()	()
15. Language	()	()
16. Perceptions of co-nationals	()	()
17. Perceptions of host nationals	()	()
18. Political ideology	()	()
19. World view	()	()
20. Social customs	()	()
21. Employment activities	()	()

Found in:

Ward, C. & Kennedy, A. (1993). Where's the culture in cross-cultural transition? Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 24, 221-249.

Appendix C: Brief Acculturation Orientation Scale

Items for acculturation orientation

Have [home country] friends

Take part in [home country] traditions

Hold on to my [home country] characteristics

Do things the way [home country] people do

Have [host country] friends

Take part in [host country] traditions

Develop my [host country] characteristics

Do things the way [host country] people do

Found in:

Demes, K.A. & Geeraert, N.(2014). Measures matter scales for adaptation, cultural distance, and acculturation orientation revisited. *Journal of Cross-Culture Psychology*, 45(1), 91-109.

Appendix D: List of Blog Posts

Brussels

<http://kategillette.blogspot.nl/2008/03/les-marolles-flea-market.html>

<http://kategillette.blogspot.nl/2008/03/incident-in-bookstore.html>

<http://kategillette.blogspot.nl/2008/03/why-my-jeans-are-getting-tighter-and.html>

<http://kategillette.blogspot.nl/2008/03/looking-back-les-restaurants-dixelles.html>

<http://kategillette.blogspot.nl/2008/02/comfort-foods.html>

<http://kategillette.blogspot.nl/2007/11/expat-bends.html>

<http://kategillette.blogspot.nl/2007/06/retail-therapy-les-petits-riens.html>

<http://bravingbrussels.tumblr.com/post/19628644841/when-tragedy-strikes-grab-a-camera>

<http://bravingbrussels.tumblr.com/post/19015583968/my-first-european-haircut>

<http://bravingbrussels.tumblr.com/post/15429136382/jour-une>

<http://bravingbrussels.tumblr.com/post/15515797067/i-scream-you-scream-we-all-scream-american>

<http://blogginginbrussels.blogspot.nl/2011/05/reflections.html>

<http://blogginginbrussels.blogspot.nl/2011/03/carnival-and-other-happenings.html>

<http://blogginginbrussels.blogspot.nl/2011/02/brussels-my-new-home.html>

<http://blogginginbrussels.blogspot.nl/2011/02/been-here-for-month.html>

<http://blogginginbrussels.blogspot.nl/2011/01/first-week.html>

Madrid

<https://sincerelylynnette.com/2015/11/28/refranes-castellanos-also-known-as-what-the-hell-do-you-mean/>

<https://sincerelylynnette.com/2015/11/15/coffee-break-time-if-you-learn-anything-go-to-coffee-break-time/>

<https://sincerelylynnette.com/2015/10/31/tie-process-in-spain-donald-trump-would-be-so-proud-that-youre-legal-who-cares-donald/>

<https://sincerelylynnette.com/2015/09/30/p-s-sorry-i-have-not-written-the-reality-of-homesickness/>

<https://sincerelylynnette.com/2015/01/19/nochevieja-old-night-aka-new-years-eve/>

<https://sincerelylynnette.com/2014/10/14/you-want-me-to-dry-my-clothes-where/>

<https://getatmel.wordpress.com/2013/11/13/meloise-at-the-plaza-mayor/>

<https://getatmel.wordpress.com/2013/09/30/real-actual-madrid-weekend/>

<https://getatmel.wordpress.com/2013/09/27/21-and-invincible/>

<https://getatmel.wordpress.com/2013/09/02/wake-me-up/>

<https://ladyinspain.com/2013/06/19/looking-back/>

<https://ladyinspain.com/2013/03/12/my-life-as-an-auxiliar-in-spain/>

<https://ladyinspain.com/2013/02/09/this-was-my-lunch-today/>

<https://ladyinspain.com/2013/02/04/things-i-love-about-living-in-spain/>

<https://ladyinspain.com/2012/10/14/10-things-i-miss-from-the-good-old-us-of-a/>

Berlin

<http://relocationchronicles.blogspot.nl/2013/09/relocated-to-berlin-settling-in.html>

<http://relocationchronicles.blogspot.nl/2013/09/relocated-to-berlin-getting-new-stuff.html>

<http://relocationchronicles.blogspot.nl/2013/10/relocated-to-berlin-signing-up-for.html>

<http://relocationchronicles.blogspot.nl/2013/11/relocated-to-berlin-special.html>

<http://relocationchronicles.blogspot.nl/2014/01/not-quite-home-for-holidays.html>

<http://megnanimously.com/the-great-berlin-weihnachtsmarkte-tour-of-2015/>

<http://megnanimously.com/5-things-to-know-about-sightseeing-in-berlin/>

<http://megnanimously.com/family-meet-berlin/>

<http://megnanimously.com/5-things-to-know-about-drinking-in-berlin/>

<http://megnanimously.com/may-day-2015/>

<http://megnanimously.com/good-eats-schneeweis-friedrichshain/>

<http://megnanimously.com/one-year-berliniversary/>

<https://berlinstudent.wordpress.com/2013/08/29/a-new-discovery-how-to-improve-your-speech-and-leadership-qualities/>

<https://berlinstudent.wordpress.com/2013/04/03/how-much-does-berlin-cost/>

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