Lancaster University – Department of Sociology

# Temporary Sojourns in the Periphery

## Partners of International Students in Lancaster, United Kingdom

Thesis resubmitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD),

by Dipl.-Soz. Elisabeth Claudia Grindel,

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# Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

This thesis is re-submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

Elisabeth Claudia Grindel

# Abstract

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*Thesis 'Temporary Sojourns in the Periphery - Partners of International Students in Lancaster, United Kingdom' submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in September 2011; re-submission in December 2012.*

This thesis reports the findings of a qualitative research project on partners of international students in Lancaster, United Kingdom, a place selected as an example of the many peripheral university cities affected by the growth in international student migration. The experiences of these voluntary, temporary, mostly highly skilled migrants differ from accounts of other mobile people and have so far been largely ignored in the literature. This is a lack that this thesis fills. Drawing on diverse bodies of migration literature as well as on semi-structured interviews, I explore these migrants' experiences concerning employment, home, social networking, and network support whilst they reside in Lancaster. I show that these 'immobilised mobile' people have to rely on the local, restricted, labour market in their search for employment and that they invest a huge amount of emotional labour for the creation of a 'diasporic intimacy' which is important for the formation of an 'intimate diasporic space' in the home. I further discuss their attempts to form meaningful social networks at the place of relocation and their work on maintaining relations abroad. I explore also how these migrants can feel in or out of place at the new setting.

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# Introduction

This thesis examines the experiences of partners of international postgraduate students at Lancaster University, selected as an exemplifying case for the growing number of small, peripheral university cities affected by a rise in international student migration.[1] These individuals are relatively privileged, temporary, transnational migrants who cross national boundaries for a shorter or longer period of time. The motivation for their migration is their desire for close proximity to their partners, the international students. Until now, research on accompanying partners of students had been largely ignored in the literature, a gap that this thesis fills.

Earlier writings on a similar group of migrants in the U.S. and Canada (de Verthelyi, 1995; 1996; Kim, 2006; 2010; Plett Martens and Peter Grant, 2007[2]) refer to these migrants as 'spouses of international students'. I prefer 'partners', as, at the time of the interview, not all of my informants were married. The usage of 'partner' includes both married and unmarried informants. Concerning visa regulations, it is vital to mention that all non-EU participants had to be married in order to gain access to the dependants' visa, whereas EU participants were able to cross borders within the EU without marriage certificates.

There are many ways in which we could consider this group of migrants within migration studies. I think they fit best, although not exclusively, into the literature of transnationalism. As they are relatively highly-skilled migrants, with the majority of them holding at least one tertiary qualification, in this introduction I situate the research in the field of 'privileged' transnational migration. In chapter one, I specifically situate this thesis in the field of transnational families and network support. These two fields offer useful insights, but my participants do not exclusively

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[1] I return to the setting in chapter three.
[2] I return to these studies in chapter one.

fit in either of these categories. In subsequent chapters, I therefore introduce other bodies of literature that are relevant to more specific issues that each chapter addresses.

In this introductory chapter, I first give a brief overview of literature on 'privileged' migration. Second, I show that, although so far largely ignored in relevant literature, the partners of international students in my study are indeed part of this emerging group of migrants. Third, I outline the chapters of this thesis.

Gunther Beyer (1981: 96) claims that the twentieth century has been called the 'century of the homeless man', a characteristic that becomes even more evident in the twenty-first century. Although migration has always been part of human history, its growth in volume and its significance have risen since the end of the Second World War and most particularly since the 1980s, which leads authors to call the current time the 'age of migration' (Castles and Miller, 2003). To migrants, the United Kingdom has traditionally played an exceptional role as an English-speaking country and as head of the former British Empire. In 2007, the year of my study, nearly 600,000 migrants entered the UK on a temporary or permanent basis (Dobson, Latham and Salt, 2008). Whereas the twentieth century can be characterised as the age of low-skilled (and) guest workers migrating into the Anglo-European world (Zirh, 2008), the beginning of the twenty-first century showed an increase in migration of the skilled and highly skilled. In 2010 nearly fifty percent of all work visas being issued by the UK were given to Tier one (highly-skilled) and Tier two (skilled with job offer) applicants.[3] This shows a significant rise in skilled migration.

Vered Amit (2007) argues that the majority of migrants today have a relatively high amount of privilege, and Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut (1990: 10) state

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[3] Migration Observatory:
http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/non-european-labour-migration-uk
[last accessed 12 April 2011].

that even those migrants who may appear relatively disadvantaged in respect to the hierarchies of their destination countries possess 'above average levels of education and occupational skills in comparison with their homeland population'. Scholars argue that at the turn of the century the movement of highly skilled migrants can be seen as a migration of the ruling elites. These migrants have been referred to as 'professional transients' (Castells, 2000), 'cosmocrats' (Micklethwait and Wooldridge, 2000), and members of the 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair, 2001).

Research on privileged skilled migrants has often concentrated on transnational corporate employees (Fechter, 2007a; 2007b; Gherardi, 2011; Nowicka, 2005; 2007), but other forms of mobility of privileged transnational migrants have also been taken into consideration. These include: employees in the middle echelons of a company (Torresan, 2007); development workers and delegates from governmental and non-governmental organisations (Eyben, 2008; Verma, 2008); diplomats (Coles, 2008; Niedner-Kalthoff, 2006); military executives (Enloe, 1990; Rogaly and Taylor, 2010;Yuval-Davis, 1997); cinematographers (Greenhalgh, 2007); academic scholars (Bauschke-Urban, 2009; Scheibelhofer, 2006); retirees living part of the year in sunnier parts of the globe (Janoschka, 2008; Oliver, 2007); backpackers (Urry, 2004) and penniless globetrotters (Kreutzer and Roth, 2006); volunteers in global spiritual and leisure centres (Rodman, 2007); international students (Iredale, 2005); and partners and families of the above mentioned (Amit, 2007).[4]

These individuals have in common relatively high amounts of capital – following Bourdieu's theory (1987; Rehbein, 2006) of economic, cultural and social capital – which allows international movement and privileges the migrants in their ability to choose whether to be mobile or to stay put. I return to a more detailed

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[4] In the next chapter, I return to these transnational professionals and their partners and families in more detail.

discussion of these issues in chapter three. The movement of these privileged transnational migrants can further be characterised as (more or less) voluntary. Hence, their ability to return to their home country is a choice dependent on the migrant's personal decision (Hannerz, 1996). Instead of being characterised as members of the transnational elites, the privileged migrants of current times are more likely be connected by their middle class status (Amit, 2007) and are travelling for the acquisition of valuable 'overseas experience' (Urry, 2004: 205) in order to increase their cultural capital.

Pnina Werbner (1999; 2006) states that these forms of 'cosmopolitanism' should not be seen as purely elitist and Euro-centric, focussing on the 'globe trotting travel[ler] [with] sophisticated cultural knowledge and [the] moral world-view of deracinated intellectuals' (2006: 496). Instead, she advocates the inclusion of both '*non-elite* forms of travel' (ibid: 497; italics in original), something she calls 'working-class cosmopolitanism' (ibid), and '*non-European* but nevertheless *high culture[d]*' (ibid; italics in original) individuals, whom she describes as 'minority elites'. Her discussion of vernacular cosmopolitanism therefore challenges the image of the sophisticated white traveller, so often used as the stereotype of 'the cosmopolitan'. In assimilation and focussing on migrants in France, the French sociologist Alain Tarrius (2000) introduces 'les nouveaux cosmopolitismes'[5] (new cosmopolitans) (McDougall and Scheele, 2012). There he argues that working-class migrants in France also hold certain characteristics often ascribed to cosmopolitans, such as being liberal, tolerant, open to different cultures. Monika Salzbrunn (2008: 78) states, he thereby 'made an important point by underlining migrants' capacity for self-organisation and entrepreneurship, underestimated by other sociologists', and in so

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[5] To my knowledge, Alain Tarrius' work is not translated into English. Unable to read French, I therefore refer to secondary literature.

doing started a new discussion on privilege. Throughout this thesis, I return to migrants' privilege.

In this thesis, I also refer to my participants as temporary migrants. Martin Bell and Gary Ward (2000: 88) combine temporary mobility with permanent migration and define temporary mobility as 'any form of territorial movement which does not represent a permanent, or lasting, change of usual residence'. Whereas the authors include tourism, I use the category in order to focus on short-term migration which involves some forms of settlement, but with the intention to relocate after a certain amount of time. The temporariness of their sojourns turns these individuals into truly transnational migrants whose life experiences are stretched over more than one place. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Green Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1995: 48) define transnational migration as 'the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous and multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement'. Transmigrants are thus migrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders (Basch and Glick Schiller, 1994) and 'whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation state' (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc, 1995: 48). According to Alejandro Portes, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt (1999: 218), transnationalism is defined by the 'growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders'. Furthermore, 'terms such as transnational social spaces, transnational social fields or transnational social formations usually refer to sustained ties of geographically mobile persons, networks and organisations across borders of the multiple nation-states' (Faist, 2008: 25).

According to Thomas Faist (2008; Bauböck and Faist, 2010), research has been conducted concerning financial remittances, human capital, knowledge transfer, and social remittances (such as the export of human rights and democracy[6]), but less attention has been given to the life-worlds of transnational actors. Focussing on exactly such issues, Remus Gabriel Anghel and his colleagues (2008) introduce the term 'inbetween-ness' (Anghel, Gerharz, Rescher and Salzbrunn, 2008: 15) in order to highlight the life between two (or more) nation states and the condition whereby 'social actors are involved simultaneously in more than a single place'. This involvement between places can occur through both corporeal and virtual travel (Urry, 2002), the exchange of commodities, or imaginatively through daily practices of remembering and homemaking.

With regard to the first form of connectivity, corporeal and virtual travel, scholars debate whether virtual travel can be seen as a substitute for corporeal travel. Deirdre Boden and Harvey Molotch (1994) argue that virtual travel will never fully replace corporeal travel, as the importance of body language and touch creates a 'compulsion of proximity', and Karen Fog Olwig (2002) suggests that for the migrant this becomes especially evident when staying connected to close family members. She states that family rituals such as births, weddings, funerals, and religious celebrations require physical proximity and therefore corporeal travel. Katy Gardener and Ralph Grillo (2002) argue that presence at and participation in ritual celebrations not only reconnects the migrant emotionally with geographically distant relatives, but also makes a statement about membership and a claim about belonging within the group, even when the migrant is physically absent most of the time. Whereas corporeal travel

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[6] For a detailed discussion of social remittances and the effect of return migration as well as visits to the population that stayed put, see Peggy Levitt's (2001) description of the 'transnational villagers'. She argues that the return of transnational migrants working in Boston, MA, U.S., affects the villagers of Miraflores in the Dominican Republic in their normative thinking and social practices.

might be important if the migrant must be physically present at special occasions, virtual communication via the Internet and the telephone plays a vital part in migrants' everyday life experiences. While devices are used in order to communicate with geographically distant, emotionally close kin and friendship networks (Greschke, 2008; Nowicka, 2008), they also allow the migrant to stay connected to the place of departure through, for example, social networking sites and interactive television. The latter allows the migrant to follow local and national news and therefore simulate proximity to the place of departure (Goel, 2008). Virtual and corporeal travels are therefore simultaneously part of the migrants' experiences and complement each other. In chapter six, I return to this body of literature and explore my participants' corporeal and virtual travels.

Research on the second form of connectivity, the exchange of commodities, has focussed mainly on the sending of financial remittances and goods by migrants to their places of origin (Rozario, 2005), but goods also move in different directions. International students, for example, might receive parcels with their favourite consumer goods from their parents (Petridou, 2001), and transnational professionals might use Internet shopping in order to obtain their preferred commodities in distant locations. Through the growth of mobility, the movement of goods is therefore not only from the more privileged countries to less privileged ones, but can, in fact, be described as an exchange rather than merely the sending of remittances. In chapter five, I look at my participants' attachments to goods received from their distant homes.

Connectivity can, thirdly, take place imaginatively through daily practices such as remembering and homemaking. Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (1998: 7) argue that for the transnational migrant, home can be found 'in a routine set of

practices, a repetition of habitual interactions, in styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in stories carried around in one's head'. Sallie Westwood and Annie Phizacklea (2000: 31) state that the connection between nation state and identity comes to be found in 'the whole panoply of cultural/symbolic artefacts that contribute towards the imaginary of the nation', such as 'schooling, national days, celebrated heroes, flags, monuments'. By remembering such artefacts and celebrating certain national days, the migrants join what Benedict Anderson (2006) calls the 'imagined [national] community' even in physical absence. Transnational migrants might also connect to geographically distant places through certain forms of homemaking, such as concentrating on creating an 'original taste of home' (Petridou, 2001), following a certain routine like consuming their meals around the dinner table at a particular time, or by designing the interiors of their new dwelling places in a manner fitting to their place of origin (Hindman, 2008). In chapter five, I explore my research subjects' imaginative connections in more detail.

All these forms of connectivity – corporeal and virtual travel, exchange of commodities, imaginative connection through remembering and homemaking – are seen as important for the migrants to maintain the state of 'inbetween-ness', but there might be differences between migrants. Access to resources or financial pressures might influence the migrants' ability to maintain contact to distant family members. Exchange of goods might also be dependent on finances. Homemaking practices might differ according to place of origin, and place of 'settlement'.

So far, I discuss that the migration of privileged migrants is on the rise. These individuals are described as more privileged in comparison to other migrants, such as low-skilled labour migrants, as well as in some cases those who 'stay put' in the country of origin. We might assume that financial pressure is less of an issue for more

privileged migrants compared to less privileged migrants. However, the following chapters will show that for partners of international students, economic privilege is not as clear cut. For the purpose of this chapter, I shall now consider how partners of international students fit in the category of 'transnational migrants'.

**Partners of International Students: Privileged Transnational Migrants?**

In this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with eleven partners of international postgraduate students at Lancaster University, seven women and four men (more information in chapter three). These migrants decided to cross national borders and to live, for a certain amount of time, in Britain, accompanying their partners who took on postgraduate education (Masters or PhD level) at Lancaster. Here, it is important to note that the decision to migrate can be characterised as *voluntary*.

The majority of the participants intended to leave the UK after a certain length of time, depending on the student's degree course. They retained their ability to end their stay early and return to their places of departure without their partner if they had to. The nature of their sojourn can therefore be characterised as *temporary*.

The partners of international students interviewed for this study hold relatively high amounts of economic, cultural, and social capital, discussed in chapter three, and the majority has at least one tertiary degree of their own. They arrived with the intention to join the local labour market as I discuss in chapter four. Hence, they can be characterised as *highly-skilled, relatively privileged* migrants.

Thus, in comparison to other privileged transnational migrants, the individuals interviewed here have the following characteristics in common: they migrated voluntarily, their sojourn is aimed to be temporary, they have an ability to return, and

hold relatively high amounts of economic, cultural and social capital. In addition, it is important to explore how they live their lives in a stage of 'inbetween-ness'.

The partners of international students construct their everyday life experiences around connections to the place of departure, some of them to more than one place because they have had several previous residences. They travel corporeally and virtually in order to stay connected with geographically distant, emotionally close family members and friends (chapter six), and they are involved in the exchange of commodities by sending as well as receiving remittances and gifts (chapter five). They try to recreate a sense of home and belonging by imaginatively connecting to geographically distant places and they invest an enormous amount of time and effort to create what I call an 'intimate diasporic space' through their homemaking (chapter five). They arrived in the UK with the intention to participate in wage labour, and most of them are highly skilled migrants themselves (chapter four).

I chose the relatively small university city of Lancaster, which I introduce in chapter three, in order to highlight that the growth in student mobility will challenge universities, especially in peripheral university towns,[7] and to show the need to conduct research on (temporary) migrants in small places as opposed to in global and globalising metropolises. In following chapters I explore whether there still is such a thing as *the typical partner* of an international student, or whether this is a group as diverse as any other group in our modern society.

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[7] In light of the current changes to the TIER 4 Visa in the UK, this growth in international student migration might not take place here, but nevertheless there will be international students arriving accompanied by their partners which makes this study relevant. Also, as the research was conducted before the change of government in the UK, I am not able to fully discuss the cuts here, but briefly explore the changes in Britain's higher education sector in the concluding chapter.

**Thesis Structure**

As the first study of partners of international students in the UK, this thesis contributes to current literature on migration. I explore experiences of these privileged transnational migrants on their temporary sojourns in Lancaster, which has been chosen as an example for the growing number of relatively small university cities that are seeing an increase in international students.

This thesis comprises eight chapters. In chapter one, I situate the research in theoretical approaches on transnational families and network support. I also focus on two bodies of literature that deal with migrating partners: family expatriates, and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada. Further, I introduce the concept of the 'transnational bubble' in order to highlight these migrants' specificity.

In chapter two, I situate the research on experiences of partners of international students in the broader context of student migration. I give an overview of historical developments of student mobility into the UK and discuss the changes that were predicted following the Bologna Process.

In chapter three, I focus on this importance of conducting research in smaller cities, and introduce Lancaster as the setting of my research. I also discuss the methods used, introduce my sample, and discuss its limitations.

In chapter four, which is the first empirical chapter, I examine my eleven participants' attempts to be included in the local labour market. I explore their different options for gaining employment, such as deskilling and spatial mobility. In addition, I discuss their resorting to 'cruel optimism'.

In chapter five, I concentrate on the participants' construction of home whilst in temporary transnational migration. I explore their creations of diasporic intimacy

and their emotional domestic labour. I look at their habits of food preparation and consumption, and introduce the concept of an 'intimate diasporic space' in the home.

In chapter six, I focus on my participants' attempts to form friendship networks in Lancaster, and their use of virtual and corporeal communication in order to stay connected to emotionally close, geographically distant kin and friendship networks. I further explore these networks on different geographical and temporal scales, taking into consideration different degrees of closeness.

In chapter seven, I look at the temporary migrants' feelings of being in or out of place. Thereby, I particularly focus on three participants and their specific experiences in Lancaster.

Finally, in the conclusion, I look back at my findings and offer a comparison of my research subjects and other privileged migrants, namely, family expatriates, and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada. In light of the findings of the research, I again draw on key issues, such as 'network support', the 'transnational bubble', 'cruel optimism', 'intimate diasporic space' and the concept of 'immobilised mobiles'. In addition, I focus on the current changes in Britain's Higher Education system and revisit the particular image of a partner of an international student as held by university professionals.

# Chapter one:

# Theorising Migrating Partners

The partners of international students in this study decided to migrate to Lancaster on a temporary basis because of their desire for close proximity to their partners. They did not want to maintain a relationship across several national borders, but chose to accompany the student for the duration of his or her degree study; but what characterises these partners? In chapter three, I will introduce my participants more fully, but here it can be said that these migrants are unique in the sense that they migrate for a fixed amount of time, are mostly highly skilled, and hold some amount of privilege as compared to other migrants and other inhabitants in their places of departure.

Because of their very specific status as temporary, highly skilled, and privileged migrants, it is difficult to include partners of international students in a singular body of literature. In the introduction, I situate these migrants in literature on transnational professionals. Here, I focus on the literature describing transnational families and network support, spouses of expatriates and the small body of literature on spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada. In later chapters, I also use other scholarly sources to highlight the specificity of the content.

## Transnational Families and Network Support

Literature on network support for migrants revolves around two main areas: the transnational family and theories of social networks. Here I focus on these theoretical considerations in order to explore the unique approach of researching partners of international students who chose to migrate temporarily.

Deborah Fahy Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela (2002: 3) define transnational families as 'families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely "familyhood", even across national borders'. They (especially Vuorela, 2002) argue that individuals do not necessary know each other face-to-face; instead, she refers to transnational families as 'imagined communities', using the concept similarly to Benedict Anderson (1985). Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) further argue that transnational families have multiple community identities related to the places where their members are residing. This is because these individual members would form bonds in current places of residence whilst also maintaining strong ties to their places of origin. Additionally, individual migrants, their families, and their communities would take agency to chart their way through new transnational spaces. In so doing, they would create new forms of family and community life.

Loretta Baldassar, Coar Vellekoop Baldock and Raelene Wilding (2007) define transnational families as families and households that become extended not only through space, but also through time. Geographically dispersed relatives thus make up parts of 'multi-stranded social relations that link together migrants' societies of origin and settlement' (2007: 63). These authors also discuss how families stay connected through diverse methods of communication (virtual and corporeal) and how the families benefit from new technologies and the decreasing cost of international travel. Focussing on caring for elderly members of the transnational family, Baldassar et al. (2007) also show how network support can span national boundaries. I return to these forms of support later in this section and in chapter six.

Harry Goulbourne, Tracey Reynolds, John Solomos and Elisabetta Zontini (2010) criticise Bryceson and Vuorela's definition of the 'transnational family' as too

vague and one-sided and state, first, that the above definition could well be applied to internal migration, especially in large nation-states like China and the U.S. Second, they criticise the focus on family life spanning only two nation-states. Instead, they argue that transnational families 'generally tend to be scattered across several nation-states' (2010: 9). This would show a world 'in which ordinary people are able relatively freely to negotiate physical, social and cultural spaces to suit their felt or perceived needs, wants or aspirations' (ibid). Third, Goulbourne et al. (2010) state that changes occur in these different locations, which increases the difficulty to keep track of each locality. Fourth, their criticism circles around Bryceson and Vuorela's failure to include the dimension of time in their definition of transnational families. Whilst the families are absent, the communities in the other place(s) are changing, and with these changes, it becomes increasingly impossible to claim that transnational migrants can maintain diverse identities over time.

What these definitions have in common is that they focus on the family as an extended network of kin. The authors include different generations and different relations, which allows them to theorise support networks from a global perspective. This definition of 'the transnational family' does not, however, coincide with the contextualisation of 'the family' within migration structures and institutions. Eleonore Kofman (2004) shows that immigration policies in European nation-states hold a 'highly restrictive definition of the family, normally limited to spouses and dependent children within the nuclear family' (2004: 244), which makes spouses and dependent children able to enter the new country of residence. Elisabeth Strasser, Albert Kraler, Saskia Bonjour and Veronika Bilger (2012) also study European (im)migration policies in regard to transnational family migration. They write that the narrow definition of 'family' in immigration law leads to a 'shrinking of the family' (2012:

171) rather than an extension. Participants of their study report that they feel that because they cannot bring other relatives to their new place of residence, they experience a lack of practical support in the new locality, as they are not in proximity to their extended families. They state that they are forced to negotiate new relations, such as friends and acquaintances, to counter this lack of support.

In short, whilst transnational families can be seen as an extended network of kin, in the majority of cases the small unit of the nuclear family migrates and has to negotiate new forms of support both locally and globally. I agree with Monica Boyd (1989) who defines transnational families as both 'social group[s] geographically dispersed [...], kinship networks which exist across space and are the conduits for information and assistance', as well as 'migratory units [...] migrat[ing] together.' (1989: 643).

Because the focus of this thesis is on the migratory unit, my main questions to be addressed are as follows: (1) What forms of support are needed? (2) Where do temporary migrants receive this support? (3) How do they negotiate the (forced) lack of an extended family in close proximity? (4) What strategies do they adopt to deal with a lack of network support?

First, however, we need to define 'network support'. Drawing on Janet Finch (1989, in: Baldassar 2007a), Loretta Baldassar (2007a; 2007b; 2008; Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding, 2008; Wilding and Baldassar, 2009) writes that transnational families exchange five main forms of support, namely, 'financial, practical, personal (hands-on), accommodation, and emotional or moral support' (Baldassar, 2007a: 389).

Transnational families, she argues, provide *financial support* in two ways: traditionally by the sending of remittances from the migrant to the remaining members of the family, and, more recently, the financial support of parents, helping their

migrating children who are more likely to choose to migrate because of career or lifestyle choices. *Practical support* includes child care, housekeeping, and help with shopping, all of which would provide stability. Baldassar (2007a) states that these forms of support can only be maintained through advice received via virtual or corporeal forms of communication when the extended network of kin lives in geographical distance. *Personal support*, according to Baldassar (2007a: 390), means 'hands-on caring associated with childcare and nursing the sick or incapacitated [and] can only be delivered face-to-face'. Within the extended network of kin, the requirement for this support often triggers the need for corporeal travel, especially when it involves ill parents or other close relatives (Baldassar, 2001; 2007a; 2007b; 2008; Brijnath, 2012; Svašek, 2008). Baldassar (2007a) further argues that migrants can seldom receive help from their relatives with *accommodation support* in their chosen new setting. Often, however, their relatives can provide space and housing during the migrants' visits to their places of origin. *Emotional and moral support* within extended family networks can, according to Baldassar (2007a), be provided across geographical distances, mainly through use of communication technologies and access to international travel. Following Baldassar, therefore, we might assume that partners of international students receive continuous support from members of their extended kin network, and I return to this discussion in chapter six, but these differences in support also lead us to consider the migratory unit itself. My participants aim at providing financial support for their partners (chapter four), practical support with housekeeping and childcare (chapter five), personal support with accommodation (chapter five), and emotional and moral support (chapters four and five).

In short, referring to these forms of support allows us to identify how members of transnational families relate to each other across geographical distances. It also helps us understand the migration motivations of the partners of international students who aim to support their studying partners. While it helps us to answer questions about what kind of support is needed and what support the partners of international students themselves can provide, it does not fully answer the question of how partners of international students themselves cope with a lack of close family members being present to help out. I thus now focus on the literature on network support originating from a social network approach.

Louise Ryan, Rosemary Sales, May Tilki and Bernadetta Siara (2008) also identify five needs for support that differ slightly to Baldassar's. Ryan et al. state that migrants are in need of 'emotional, informational and instrumental support [... as well as] companionship and socializing' (2008: 674). Moving beyond the transnational family as the main source of support, Ryan et al. argue that these forms of support may be provided by different people at different times and places. They state that a partner in proximity might offset feelings of longing or homesickness, but also believe that emotional support might be given by friends both locally and globally. Sometimes, they state, bonds with family 'back home' might weaken because the migrants feel that they do not need to reconnect on a constant basis. Informational support, which is similar to Baldassar's practical support, may be received from friends, colleagues, or neighbours who are more familiar with the local environment rather than distant family members are. Instrumental support with employment seeking or housing might be sought through 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973; in: ibid) and from people who are not necessarily members of an intimate social circle or one's family, but who have 'the necessary knowledge and know-how' (ibid: 675) to help.

Socialising and companionship are, again, seen to be important in the locality of the new place, and can include new friends and acquaintances as well as the 'weak ties'.[1]

Ryan and her colleagues (2009) later acknowledge that the difference in friendship and kinship networks lies in permanency. They state that 'social networks based on friendship may be transient and fluid [and] family or kinship networks are likely to be long-lasting' (2009: 63). For migrants, especially temporary migrants, both networks are important. I return to a more detailed discussion of these local friendship and global kinship relations in chapter six. Here, it is important to acknowledge that support can move beyond the transnational family as the sole provider of assistance to migrants managing their everyday lives. The next section focuses on social networks and social capital.

Robert Putnam (2000) is concerned about non-material values and resources, such as trust, bonding, and support, which would inform individual and community social action through networks like families and other community groups. He considers two concepts of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding is described as 'inward looking [networks that] tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups' (2000: 22). Bridging is defined as open networks that are 'outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages' (ibid), i.e., bridging different cultural backgrounds. Bridging is considered to be positive for the integration of migrants into the new society they choose to live in, whereas bonding is seen to be negative and would, in its extreme, lead to 'superglued' societies which are so exclusive that they would not allow any new members to enter (Putnam, 2000). Migrants are portrayed as either forming diverse networks including 'indigenous'

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[1] Christa Schmidt, Joseph Miles and Anne Welsh (2011) nicely discuss how friend networks become the main providers for all sources of support for LGBT students in the U.S.

members of the society, or as settling into ethnic enclaves with other members of their nationality. Putnam's opinion has, however, been widely criticised.

Goulborne and his colleagues (2010) criticise Putnam as being too simplistic. In their comparison study of Italian and Caribbean migrants in the UK, they show that bridging and bonding can occur simultaneously and that migrants can have both widespread networks and close-knit ones. Sometimes the network of ethnic minority neighbourhoods would allow a migrant to make new connections with other ethnicities, which Goulborne et al. consider as 'linking'. Similarly, Peter Nannested, Gunnar Lind Haase and Gert Tinggaard Svendsen (2008) criticise Putnam for considering 'bonding' to be only negative. They suggest that migrants can build networks with the wider community whilst still belonging to close-knit ethnic homogenous communities. Instead of calling this 'linking', they use the term 'positive bonding'.

Ryan et al. (2008; Ryan 2008) question the distinction between 'bonding' and 'bridging' and state that these assumptions often take for granted that 'migrants arrive and simply slot into networks that provide them with resources and emotional support' (ibid: 676). This is, however, not always the case. It largely depends on the migrants and their ambitions, as well as the locality. Not all places provide for the close-knit, homogenous, ethnic neighbourhoods that seem to be the basis for Putnam's work, and not all migrants want to be included in close-knit communities. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) write that 'there are [... migrants] who consciously avoid people of similar cultural background to themselves when settling in a new place' (ibid: 21), a phenomenon, they call 'reverse cultural alienation' (ibid).

In short, Putnam's concepts of 'bonding' and 'bridging' of social capital have been criticised for being too simplistic. Migrants adopt diverse strategies that extend

beyond these two concepts, and might include 'linking' or the simultaneous building of diverse networks.

Even as critiques of Putnam, however, these theories seem to hold the connotation that migrants have to integrate into the society of their resettlement. I would argue that this might not always be necessary, especially not for temporary migrants. The aim of my study is not to discuss whether the partners of international students 'integrate' into British society, but to draw attention to central questions, including the following. (1) How does the temporary nature of these migrants' sojourn affect these migrants' experiences of resettlement? (2) What role does the new place play, especially when considering that Lancaster is not a global or globalising city (chapter three)? (3) How do these temporary migrants negotiate their everyday practices? (4) What support do they receive and claim both in Lancaster and spanning over national borders?

The majority of the literature on migrants' network support seems to focus on less privileged migrants, and little is said about the social networks of highly skilled migrants. Bryceson and Vuorela (2002: 7) claim that 'the word "migrant" [often] tends to carry class connotations and is applied more readily to people that are considered economically or politically deprived and seek betterment of their circumstances [...whereas] transnational elites are perceived as "mobile" rather than "migrant".' I am not going into a detailed discussion of mobility versus migration here, but it is important to note that these stereotypes seem to remain prevalent in the literature on support networks and transnational families as the literature seems to focus on research on less privileged migrants who migrate with the aim of permanently resettling in the new surroundings.

Given the focus of this thesis, which is temporary migrants who are the partners of international students, who are relatively privileged compared to other groups of migrants, the literature on transnational families and support networks can be usefully complemented by literature that discusses other privileged, temporary migrants, namely, expatriates and their spouses.

The spouses of expatriates described in such studies are commonly called the 'incorporated wife', 'trailing spouse' or 'accompanying spouse', terms which describe the same conditions but imply different degrees of agency. The term 'incorporated wife' was coined by Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener (1984) and refers to 'women whose labour contribution formed an implicit part of their husband's contract with their employers, particularly in the diplomatic, military, and corporate sector' (Coles and Fechter, 2008: 1). Hence, the woman's agency is included in the man's profession. The term 'trailing spouse' carries a special connotation, as it denies the wife any form of agency, but portrays her 'in a fairly passive light' (Moore, 2008: 86). She is '"trailing" behind her partner, as a kind of reluctant appendage' (Moore, 2008: 85). The term 'accompanying spouse' shows that the woman was involved in the decision-making processes and might at the same time be provided for through the husband's wage package.

Whilst the latter term is the most favourable, as it not only allows female migrants some form of agency but can also be used for spouses of international students and other, non-corporate, migrants, I refrain from using these three terms. I refer to my participants as 'partners of international students'. As explained in the introduction, not all of my participants were married, making the word 'partner' more inclusive.

In the next two sections, I introduce studies of spouses of corporate expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada. Then I conclude by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of both bodies of literature and highlight how this study contributes to this field.

**Spouses of Corporate Expatriates**

The term *expatriate*, which originates from the Latin *ex* ('out') and *patria* ('native country'), is used to describe 'a person who lives outside their native country' (Fechter, 2007a: 1). Although the broad definition of the term might suggest that it covers all kinds of migrants, it is traditionally used for white, North American and European migrants involved in temporary migration beyond 'the West' (Fechter and Walsh, 2010: 1197).[2]

Anne-Meike Fechter (2007a) distinguishes between 'corporate' and 'family' expatriates. 'Corporate expatriates', also described as 'transnational' (Nowicka, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008) or 'mobile' (Fechter and Walsh, 2010) professionals, are employees who are sent abroad by their employers and 'given financial incentives to move [compensating] for the costs and inconveniences incurred by the relocation' (Fechter, 2007a: 2). Fechter (2007a: 5) argues that the term holds a certain connotation of 'greed, ignorance, [...] luxurious lifestyles, a lack of language skills [in the local language, and] arrogance'. The image of such a corporate expatriate is often a white, male employee in the middle or upper echelons of the company who is highly mobile and often resides in a given country for one to four years before moving on to the next (Nowicka, 2005). The term also suggests a certain amount of success, which is characterised by 'a technically defined understanding of the ability to maintain the

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[2] Sawa Kurotani (2007) also applies the term 'expatriates' to middleclass Japanese migrants in the U.S., but so far it mainly refers to white westerners temporary migrating to less developed countries.

same productivity in the office at home or abroad' (Hindman, 2008: 43). Fechter (2007a) argues that for male corporate expatriates, the move to another country does not affect their daily lives in significant ways, as they spend most of their time in the office. Due to increased responsibilities, the men's time revolves even more around work than it did at the place of the home office, as they are required to work longer hours, participate in time-consuming commutes, and travel around the country (Fechter, 2007a). The architecture of the transnational office and the structure of the corporate environment provide corporate expatriates with a familiar framework. Although their greater involvement in the workplace and their migration abroad cause some problems for corporate expatriates (as Magdalena Nowicka states when writing that highly mobile professionals struggle with their roles as 'part-time family members' [2005: 111] and leads to 'weakening of old friendships' [2005: 114]), these changes might also occur without migration simply due to increased responsibilities.

The term 'family expatriate' is used to describe accompanying spouses who migrate because they desire physical proximity to their corporate spouses. After relocation, the 'women's prime duty [is to support their] husbands and families during a posting abroad, [to smooth] over familial conflicts and generally [to put] their own interests second in order to successfully reproduce the expatriate family abroad' (Fechter, 2007a: 42). The women are responsible for creating a 'hyper-national space a long way from home' (Hindman, 2008: 43). This space can, according to Heather Hindman (2008), be described as stereotypically western, following concepts of the idealised home (Wright, 1991) with a strict gender segregation. Hindman (2008: 43) argues that following the cliché that 'keeping wives happy is a strategic part of making productive employees', corporate enterprises take on the increased tasks of 'making a "hyper-national" home' in the employees' wage packages, through

incentives such as 'hardship pay, education and travel allowances, housing supplements, and entertainment costs' (Hindman, 2008: 46). These areas of compensation demand the performance of 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1983), as it is expected of the family expatriates that they will keep personal and private sorrows and problems away from their working partners. Although women enjoy the increase in their husbands' compensation, they also say that it puts them 'at the mercy of the company' (Fechter, 2007a: 42) and that the failure of the expatriate's performance at work is often blamed on the wife rather than on the corporate expatriate himself (Hindman, 2008). In regards to international students, I show in chapter four that they are also expected to apply forms of emotional labour, but that they additionally struggle with not being included into the students' scholarships.

The expanding literature on corporate and family expatriates who construct their lives around what Eric Cohen (1977) called 'expatriate communities'[3] is largely drawn from research performed in 'global' (Sassen, 2001) or 'globalising' (Farrer, 2010) cities such as Jakarta (Fechter, 2007a; 2007b; 2008; 2010; Leggett, 2010), Kathmandu (Hindman, 2008), Shanghai (Farrer, 2010), Hong Kong (Leonard, 2010), Dubai (Coles and Walsh, 2010; Walsh, 2006; 2008; 2009) and similar cities (Nowicka, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008). Although there are cultural, religious and societal differences among global cities, the scope of possibilities offered to the western expatriates is large, and so these privileged migrants can ignore differences by inhabiting particular spaces within these cities (Nowicka, 2005). They can construct a life around certain living areas, preferring English-speaking and western forms of entertainment, forming social networks characterised by 'whiteness', and participating in daily practices like shopping or exercising in newly developed malls and studios. In

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[3] Fechter (2007a) argues that although Cohen's article concerning western expatriates was already published in the 1970s, it was largely forgotten in the literature until the early 2000s.

this thesis the main focus is on a rather small university town in the North of England, chosen in order to explore the unique experiences of temporary migrants in a peripheral space (chapter three).

Concerning the inhabitation of particular spaces in cities, it is vital to acknowledge that the majority of expatriates live in compounds (Blunt and Dowling, 2006) or company-owned complexes (Gordon, 2008).[4] These accommodations are characterised by being slightly removed from city centres and having a high degree of protection provided by security guards. Each compound becomes an 'oasis of westerness' in the cities to which the expatriates migrate, not only due to their mainly white population, but also through the establishment of 'western' shops or restaurants. These compounds are at the centre of the daily lives of the expatriates, especially family expatriates.[5]

Apart from segregated housing spaces, global (or globalising) cities also offer a range of western food and entertainment largely provided by global chains like McDonalds or the Hard Rock Cafe, along with cinemas that show Anglo-American movies (Nowicka, 2005). Due to this process of globalisation, or what Georg Ritzer (2004) called the 'McDonaldization of societies', expatriates are able to socialise as if they had not yet left the west.

For expatriates, social networking that takes place with peers is characterised by its whiteness. Whereas working expatriates might sometimes deal with people of other ethnic or racial 'identities' (Fechter, 2007a) either at work or through social contacts with a newly emerging middle class of, for example, Chinese employees

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[4] Army expatriates often reside in military bases outside the towns (Jervis, 2008; Rogaly and Taylor, 2010).

[5] A younger generation of highly mobile professionals, migrating mainly when single and without children, inhabit spaces in the city centre, but these are mostly in luxurious apartments (Walsh, 2006) or luxurious international hotel complexes (Fechter, 2007a). Although these two forms of housing differ in their nature from the traditional compounds, the expatriates are still removed from the local inhabitants of the country.

(Leggett, 2010), their families spend most of their time in the company of other white female spouses (and children) who might form shopping groups (Hindman, 2008) or attend morning coffees and charitable events organised by international women's groups (Fechter, 2007a).[6] Other meeting places are connected to leisure and fitness, wherein people of a specific gender, ethnicity and class can be found. Children, for example, are taken to swimming lessons, women hire private tennis trainers, and men go golfing (Fechter, 2007a). Settling into the stereotypes attached to these forms of leisure and fitness, the expatriates reproduce their western (if not British) norms of middle class entertainment in their new, temporary homes abroad (Fechter, 2007a). Social networking takes place at international schools, either through active participation in the school's curriculum and social activities (Moore, 2008) or through the networks that the children develop with other expatriate children (Coles, 2008). It becomes clear that both corporate and family expatriates spend most of their time in the company of other expatriates. As they normally live in a country for only a few years, few make an effort to learn the local language (Nowicka, 2005). They socialise within the expatriate community and can construct their lives using either their native (western) language or the global language English (Davis, 2009).

Several authors (Coles, 2008; Coles and Walsh, 2010; Fechter, 2007a; 2007b; Gordon, 2008; Jervis, 2008; Kurotani, 2007; Verma, 2008; Walsh, 2006; 2008) who focus on family expatriates, document that the legal status of the family expatriates are dependent on the visa of the corporate expatriate (usually the husband and father), which denies the accompanying partners the ability to participate in paid labour. Although the wives would be able to obtain work visas if they found suitable

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[6] Katie Walsh (2006; 2008), Anne-Meike Fechter (2007a; 2007b), and Katie Willis and Brenda Yeoh (2008) demonstrate that corporate expatriates who migrate while single, mainly construct their social lives around meeting and dating within the expatriate community, and with other foreign corporate expatriates.

employers, many women do not actively search for such posts.[7] This differs greatly to my participants who are granted a full work permit with the dependants' visa. How this changes their experiences of employment is discussed in chapter four.

Instead of gaining employment, family expatriates claim that they are restricted to the domestic sphere and experience a loss of professional agency. Taking age into consideration, Fechter (2007a) argues that older generations of expatriates do not suffer as much from being defined as housewives because they have not held professional positions before migration. With the increase in female employment, however, younger generations of family expatriates have often left their employment in order to accompany their spouse on his transnational posting. Fechter (2007a: 45) reports that the younger spouses feel 'stripped of their own professional identities [as] they are ranked according to the husband's job'. They are rarely asked what their profession was or which degree course they undertook, but instead are identified by the reply to the question, 'What position does your husband have?' (Fechter, 2007a). This loss of agency causes what Anne Coles and Katie Walsh (2010) call a 'loss of professional identity' as the wives of corporate professionals get 'incorporated' into their husbands' status.

Family expatriates also experience a loss of agency in the home (Fechter, 2007a; Hindman, 2008; Walsh, 2008). Although they are responsible for domestic affairs, they often do not physically partake in the domestic work, as it is expected that they will hire local staff. The women's role is to supervise rather than to perform domestic tasks, a situation which is unfamiliar to most modern women. During

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[7] Some studies (Coles and Walsh, 2010; Fechter, 2008) focus exclusively on young working female expatriates who are part of the 'XPAT generation' (Malewski, 2005) but argue that these privileged migrants are mostly characterised by their single status. Once they form relationships and get married, they are often pressured by their husbands' employers to stop working and take on the role of a supportive wife. They become family expatriates. As they are not partners or spouses of expatriates, I do not discuss this body of work in detail here.

relocation to non-western destinations, the spouses experience a loss of domestic work, which is a loss of control over the domestic space.

Spouses also experience a loss of spatial agency as they are advised not to travel on their own, but to rely on staff and drivers instead. Before they migrate, they are advised not to become too independent in the place of relocation. The 'stranger danger' discourse (Ahmed, 2000) is used by the company advisors to ensure that the accompanying spouses do not 'go native' (Hindman, 2008), but this psychological confinement causes problems as many women complain about not being able to drive, something that they consider a form of independence. When the woman's ability to travel without assistance is taken away, she lacks spatial agency, which leads to a loss of personal independence.[8]

The loss of professional, domestic, and spatial agency, plus her removal from her networks of friends and family in their countries of origin puts the family expatriate in a position where she has nothing to do all day (Fechter, 2010: 1287). Katie Walsh (2008: 71) argues that this situation can, and quite often does, lead to a state of 'situational depression' experienced by expatriate wives and their subsequent dependence on prescription anti-depressants. Whether similar problems occur for my participants shall be explored.

Scholars on family expatriates write that in order to reclaim some forms of agency, these wives will try to get involved in activities like shopping and home designing, charitable work, and voluntary work in international schools.

Heather Hindman (2008) argues that shopping for 'traditional' – here 'American' – food becomes a major task in the spouses' lives. Hindman researched family expatriates in Kathmandu (Nepal), a place where there are not many major

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[8] Fechter (2007a) argues that, occasionally, some women explore the places of relocation on their own, but they are exceptions. Most of her informants state that they are criticised for such dangerous manoeuvres and encouraged to stop going out alone.

western supermarket chains. Shopping for 'real American' goods might involve significant research and long travel, both seen as un-avoidable as 'real American' food is perceived to form a major part of creating a 'hyper-national' home space.[9] Leonie Gordon (2008) claims that home design is another way the female spouse can gain some sense of agency, as the work involved in such homemaking is perceived as the women's ability to prove their taste. Gordon (2008) draws a distinction according to the rank of the husbands. Wives of employees in the middle echelons of the company were usually placed in company-owned accommodation, whereas wives of higher ranking husbands were able to live in self-chosen accommodations. Hence, whereas the latter were able to refurbish and decorate their new houses according to their own taste, the former moved into already furbished and decorated accommodations without many abilities to personalise the space. Similar restrictions occur for my participants. I return to this in five.

Family expatriates also organise charitable events and participate in events sponsored by international women's groups (Fechter, 2007a; Yeoh and Khoo, 1998; Yeoh and Willis, 2005), such as dinners, balls or concerts, aiming to raise money for the local community (Hindman, 2008). The wives thus demonstrate their organisational talents and after having successfully organised a few events, they can function as mentors for other women and establish their own position in the hierarchy of the group, regardless of their husbands' status.

According to Fiona Moore (2008), another method of reclaiming agency is volunteering in international schools. These accompanying wives might run the school, serve on school advisory boards, or take on unpaid labour in language teaching. The positions allow the family spouses to claim a place within the hierarchy

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[9] In chapter five, I return to such homemaking practices.

of the expatriate community, use some of their previously-acquired skills, such as teaching, and gain some forms of respect.[10]

These forms of involvement – shopping, participating in charitable events and doing voluntary work in international schools – take the female spouses out of the house and allow them to re-establish some agency of their own, but they fail to fully compensate the wives for any loss of employment. The tasks they do are highly gendered as stereotypically feminine as they focus on homemaking, charity, and education.

Whilst following their busy social diaries, the family expatriates are almost exclusively surrounded by other expatriate wives. Although they physically move through spaces (in order to get to shopping malls, on their way to international women's groups' activities, whilst on outings or when picking up children from their international schools), they are unattached to the place of relocation as the movement through the city between the diverse transnational oases takes place in a car driven by staff. Although the expatriates normally have a sophisticated knowledge of socio-economic and cultural specificities of the place, they consume the place rather than mixing with the local population. Hence, they are both experts and tourists (Nowicka, 2006).

In summary, it can be said that due to the exclusiveness in the ethnicity of friendships and the compounds in which they generally live while abroad, family expatriates are characterised by certain stereotypes. Focussing on Dubai, Katie Walsh (2008) describes the caricature of 'Jumeira Jane', a term that connects the Anglo-American name 'Jane' with Dubai's popular residential and retail district favoured by European expatriates since the 1960s. This Jane is a woman 'who does not work and

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[10] Brenda Yeoh and Loisa-May Khoo (1998) include part-time employment as a form of reclaiming agency. Being able to work in Singapore is dependent on Singapore's laws and is not mentioned by any other study. I briefly return to their findings in chapter four.

instead spends her days shopping, meeting friends for lunch or coffee, and indulging in beauty treatments [but who also depends on] prescription anti-depressants, plastic surgery, [and/] or sexual and emotional attention of a personal trainer or tennis coach' (Walsh, 2008: 63). The caricature creates the negative notion that Jane is 'shallow, materialistic, status-conscious, vain, lazy and neglect[ful of] her children by leaving them with the maid' (2008: 64). Drawing on a stereotype that originates in descriptions of British colonials in India, Anne-Meike Fechter (2007a: 1), describes Jane, and other expatriates, as 'gin and tonic sipping', 'egoistical, domineering, ignorant and greedy [individuals who are] neurotic about hygiene while living a life of luxury, whiling away their days by the pool or at Coffee Mornings, and knowing local people only as their servants'. Fechter (2007a: 45) further describes Jane's life as taking place in a '"golden cage" [which] is comparative material affluence coupled with the experience of being fenced in and restricted in terms of social and spatial movements', which summarises the family expatriates' experiences of financial reimbursement on the one hand and loss of agency on the other. The experiences of expatriates can be further characterised by a 'hyper-hetero-normativity' with precise gender divisions which in the countries of origin would often be seen as outdated (Walsh, 2008).

These stereotypes, caricatures and metaphors often originate in colonial discourses. Hence, I now turn to the connection between current expatriates and settlers of the past.

Some studies (Armbuster, 2010; Coles and Walsh, 2010; Farrer, 2010; Fechter, 2007a; 2010; Fechter and Walsh, 2010; Leggett, 2010; Leonard, 2010; Korpela, 2010; Rogaly and Taylor, 2010) draw comparisons between the current transnational professionals (the corporate expatriates and their families) and the colonial settlers of

the past. These authors argue that the experiences of current expatriates seem to resemble colonial settlers, especially in the racialisation of their spaces. As stated above, the majority of expatriates surround themselves with other expatriates and only know local people as servants or employees. For the corporate expatriates, their whiteness functions as symbolic capital which assures them superior positions in the transnational labour market; colonial settlers held the same symbolic capital. Family expatriates are seen to perform a substantial amount of emotional labour as they create a home away from home which is characterised as 'hyper-national' (Hindman, 2008). The wives have lost their professional identities and are expected to keep themselves happy by shopping and participating in the events of international women's groups and international schools. Although these involvements allow the women some form of personal agency, the practices are highly gendered and focus on homemaking, charity, and education. Whilst their tasks have been described as 'staying in line' and 'not going native', the focus on social networking within the white, middle class expatriate community can also be seen as maintaining social and racial boundaries. Fechter (2010: 1293) argues that like the wives of settlers in colonial times, today's spouses of corporate expatriates are responsible for 'doing the "dirty work" of colonialism – such as upholding social and racial boundaries – and subsequently being blamed for it'. Stereotypes like 'Jumeira Jane' and the 'gin and tonic sipping westerners around the pool' were common during colonial times and are still evident today. Hence, the above mentioned studies argue that today's expatriates are, in fact, the successors of colonial settlers: not legally, but culturally and socially.

In this section I focus on family expatriates who temporary migrate due to the desire for close proximity to their partners and spouses, the corporate expatriates. This movement is characterised by westerners moving to the global south. Whilst these

individuals face different challenges in comparison to my participants, they nevertheless have similarities, especially in regards to cultural and social capital, privilege, their desire to be proximate to their partners, and the intended temporariness of their sojourn. In the next section, I turn to movements into the west and the experiences of spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada.

## Spouses of International Students in North America

A small body of literature focuses on spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada. Although this group of migrants is closest to my participants, differences occur, first, in visa regulations whereby it is again important to mention that my participants were granted a full work permit with the dependants' visa, and, second, places, as these studies focus on a North-American setting whereas my study is the first to talk about partners of international students in the UK. These disparities lead to differences in experiences of the individuals, as is discussed throughout this thesis as well as the concluding chapter. As with family expatriates, spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada have, however, similar experiences as the migrants in my study, hence, I find it important to introduce them here.

Renata Frank de Verthelyi (1995: 389) argues that the spouses of international students are 'invisible' privileged migrants, as little attention has been given to them in migration literature. Although two earlier studies (Green Schwartz and Kahne, 1993; Vogel, 1985) included this group in their research on partners of academics in general (students and scholars), so far only three studies focus exclusively on spouses of students (de Verthelyi, 1995; 1996; Kim, 2006; 2010; Plett Martens and Grant, 2007). According to Charlotte Green Schwartz and Merton Kahne (1993: 454; italics in the original), the 'invisibility' of spouses is due to their 'sense of being "outside"

[which] begins with the fact that the wives' presence is not of significant interest to college administrators. Although these women are *in* the community, they are not *of* it'. The student's marital status and the wife's experience of relocation are imagined to be solely private issues, and so it is not surprising that currently there are no official statistics on the number of partners of international students who have migrated to North America. In comparison to studies on family expatriates, we can here state that the spouses of international students are not 'incorporated'.

Renata Frank de Verthelyi (1995; 1996) and Vonda Plett Martens and Peter Grant (2007) conducted studies with female spouses of international students in the U.S. and included different nationalities in their studies. Minjeong Kim (2006; 2010) focussed on Korean women entering Canada as an accompanying spouse of an international student. All three of the studies cited here have three major points in common: (1) they focus exclusively on female spouses; (2) they were conducted in the United States and Canada, countries in which the dependants' visa for spouses of international students is granted without a work permit; and (3) they assert that the spouses of international students are characterised by the possession of high amounts of social and cultural capital as well as being highly skilled (mainly in science, education, business and economics). These studies also acknowledge that the spouses of international students abandon their own careers in order to accompany their partners for the duration of their studies. De Verthelyi (1995), Kim (2006; 2010), and Plett Martens and Grant (2007) identify seven key areas of adjustment difficulties experienced by spouses of international students: (1) loss of professional identity; (2) change in childcare; (3) language barriers; (4) feelings of isolation; (5) financial pressure; (6) lack of purposeful activity; and (7) psychological problems.

Due to the legal restrictions of the dependants' visa in the U.S. and Canada, the spouses of international students are not allowed to partake in paid employment (Kim, 2006) and are therefore 'forced' (Kim, 2006) to change 'from an active professional life in the public sphere to a more traditional feminine role as a homemaker' (de Verthelyi, 1995: 398). This is described as 'a painful experience, one of loss of valued aspects of their identity and a severe blow to their self-esteem' (1995: 398), which is comparable with family expatriates' loss of agency as discussed above.

The women's ability to work is further restricted by a change of childcare arrangements (Plett Martens and Grant, 2007). Whereas they were rarely solely responsible for the upbringing of the children and could rely on familial and state support structures before migration, after relocation the spouses struggle with the lack of support, as they are not able to employ a maid, as family expatriates.

Language is another concern often mentioned by the informants. Although many consider their stay in an English-speaking country as the best way to learn and improve their English, only a few acknowledge the impact that their lack of English has on everyday interactions (de Verthelyi, 1995). Their restricted vocabulary is perceived to prevent them from 'expressing or defending their ideas with richness and precision' (1995: 399), which leads to a fear of speaking with U.S. American and Canadian locals. The language barrier is then seen to create a lack of contact with peers and feelings of isolation.

The spouses of international students in these studies also speak of feelings of homesickness and loneliness arising from separation from their kin and friendship networks after relocation, as well as their struggles to meet new people in their new place of settlement. Whilst the international students are welcomed into a professional

network of academics and peers, their spouses spend most of their time at home, struggling to create new encounters. Unable to work, and relying on student funding, the women in these studies mention financial pressures adding to their changed situation. Whilst the couple was used to benefitting from a double-career income in their home countries, most informants admit that they had to 'tighten the budget' (de Verthelyi, 1995: 400) after arriving in the U.S. and Canada, something that distinguishes them from family expatriates.

These studies describe the spouses of international students' role changes, which are characterised by unemployment which '"forces" [them] into unpaid care work' (Kim, 2006: 165), language barriers which cause isolation, and financial worries. These restrictions leave the spouses of international students with a 'lack of purposeful activity' (de Verthelyi, 1995: 397). All they are able to do is to go shopping and engage in homemaking, but, different to family expatriates, both practices are restricted by the families' budget. In some instances, this loss of purpose led to psychological problems including depression, loneliness and anxiety (de Verthelyi, 1995).

De Verthelyi (1996) and Plett Martens and Grant (2008) also explore the spouses' participation in self-help groups and university support networks to help them avoid these psychological problems. As programmes and services for accompanying spouses are frequently understaffed and underfunded (Green Schwartz and Kahne, 1993), they have to rely on voluntary, unpaid work, often performed by the spouses themselves. De Verthelyi (1996) shows that some women participated in the publishing and distribution of a newsletter, '*written and edited by spouses for spouses*' (1996: 699; italics in the original). Apart from being able to use 'this creative activity [to] restore a sense of personal identity and enhance self-esteem' (1996: 699),

the bi-weekly meetings of the editorial board (which was composed of volunteers and changed frequently) provided emotional support and an ability to form friendships with other spouses of international students. Plett Martens and Grant (2008) focus on the spouses' participation in university support networks, such as English classes, computer training, university lectures and discussion groups, and state that the spouses are eager to participate and often conduct such programmes, taking responsibility in turns.

Hence, the spouses take on unpaid voluntary positions in support of the universities' support networks. Through their participation, the spouses are able to meet other wives, and the majority of the informants in these studies state that they are satisfied with the amount of time they spend with co-nationals, though they would enjoy more opportunities to interact with U.S. American and Canadian citizens so they could improve their English and learn more about the local culture. Their connections to local inhabitants are, however, restricted by lack of opportunity on the one hand and fear of language barriers on the other.

In summary, we might say that the lives of spouses of international students change hugely as the women find themselves in the more traditional role of a homemaker and experience a loss of professional identity. Whilst the international students are busy studying and socialising with new peers, their spouses have little to occupy them, and so they lead lives lacking purposeful activity and filled with a danger of psychological problems. In their efforts to avoid ennui and anxiety, the wives participate in unpaid labour through which they are able to meet other spouses, who give them a network of friends. These networks consist of other temporary migrants, as the spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada lack acquaintances and friendships with local U.S. American and Canadian citizens. These

studies have, however, all been conducted in the U.S. and Canada, where the dependants' visa forbids employment. Throughout this thesis I frequently revisit the experiences of these migrants and compare these women's experiences with the lives of my participants, partners of international students in the UK.

## Conclusion: Life in a Transnational Bubble

Literatures on transnational families and network support highlight migrants' need to access certain forms of support. These are often seen to be of financial, practical and emotional (including companionship and socialising) nature. I identify above that authors writing about network support and social capital seem to take for granted that migrants need to integrate into the society where they resettle. Furthermore, literature on network support seems to work from an assumption that close knit communities exist in the new locality, and that their participants, often less privileged migrants, would join these communities upon arrival. I ask, however, whether this 'need to integrate' is always necessary and consider that especially for migrants whose sojourn is intended to be of a temporary nature, other forms of adaptation might be important. I therefore chose to focus on two groups of migrants who might have more similarities with my sample than less privileged migrants aiming for permanent settlement, namely family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada.

Both groups have certain experiences in common. Due to legal regulations, both groups of migrants are denied access to the local labour market, which can lead to a loss of professional identity. The migrating wives are responsible for the creation of a home away from home and are 'forced' (Kim, 2006) into the domestic sphere. Both groups state that they experience a language barrier, either due to an inability to

speak idiomatic English or due to an active decision not to learn the local language because they intend to only stay for a set period of time. Both groups of spouses are primarily responsible for the upbringing of their children, but they lack the practical support of their families and friends, who remained at the places, the migrants left behind. Although they use virtual communication in order to stay in touch with geographically distant, emotionally close relatives and friends, they tend to feel isolated in the place of relocation. In both groups, psychological problems such as 'situational depression' (Walsh, 2008) or anxiety (de Verthelyi, 1995) are reported. Trying to avoid complete social exclusion, members of both groups participate in some form of unpaid labour, either within the university setting or in the expatriate community. These involvements enable the migrants to form new acquaintances and friendships that are, however, normally characterised by the absence of local people. These involvements hardly fully compensate for the loss of professional identity suffered by the wives, and the members of both groups of migrants also complain about a lack of purposeful activity.

The spouses differ greatly in access to economic capital, which is responsible for the majority of the differences between the groups. Whereas family expatriates benefit from their husbands' increased wage package, which supports the wives and children, spouses of international students often complain about having to 'tighten the budget' (de Verthelyi, 1995: 400). Although shopping and homemaking become extensive practices for family expatriates as they create their 'hyper-national' homes, the spouses of students have to carefully balance their desire to buy goods that turn food into an 'original' taste of home with the money available. Whereas family expatriates can, and are expected to, employ servants to maintain the household and care for children, the spouses of students are mostly solely responsible for the home

and education. Although employing servants takes agency away from family expatriates, the lack of any support dictates the student spouses' role in the domestic sphere. Family expatriates socialise through coffee mornings, charitable events, sports and leisure activities which the international student spouses studied cannot afford. Whilst family expatriates describe their luxurious lifestyles as 'golden cages' as they are losing spatial agency due to 'stranger danger' discourses, the spouses of international students in the west are theoretically able to move freely, but are in reality restricted by their finances. The differences in their access to economic capital therefore have tremendous effects on their experiences.

The two groups also differ in their access to social capital. The ability to join already existing support structures, such as coffee mornings, or international women's groups, already privilege family expatriates in their extension of networks in comparison to spouses of international students in the U.S. for whom these support networks are less common. In addition, both groups of migrants hold a particular 'outsider' position within the societies of relocation. Whereas family expatriates are portrayed as having chosen a life upholding racial and social boundaries, the spouses of international students often find themselves isolated. Although they want to meet local U.S. Americans or Canadians, these migrants are often denied access to the local community, which causes feelings of isolation. These findings can be used to critique the literature on social networks and social capital. On the one hand, these stories reinforce the statement that some migrants simply do not want to 'integrate' into the 'host' society, as they know that their stay is temporary. Instead, the migrants find their support through networks of other temporary migrants, who might or might not be of the same cultural background as the migrants themselves (as in the case of family expatriates). On the other hand, it highlights that not all migrants arrive in their

new locality with access to either the mainstream society or ethnic enclaves (as is the case for spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada). Instead, they might be isolated completely or form relations to other temporary migrants who are not necessarily from the same country, but have in common that they are also spouses of international students. This challenges Putnam's simplistic approach of migrants either 'bridging' or 'bonding' social capital.

One issue that I find very useful in my analysis of the experiences of partners of international students is the metaphor of the 'bubble'.[11] Concerning the experiences of family expatriates, Fechter (2007a; 2007b) introduces five useful metaphors that describe the expatriates' removal from the local environment. She argues that they live in a 'bunker', in 'Disneyland', in a 'ghetto', in a 'hothouse' or in the 'bubble'. The metaphors of the 'bunker' and 'Disneyland' are used to describe luxurious dwellings, whereas 'ghetto' and 'hothouse' are used to 'refer to aspects of community and social life' within the boundaries of the expatriate community (Fechter, 2007b: 38). The metaphor of the 'bubble', or 'expat bubble', 'incorporates features such as boundedness, seclusion from the outside, a certain glamour as well as an artificial atmosphere inside' and therefore becomes 'an iconic image capable of signifying expatriate life as a whole' (2007b: 38).

These metaphors as used by Fechter (2007a; 2007b) highlight the specificity of the family expatriates' luxurious lifestyles. With slight modification, the idea of the bubble can, however, be expanded to include other privileged migrants. Adding the aspect of a bubble's transparency, I propose the term 'transnational bubble', which is a 'bubble' insofar as the walls around the privileged migrants' protected lifestyles are flexible and transparent, enabling them to see the surrounding society and its social

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[11] In the concluding chapter, I return to a discussion on this bubble.

structure, but at the same time allowing the migrants to filter out things they do not want to see. As temporary migrants they are able to choose not to 'integrate', and instead have the privilege to decide which things they do not want to see. Hence, it is interesting to observe, how temporary migrants, i.e., partners of international students, construct their lives within an artificial life style. What do they do? Whom do they befriend? How do they spend their everyday lives?

Evaluating these two bodies of literature, we can see that literature on expatriates often claims to research white European and North American privileged migrants but does not acknowledge differences within this group. Instead the authors cited adopt British/American stereotypes like playing golf as a form of social and corporate networking and apply these stereotypes uncritically to all white westerners without distinction. Literature on spouses of international students fails to take ethnic and racial differences into account, but instead is coloured by broad generalisations.

As the field of partners of international students in a European setting is so far under-researched, however, these bodies of literature are helpful to understand experiences of members of transnational families. None of this work, however, fully captures the situation in Europe. Although, some similarities can be found, some crucial differences appear: (1) Compared to the spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada, the partners of students in the UK are legally able to gain full-time employment. (2) Compared to family expatriates, the partners of international students in my study have access to less financial means. (3) By residing in Lancaster, which is not a global (or globalising) city, these temporary migrants have less access to international facilities, or close knit ethnic enclaves, compared to the other two groups. In the following chapters I therefore focus on the specificity of partners of international students in Lancaster, a peripheral university city in the UK. In light of

these findings, I return to a full comparison between all three groups in the concluding chapter.

Above I state that the distinctiveness of the group of individuals in my research makes it difficult to situate them into a specific body of literature. Hence, in this thesis, I introduce new literature in each empirical chapter in order to address more specific elements of the partners' experiences. I address literature on (international) employment (chapter four); home and belonging (chapter five); kinship, friendship and social networks (chapter six); and feelings of being in or out of place (chapter seven). But first, the next chapter gives an overview on student migration into the UK.

# Chapter two:

# International Student Migration to the UK

In the age of migration, student mobility has become one of the main reasons why people decide to move across national boundaries and live in other countries for a short period of time (Castles and Miller, 2003). Especially since the 1990s, the number of students being mobile around the globe has been increasingly on the rise. In 2005, for example, it was estimated that more than 2.7 million students crossed borders in order to enrol at an institution of higher education (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). For 2025 an annual figure of 7.2 million students is estimated as the numbers of temporary migrants in search of valuable education are rising dramatically (Böhm, Davis, Meares and Pearce, 2002). The majority of students (an estimated ninety percent of all international students) choose to enrol at an institution in one of the countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). The five most attractive destinations are the U.S., the UK, Germany, France and Australia, which together host approximately seventy percent of all mobile students (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). English-speaking countries especially attract numerous international students because English is seen to be the international language that connects academics around the globe (Crystal, 2003; Harris, 2001). Furthermore, Glyn Davis (2009) argues that the market-advantages of English-speaking countries reflect the importance of what he calls the 'U.S. American Empire' and the globally accepted importance of English as global language.

Although the numbers of students crossing borders constitutes a high proportion in the overall movement of people in motion, the research on the effects of international students on their sending and receiving countries is still rather marginal. Although some authors talk about 'brain drain' and 'brain circulation' (Lee, 2010),

and about the effects on the sending countries (Gribble, 2008) as well as economic changes in the receiving countries (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007), as a group of mobile people, international students are inadequately studied (Findlay, 2011). Even less academic interest has been placed on short-time sojourners that migrate as partners and children of international students (with the exception of de Verthelyi, 1995, 1996; Kim, 2006, 2010; Plett Martens and Grant, 2007, which I discuss in chapter one). Effects on the receiving countries as well as the life experiences of this particular group of migrants have received considerably less attention.

Given the predicted increase in international students in Europe, we might foresee that the number of international students accompanied by their partners, spouses and/or children will increase because there are already new methods in place in every European country to attract international students, such as offering courses exclusively in the English language regardless of whether it is the country's dominant or official language. It is also predicted that the attractiveness of English-speaking countries might not continue, but other countries might enter this global competition (Castles and Miller, 2003; Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007).[1] Further internationalisation will affect distribution within the receiving countries as international students not only choose to study in metropolitan areas but also spread to institutions in smaller towns and cities, a move that can especially affect the social structure of small university cities.

In an effort to understand the challenges that the UK and other (European) countries may face in the future, my study concentrates on one small university town, Lancaster, located in one of the currently most favourable destinations, the UK. I introduce Lancaster as the setting of this research in the next chapter.

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[1] The changes to the TIER 4 Visa might cause a decrease in the attractiveness of British universities. As the study was conducted in 2007/2008, I do not discuss these changes here, but I return to a brief consideration in the concluding chapter.

In the following sections I summarise the historical developments of student mobility into the UK and consider the role that the Bologna Process[2] plays on student mobility as well as on the overall increase in the importance of Europe as the new area for higher education. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the new image of an international student.

**The History of Student Migration into the UK**

With more than 300,000 students entering the UK every year, the UK is currently the second only to the U.S. as the most important destination for international students worldwide (King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010). Britain's attractiveness for foreign students dates back to medieval times and has since played an important role in Britain's academic and economic development. In what follows, I focus on Britain's role for the international fraternity of students in medieval times, the 'Grand Tour', Britain's establishment of a Commonwealth exchange of students, its role within the European Union student exchange programmes, and the development of a growing number of international students at (mainly) the postgraduate levels of study.

Eric Ashby (1966: 3) argues that medieval universities were 'truly supra-national' entities due to their devotion to education and their considerable independence from local politics. The wandering student who migrated from one university to another was a common sight in Europe thanks to agreements between kingdoms and nations for safe passage for the purpose of education. The academic arena in Europe thus moved beyond national boundaries and spanned the whole of the European developed world. Speaking the same academic language, Latin, and being united by the same Catholic principles, the scholars of the time formed an

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[2] The term 'Bologna Process' is used to describe the current changes in European academic systems and is defined in the next section.

'international fraternity of students' (Ashby, 1966: 5) that was mobile across Europe. England played a vital role within this movement, as it was one of the first countries to host its own university, Oxford, founded in 1167 after a period of teaching dating back to 1096 (Evans, 2010). In 1209, the University of Cambridge was founded after an upheaval at Oxford which caused the flight of several scholars to the town of Cambridge, where they established the new university (Evans, 2009). In those times, the existence of universities across Europe was exceptional,[3] which increased the importance of Oxford and Cambridge for foreign scholars and the international fraternity of students. The students themselves were characterised as male, noble, of diverse nationalities, and devoted to obtaining knowledge (Norton, 1909).

Over the centuries, the international fraternity of students changed its nature as the custom of the 'Grand Tour' was established and 'young English elites of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often spent two to four years travelling around Europe in an effort to broaden their horizons and learn about language, architecture, geography, and culture' (Rosenberg, 2009). Traditionally this path went from London to Paris and then to the Italian cities as the young English gentry spent their time educating themselves in European high culture and manners which they then brought back to English society (Martin, 2009). Like the travelling medieval scholars, the later gentry travelled for the purpose of gaining knowledge but also for improving their manner, the result of which was to improve high culture back home in England. The international student was a young man with wealthy parents, a gentleman in search of culture and respectability rather than a scholar devoted purely to attaining knowledge.

During the nineteenth century, European universities became more national in nature and lost the supra-national characteristic of medieval times due to an overall

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[3] Other early universities were: Bologna (1088); Paris (1150); Palencia (1208); Salamanca (1218); Montpellier (1220); Padua (1222); Naples Frederico II (1224); Toulouse (1229).

rise in nationalism and a decrease of the dominance of the Catholic Church (Anderson, 2004). Although student mobility still occurred, it became less important than before and was even discouraged in parts of Europe, especially in the lands ruled by the Habsburg dynasty, which tried to keep its students within its boundaries and put restrictions ruling foreign students into place (Anderson, 2004). Now the roving European scholar became one who further established the prestige of his own nation by attending the national university rather than investing too much in international exchange (Anderson, 2004). At the same time, the demand for more practical education for the new emerging industrial bourgeoisie in England led to the establishment of new ('redbrick') universities such as Manchester, London, Birmingham and Leeds. On the Continent, students and scholars formed social and political societies that threatened the ruling dynasties, especially in the German nations, which had a history of student uprisings in the nineteenth century (Wipf, 2004). British university students, by contrast, were less politically active. This is seen to be connected to the fact that, especially for 'Oxbridge', the nature of the student body was 'a kind of gentleman's club of the sons of members of the ruling class' (Anderson, 2004: 143). Furthermore, Europe became less attractive to the English gentry as colonialism and its challenges arose. From the middle of the nineteenth century, English politicians tried to find a suitable model of universities to 'export' to the colonies (especially Canada, Australia and India), a move which led to various reforms in the English universities themselves, including Oxford and Cambridge. Those reforms not only incorporated the natural sciences into the curricula, but they also assured that the curricula prepared graduates to become 'clergymen, lawyers, doctors, civil servants, schoolteachers, and to a growing extent managers and businessmen – not only at home but across the empire, which now became a vital part

of the middleclass career world' (Anderson, 2004: 198). It could therefore be assumed that the Commonwealth and the British Empire played a larger role in the development of modern universities in the UK than European influences did. The exchange of knowledge with European universities, as seen in medieval times, was replaced by the drive to export knowledge to new universities throughout the empire based on the English academic model.[4]

During the two world wars, the importance of higher education in Britain decreased (Ashby, 1966), but shortly after each war, a university education became popular again and with it, student mobility throughout the empire. This migration became a vital part in British politics. In 1959, the first Commonwealth Education Conference was held in Oxford and set up the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), which is still in place today (Williams, 2003).[5] This initiative was seen to 'play an important part in maintaining and strengthening the common ideals on which the Commonwealth is founded' (CSFP quoted in Bown, 2003: 165). It set its motto as '[e]ach has something to learn from others; each has something to give' (Report of the Commonwealth Education Conference, 1959 quoted in Bown, 2003: 163).

Apart from promoting the principle that the constant exchange of knowledge is a valuable tool used to support the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan was also aiming to strengthen common ideologies across the Commonwealth and to allow all members of the community to benefit through access to a pool of educational resources (Bown, 1994; 2003). In order to facilitate this exchange of knowledge and attract scholars throughout what had been the empire,

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[4] Here the distinction of English versus British is vital as the Scottish universities maintained an exchange with European institutions, mainly with universities in Holland (Ashby, 1966).
[5] Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP):
http://www.csfp-online.org/index.html
[last accessed 01 April 2011].

student scholarships were introduced. The original CSFP aimed to provide 1,000 bursaries throughout the Commonwealth, with Britain offering 500, Canada 250, Australia 100, India 100, and the remaining 50 being distributed over the other Commonwealth countries. In 1966, the target of 1,000 bursaries per year was reached, so the amount was steadily increased and at the turn of the twenty-first century, the number of scholarships per year was close to 2,000 (Bown, 2003). By 2010, more than 27,000 students benefited from these scholarships that gave them access to mobility. Ten percent of all students were enrolled in undergraduate studies and ninety percent of the scholarships were used for postgraduate studies, short term exchanges, medical training programmes and mid-career professional fellowships.[6] Compared to other countries across the former empire, the UK still provides the majority of bursaries. This is due to its historically leading position within the former empire and the fact that English is the preferred academic language.[7]

In 1981, the Standing Committee on Student Mobility was founded in order to highlight the importance of scholarly exchange (Williams, 2003: 11). The aim of this committee was to monitor the increase in mobility of students across the former empire through the collection of statistical data and to respond to policies introduced by participating countries, including tuition fees and visa regulations. The committee's work also focussed on publicising the possibility of mobility for international students and staff. Due to cuts of funding and a perceived ineffectiveness, however, the Commonwealth Education Conference decided to dissolve the committee in 1992. Its

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[6] Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP):
http://www.csfp-online.org/index.html
[last accessed 01 April 2011].
[7] For a detailed listing of scholarship awards according to receiving countries, see:
http://www.csfp-online.org/countries.html
[last accessed 01 April 2011].

short existence did, however, draw attention to the importance of student mobility in the 1980s, a time of major changes within the educational system.

Recognising the economic value of international student mobility, the Conservative government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher implemented tuition fees for non-British students in the autumn of 1980 (Williams, 1984). This can be seen as the origin of the still-existing differences in tuition fees for UK/EU students and overseas students.[8] This introduction caused a national uproar among students (Thomas, 2002), which can be characterised as the highest level of student engagement in student politics in the twentieth century. Students engaged in grassroots elements such as university occupations and demonstrations (Grindel, 2007), but these actions were unable to prevent the implementation of tuition fees for international students.[9] These political changes had an influence on funding bodies such as the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) as costs rose due to the need to not only provide financial support for personal maintenance, but also for institutional costs. It is unsurprising that the numbers of scholarships being granted dropped slightly during the 1980s, though the numbers rose again in the 1990s (Bown, 2003).

So far it can be said that Britain's role as a main receiving country of international students went from being a major player within the international fraternity of students travelling across Europe in medieval times, to being the main focus within the British Empire and, later, the countries of the British commonwealth. Due to colonialism and the establishment of the British Empire, student mobility

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[8] According to Line Verbik and Veronica Lasanowski (2007), on average, higher education institutions took between ten and fifteen percent of their overall incomes from the tuition fees of overseas students in the year 2005. This can be characterised as quite a substantial proportion of intake.

[9] The failure to hinder the introduction of tuition fees for international students is seen as responsible for Britain's ability to be the first country in Europe to introduce general tuition fees in 1997 (Edelman Boren, 2001; Grindel, 2007; Keller, 2000).

changed from intra-European to extra-European travel. In the late 1980s this focus changed again, this time as a result of the introduction of a broader European exchange system (King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003).

Like the CSFP, the European Exchange Programmes aimed at the creation of a European identity by providing financial as well as institutional support for the movement of students and scholars.[10] The most renowned student exchange programme was the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, ERASMUS, but other programmes were introduced at the same time, such as SOCRATES, LINGUA, COMETT and TEMPUS (Bunt Kophuis, 1992: 17). ERASMUS, like other programmes, offered students the opportunity to study in a different European country for a period of three to twelve months. Recently, the programme expanded to include staff mobility and internships in organisations and companies (European Commission, 2010).

According to an ERASMUS statistics report by the European Commission (2010), the number of students able to participate in this exchange reached two million in 2009. It is estimated that currently, about four percent of all European students gain access to international student mobility every year through ERASMUS (King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003).[11] The total numbers of students participating in this programme are constantly increasing due to the growth of the overall number of European students, which is in turn caused by widening university participation policies within countries, the end of the Cold War, and the expansion of the European Union. Together with Spain, France and Germany, Britain receives the highest number of

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[10] The Bologna Process aims to further establish a European identity and is discussed in the next section. The focus here lies on already established programmes to highlight the student mobility into the UK.

[11] Russell King and Enric Ruiz-Gelices (2003) discuss that although the number of ERASMUS students increases every year, the programme has never reached its originally predicted peak of ten percent of all students participating in the programme every year, which they consider a failure.

ERASMUS students on an annual basis. Since the academic year 2004/2005, Britain has hosted just over ten percent of all ERASMUS students every year. In 2007/2008, the academic year in which the interviews were conducted, 19,120 students entered the UK and numbers are still on the rise (European Commission, 2010).

Whilst Spain, France and Germany are active in sending their students abroad, in the UK there occurs a disparity between students received and students sent, as only about five percent of all ERASMUS students are British nationals (ibid). Britain is therefore characterised as a receiving country taking in more students than it sends away. This might be the result of language and culture, with fewer British students being mobile throughout Europe but concentrating on other English-speaking destinations like North America and Australia (King, Findlay, Ruiz-Gelices and Stam, 2004). In turn, it is likely that the UK attracts European students who enter Britain through programmes such as ERASMUS so they can learn to speak, read and write English.

The trend toward re-establishing Europe as a partner in the process of student mobility is further affected by the changes that arose out of the Bologna Declaration, which is discussed in detail in the next section. I first, however, highlight the total figures of international students entering the UK every year (Figure 1).

When we compare the total figures of incoming students in the academic years of 1998/1999 and 2007/2008, it becomes apparent that the absolute number of incoming international students (full-time, part-time, undergraduate, postgraduate and exchange students) is rising dramatically.

**Incoming International Students**
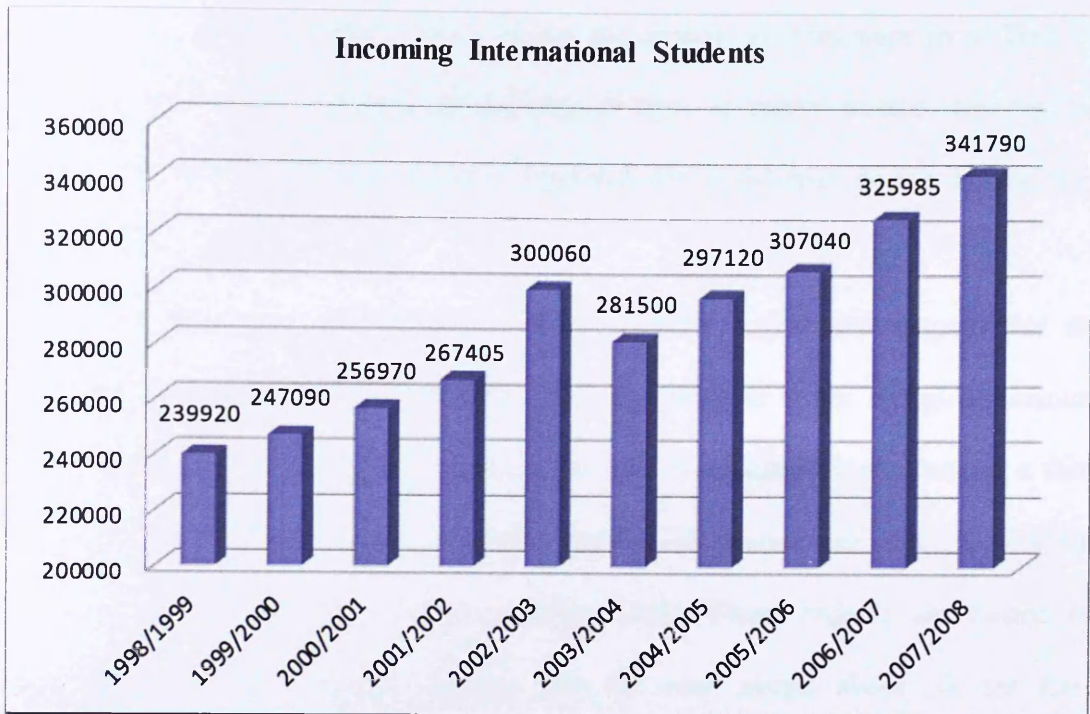
Figure 1: Total Numbers of Incoming Students 1998/1999-2007/2008.[12]

These figures show that apart from a one-off-surge in 2002/2003, which was caused by a steep increase in students from the Baltic countries and the Eastern European states, the growth of numbers of international students appears to increase steadily. Further analysis of the statistics produced by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2009) shows that, compared to home students, international students are more likely to study at postgraduate levels than native UK students. Approximately fifty percent of all students choosing studies at the Masters or PhD level in 2002/2003 are international students.[13] The number of female international students in 2002/2003 was slightly smaller compared to male students (approximately forty-eight percent of the whole). This figure differs from UK students, where approximately fifty-eight

[12] Sources: 1998/1999-2002/2003: EURODATA (Sibson, 2006: 105); 2003/2004-2007/2008: HESA (2009). As this study was conducted in 2007/2008, here, I do not focus on the rise of student migration beyond that time.

[13] Robin Sibson (2006) compared the figures of international students with UK students and showed that the level of study (undergraduate and postgraduate) displays disparities according to the origin of the student. Whilst about forty-seven percent of all international students chose to study at a postgraduate level (Masters and PhD) in 2002/2003, only nineteen percent of all home students were registered at postgraduate level.

percent were female (Sibson, 2006). Female international students were more likely to participate in a study exchange for a period of three to twelve months, whereas the number of male international students registered for a full-time degree course was slightly higher (Sibson, 2006).

The high intake of more than 300,000 students a year also suggests that the number of Commonwealth and European Exchange students is not enough to account for all of the international students entering the UK on an annual basis. Instead a third layer has to be introduced: the growing number of international, non-EU students entering both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These students are funded by local institutions, other funding schemes than the ones named above, or are free-moving.[14] The inclusion of tertiary education in the General Agreement of Trade Services (GATS) in 1994 caused a denationalisation of higher education and reduced national sovereignty over educational policies, which until then were completely dependent on the nation state. Authority was transferred to global agencies as part of the process of liberalisation of trade and economy. GATS deals with:


- transnational delivery of services (i.e., Internet-based 'e-learning').

- usage of services in a foreign country (i.e., international students studying abroad).

- commercial presence of foreign services in the home country (i.e., branch offices of foreign universities).

- presence of persons in a foreign country (i.e., foreign lecturers and researchers in a hosting country).

(Hahn, 2002).

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[14] Here 'free-moving students' are students that self-fund their studies in the UK.

Universities around the world now stand in competition with each other for the most suitable candidates applying for their programmes, which also increases student mobility. Statistics produced by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2009) show that of all international students arriving in the UK, around one third arrive from other European countries and two thirds can be described as overseas students, originating from outside the EU. The countries with the highest numbers of students studying in the UK are China, India, the Republic of Ireland, the USA, and Germany (HESA; Lanzendorf, 2006). This shows that the origins of many international students are outside Europe and the Commonwealth.

In summary, Britain has a long-standing history of hosting international students. In medieval times, British universities were part of the European network of universities, and an international fraternity of students studied at Oxford and Cambridge. Later, the sons of the English aristocracy and gentry took part in the Grand Tour and explored European countries, which improved their academic knowledge and raised English culture to Continental levels. With the growth of the British Empire, Britain's focus moved to forming connections with the conquered lands, connections based on exchange of knowledge and the later establishment of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. However, from the 1980s onward, the UK participated again in forming a European identity through the provision of European Exchange Programmes such as ERASMUS and its participation in the Bologna Process (to be discussed in detail in the next section). More recently, the worldwide increase in student mobility further affected Britain and caused an increase in the total numbers of students entering the country in order to study at an institution of higher education in the UK. Britain's exceptional role as the head of the Commonwealth, on the one hand, and its attractiveness as an English-speaking

country, on the other hand, then led to its status as the second most important state in the world in terms of hosting international students.

The image of the international student as a male European gentleman has changed. Today we see students of non-European nationalities, female students, students with lower class backgrounds, and students accompanied by partners, spouses and children.

In the future, it will be vital to monitor how the changes to the TIER 4 Visa might affect the overall number of students entering the UK. As my study was conducted in 2007 and 2008, it is not relevant to discuss the current changes in detail here. Instead, I focus on the Bologna Declaration and its (then) predicted effects on student mobility, and briefly return to current changes in the concluding chapter.

## Internationalisation and the Europeanisation of Higher Education: The Bologna Process

I state above that Europe was once a network of universities hosting an international fraternity of students, a group of privileged migrants crossing national borders for the purpose of education. This agreement of safe passage between kingdoms and nations in medieval times originated in Bologna, Italy, which has once more become known for its attempt to create a 'Europe of knowledge' (Hahn 2002:44). As stated above, in the nineteenth century the institution of the university turned from being a 'supra-national' entity (Ashby, 1966) into a national one. Although universities were never purely national institutions, and student mobility always played an important role (Bultmann and Weitkamp, 1999), the mid-1990s once again saw an attempt to change the nature of the sector through an 'internationalisation of higher education [which] has gone through a period of rapid and far-reaching developments' (Maassen, 2004:

11). The inclusion of tertiary education into the GATS agreement in 1994 further caused a denationalisation of higher education and reduced the sovereignty of nations over education policies. Authority was transferred to global agencies as part of the process of the liberation of trade and economy, and universities were turned from providers of state service into market-oriented 'companies' where marketing elements such as quality assurance[15] and 'public management' took over legislation from the traditional self-government of the university (Buck-Becheler, Schaefer and Wagemann 1997; Daxner, 1999; Keller, 2000).

Competing with each other, nation-states now faced the need to form alliances in order to become global players. This need was especially prevalent in European countries as they not only saw each other as rivals but also faced rivalries with North America and Southeast Asia. Forming alliances across Europe, then, was seen as a way to strengthen the whole of Europe in opposition to the other main arenas of education. This process, which is known as the Europeanisation of higher education, had been part of the political agenda since the 1970s through the implementation of European Education Programmes, such as Joint Study Programmes and since the 1980s through the implementation of ERAMUS Exchange Programmes discussed above (Hahn, 2002). The process saw its peak in 1998 when education ministers from France, Germany, Italy and the UK met at the Sorbonne to discuss the development of a harmonisation of education architecture in the European tertiary education sector (Hahn, 2002). These changes were intended to strengthen the intellectual, cultural, social, scientific and technological dimensions of a united Europe. They also formed the basis for the development of a 'Europe of knowledge' (Hahn, 2002: 44). One year later, thirty education ministers met in Bologna and further discussed the issues, and

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[15] For a debate on quality assurance see for example: Engel (2000); HRK (2003); Pohlenz, Grindel and Köpke (2006); Pohlenz and Tinser (2004).

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by 2007, sixteen more countries had joined what came to be known as the Bologna Process.[16] As signed, the Bologna Declaration functioned as an action plan which aimed to fulfil the following goals by the end of 2010:

- adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement [...].

- adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and postgraduate.

- establishment of a system of credits [...] as a means of promoting the most widespread student mobility.

- promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movements [of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff].

- promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

- promotion of the necessary European dimension in higher education, particularly with regard to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

(Bologna Declaration 1999, in: Amaral and Magalhães, 2004: 84).

Follow-up meetings in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005) included discussions about aspects of synchronising forms of quality assurance and issues of co-operation between the European Higher Education Area and other areas of education, such as North America and Southeast Asia (Garben, 2011).

[16] For a detailed discussion of the participating countries, see Tomusk (2010)

With the implementation of a united European area of Higher Education, the most crucial tool had been the Europe-wide shift towards a two (or three) cycle model[17] of studying, including both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This involved a broad modularisation of studies and a shift towards a Bachelor-Masters-PhD system which can be characterised as an adoption of the Anglo-American structure (Grindel, 2007).

It is, however, the most extreme cut in the diversity of European university systems to-date which, according to critics of the Bologna process, takes away the uniqueness of different degree schemes in favour of a unified system (Stölting, 2005). For the future, it is predicted that the exchange of international students in the first cycle of studies will decrease and that mobility in the second cycle will increase (Crosier, Purser and Smidt, 2007).

A further indicator of Europeanisation is the increase in the use of English as the preferred academic language, especially for courses in the degree schemes in the second cycle of studies throughout the whole of Europe. The ability to attract international students, regardless of the students' ability to speak the local language of the receiving country, further 'boost[s] the international attractiveness of many universities' (2007: 43) throughout the whole of the European education area. The acceptance of English as the new universal academic language, which in medieval time was Latin, is, however, not universally praised in the international literature. Ragnhild Ljosland (2005), for example, criticises Norway's 'misunderstanding of the Bologna Process', where internationalisation becomes Anglicisation. She also stresses

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[17] Here it is important to note that both descriptions mean the division into Bachelor, Masters and PhD. This is the main change from a purely two-cycle study system (as it was manifested in most of Europe) where the first level was a research degree which finished with an equivalent to the Masters whereby the second cycle was a doctoral study programme. In this thesis, I refer to the Bachelor-Masters-PhD division as a 'two-cycle model' characterising the division into undergraduate level (Bachelor) and postgraduate level (Masters and PhD).

the point that although it is not the intention of the Bologna Declaration to turn the education sector into an 'English-speaking Unicorn', trends throughout Europe show that this is what is happening.

In short, European countries have tried to re-establish the long lost idea of a Europe of Knowledge, first through the implementation of European Study Exchange Programmes and second through the formation of a European Higher Education area through the implementation of the Bologna Process. The aim was to create a stronger European identity as well as to become attractive for non-EU students. Therefore a new trend might emerge, which is predicted to change the reason for student mobility.

## Conclusion: The Changing Image of an International Student

International student mobility is characterised by a constant growth that particularly dates from the 1990s. Universities in English-speaking countries have until now been in an advantageous position to recruit international students compared to non-English speaking countries. This trend may, however, change in the new context as on the one hand, an increasing amount of European universities offer postgraduate courses in English, and on the other hand, the UK and the U.S. increase their tuition fees and put restrictions to the legal rights of international students, such as restricted work visas or an increased amount of surveillance. I return to the current changes in the UK Higher Education system in the concluding chapter.

The chapter here outlines the history of student mobility into the UK as dating back to medieval times, where especially prestigious universities like Oxford and Cambridge welcomed the international fraternity of students. With the modern development and demand for more practical academics, 'redbrick' universities like Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds became role models for the export of academia

throughout the British Empire. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the focus on the British colonies had become more important than exchanges with Europe. Since the 1980s, the UK has turned back to Europe with the participation in European Exchange Programmes and the Bologna Process. The introduction of higher education into the GATS agreement has further drawn attention to the worldwide importance of student mobility, leading to a further increase in numbers of international students.

The shift toward a more modularised system of study throughout Europe, which is divided into undergraduate and postgraduate studies, might further affect the nature of the student population. Indeed, the implementation of a two-cycle model might change the social structure of the body of international students and increase the overall age of international students due to the predicted increase in postgraduate students and a predicted decrease of participation in European Exchange Programmes. Currently, the UK is the most important receiving country in Europe, followed by Germany and France. The majority of international students are enrolled in postgraduate studies and at the time of my interviews in the academic year 2007/2008, international students made up:

- eleven percent of full-time first degree students and ten percent of all first degree students.

- sixty-five percent of full-time taught postgraduates and forty percent of all taught postgraduates.

- forty-eight percent of full-time research degree students and forty-one percent of all research postgraduates.[18]

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[18] UK Council for International Student Affairs' statistics on Higher Education:
www.ukcosa.org.uk
[last accessed 22 December 2007].

As for the age of students, statistics show that the oldest students are studying in the UK, with an average age of 28.0 years (HIS, 2005: 24) across all levels of study. In the UK, the HESA (2009) statistics show that in 2007/2008 the vast majority (seventy-seven percent) of all postgraduate students were older than twenty-five. Relating this finding to the fact that the majority of international students are enrolled in postgraduate studies, it might be possible to say that most international students are in their twenties, thirties and older.

Due to the further internationalisation of the European Higher Education area and an implementation of a two-cycle model of studies across Europe, we might thus predict that European universities will see an increase in the average age of international students. Further, we might assume that this increase in the age of students might increase the overall number of accompanying partners, spouses and/or children.[19] Therefore, universities across Europe might face new challenges in accommodating the needs of students who arrive with accompanying persons, as the well-being of the student is tied to the well-being of his or her partner, spouse and/or children.

Traditionally, the quality of the chosen university played a role in decision-making, combined with the place of destination and the native language of the receiving country. With the attempt to conduct postgraduate courses exclusively in English, the new international student's choice is less likely to depend on his or her ability to speak the dominant language of the chosen place of destination. Instead, it is predicted that decisions are made based on the type of course offered, on the reputation of the department, and on the reputation of the university itself. It is likewise predicted that the English-speaking countries might actually experience a

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[19] Here it is vital to mention that these conclusions were formed assuming the continuance of the policy of granting dependants' visas to spouses of international students.

decrease in the number of international students due to a rise in tuition fees, especially in the UK (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). This shift might also lead to a change in mobility patterns, as universities in so-called 'global cities' (Sassen, 1998) now stand in competition with smaller university towns across Europe which cannot offer as much of a multicultural setting as the global cities, but might be able to offer courses of a higher quality or better student-lecturer ratios. These factors will attract students, particularly postgraduates. Research covering these places is scarce, so I selected Lancaster in order to exemplify the large number of small towns and cities that have not had an extensive history of higher education and international students but are now facing this relatively new phenomenon.

Focussing on Britain as the country which already has a long-standing history of student mobility as well as granting dependants' visas to spouses of international students, this thesis aims to give a first insight into the lives of partners of international students re-settling temporarily in Lancaster, a peripheral city in northern England. Lancaster was chosen as an example of the numerous small university towns that are facing an increase in student mobility due to the Bologna Process. In order to give the reader a feeling for the place, in the next chapter, I turn to a brief introduction of the city, the methods used and the sample.

# Chapter three:

# Methodology, Setting and Sample

In chapter one, I discuss the importance of researching the experiences of partners of international students, especially as no other academic study deals with this specific group of migrants entering a European country. Although there are numerous studies of spouses of transnational migrants who are not students (as discussed in chapter one), the experiences of the partners and children of international students have been almost ignored. I see this as evidence of the common misconception that these migrants are 'trailing spouses' without any agency of their own.

I came to this realisation whilst studying the literature on international students and also through reproducing that same mistake myself whilst conducting two studies on the experiences of international students. In the first study, conducted in 2004, I researched international, full-time students at Lancaster University as part of a work placement in the Student Support Service. In the second study, conducted in 2004/2005, I explored experiences of international, full-time students at Potsdam University as part of a research seminar supervised by Erhard Stölting and Philipp Pohlenz. My analysis of the qualitative and quantitative material showed that the happiness and educational performance of international students depends largely on personal issues, one of the most important of which is their concern for the well-being of their partners and children. As I critically evaluated my earlier research, I came to the conclusion that if we want to understand the full complexity of student migration, then it is vital to study the experiences of partners of international students.

In order to do so, I chose to use a 'case study' as my research design (as detailed in the next section). This allows me to address specific theoretical and epistemological questions arising from a gap in the literature on spouses of migrants

(as discussed in chapter one). The case for this particular research is Lancaster University, chosen due to, firstly, an identified gap in the literature as highlighted in chapter one; secondly, in connection to the growing internationalisation of higher education, discussed in chapter two; thirdly, for personal reasons; and fourthly, for pragmatic reasons.

Regarding the first reason, I discuss in chapter one that the experiences of partners of international students in the UK in general, and in peripheral places in particular, are largely absent in the literature. Basing my work on the experiences of partners of international students in a city which is not a metropolis or a global city, as I will show in detail below, permits insights into a phenomenon so far largely understudied (Erel, 2011).

Secondly, my choice to do this research sets links to the growing internationalisation of higher education. As I discuss in chapter two, the UK is the second most important destination for international students (King, Findlay and Ahrens, 2010). According to Line Verbik and Veronica Lasanowski, as discussed in chapter two, international students tend to choose their place of study more on the basis of the reputation of the university, department, or potential supervisors, than on the university's location (i.e., whether it is a metropolitan or large urban centre). Smaller university cities like Lancaster are seeing a growing number of international students enrolling at their universities and bringing their spouses, partners, and children along. The experiences of these migrants in cities that until now have not had had a long history of migration, are, however, largely absent in the literature. To fill this gap, this thesis concentrates on research conducted in a smaller university city. Lancaster is thus presented as what Alan Bryman (2004: 56) defines as an 'exemplifying case', a case not chosen on the basis of an aim to be representative, but

because it 'provide[s] a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered', here, the experiences of a partner of an international student whose migration can be characterised as living temporary lives in a peripheral university town.

My third reason for choosing Lancaster University as my case study is drawn from my own life. I first arrived in Lancaster in the academic year 2003/2004 in order to participate in an Erasmus exchange programme. During this time, I experienced life as a temporary migrant who intended to stay in Lancaster for a fixed period of time. This was originally six months, but it stretched into eleven months. As I state above, I also conducted a small research project on international students in 2004, and therefore already had a pre-formed set of knowledge of Lancaster. Arguably, due to my previous research project, I might have already formed what Malinowski (1922; in: Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 24) calls 'foreshadowed problems', such as certain feelings towards being a temporary migrant in this city and observed experiences of international students and their partners, but my ability to gain easy access to the field due to networks I had formed previously outweighed these concerns. After living in Potsdam for two years, I decided to return to Lancaster in 2006 because I wanted to be close to my British partner. Choosing to enrol at Lancaster for this PhD programme and choosing the same university as my case were thus also based on my desire to be near my partner and my given entry into the field.

My fourth reason for choosing Lancaster as my case was of a pragmatic nature. Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995) draw attention to the researcher's need to carefully counterbalance his or her desire to collect a vast amount of data against pragmatic concerns like access, money, and time. For practical reasons, therefore, I decided to study Lancaster because I started my PhD without any

institutional funding and therefore had to rely on part-time employment. I taught undergraduate students at the Department of Sociology and also worked part-time as a manager of an art and community centre in Lancaster's City Centre. For these reasons, I was bound to Lancaster and unable to travel long distances to collect data at other institutions of higher education, which meant I could not conduct a comparative study. I could simply not afford to leave Lancaster for the time it would have taken me to gain access to another field and collect data in another city.

Before I introduce my methodology and sample in the next sections, let me introduce the city where the research was undertaken.

The city of Lancaster is situated in the northwest of England in the county of Lancashire, which lies between the city of Manchester and the Scottish Borders. It is located on the main northwest road and rail routes, in proximity to the Lake District National Park. Its boundaries are set by Morecambe Bay on the west and the Trough of Bowland on the east (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Lancaster on the UK Map.**[1]

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[1]  Source: http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/civic-ceremonial/short-history-lancaster-through-ages/ [last accessed 04 January 2010].

Lancaster was first mentioned as a borough in 1193, when the soon-to-be King John granted the Liberties of Bristol, in its Foundation Charter, to the burgesses of Lancaster. At that time, Lancaster's population was clustered around the Castle Hill and the Priory Church (Constantine and White, 2001). In 1351, when King Edward III granted Lancashire the status of County Palatine, and Henry, the fourth Earl of Lancaster, was appointed the first Duke of Lancaster. He was succeeded by his son, John of Gaunt. After further settlement, Lancaster's importance in the British economy peaked in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to its involvement in trading goods, especially with the West Indies, and the slave trade. Having gained reasonable amount of wealth, Lancaster was granted city status on 14th of May 1937 as the first city within the boundaries of Lancashire.[2]

Today, the city is governed by the Lancaster City Council, which is currently responsible for the whole of the Lancaster District, which includes the City of Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham, Lancaster University, and surrounding rural areas, and a population of just over 100,000.[3]

Lancaster hosts two universities: Lancaster University and parts of the University of Cumbria. Lancaster University, founded 1964 and situated approximately three miles from the city centre, is based on a collegiate system following the tradition of universities like Oxford and Cambridge,[4] as it hosts nine colleges. These are Bowland, Cartmel, County, Furness, Fylde, Graduate, Grizedale, Lonsdale and Pendle. In the academic year 2007/2008, when my interviews were conducted, 11,522 students[5] were enrolled at Lancaster University. Of that number,

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[2] Preston was granted city status only in 2002.
[3] Information provided by the City Council Lancaster, Office of Demographics, 2010.
[4] There are currently only six universities in the UK with this collegiate system: Cambridge; Durham; Kent; Lancaster; Oxford; York.
[5] Figures include all students enrolled at Lancaster apart from: dormant students (those who have ceased studying but have not formally de-registered); post-doctoral students, and students primarily

just over 5,000 students were residents on campus in accommodations administered by the university.[6] Of the overall figure of registered students, 8,660 were British nationals, 915 were of another EU nationality, and 1,947 were overseas students. The total number of international students was 2,862, which means that at the time one in four students at Lancaster University (twenty-five percent) were not British. In 2007, approximately twelve percent of all undergraduate students and fifty-two percent of all postgraduate students were of non-British origin.[7] The top ten countries of origin of postgraduate students were China, India, Greece, Germany, Taiwan, Nigeria, the U.S.A., Thailand, Italy and Pakistan. The ten most common nationalities for undergraduate students differed slightly from the postgraduate students: China, Cyprus, India, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Norway, Lithuania, Greece, France and Germany. Compared to the most common countries of origin for foreign nationals in the whole of the UK,[8] it is striking that Lancaster does not seem to attract a great number of U.S. American and Irish students, but instead a high presentation of Greek and Cypriot students.[9]

Lancaster's second university, the University of Cumbria, was founded on the 1st of August 2007 on the grounds of the former St. Martin's College, which had operated as a college of education since 1964. Although its main campus is in Lancaster, the university also offers courses in Ambleside, Carlisle and London. In 2007/2008, of the approximately 5,500 students enrolled at the Lancaster site, around 100 of them were international,[10] adding to the total of foreign students in Lancaster.

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studying outside the UK; instances where the whole of the programme of study is outside the UK; students on sabbatical; and writing-up students.

[6] Information provided by the Lancaster University College and Residence Office, 2010.

[7] Information provided by the Lancaster University Registry Office, 2010. In a national comparison, this figure is slightly higher than the average as shown in the previous section of this chapter.

[8] China, India, Ireland, USA, Germany.

[9] The diversity of European, Commonwealth and other foreign nationalities corresponds with the acknowledgement that the body of international students is a mix of different origins.

[10] Information provided by the University of Cumbria, 2010.

Relating the overall numbers of enrolled students at both universities to the approximately 100,000 inhabitants registered in the Lancaster District, Lancaster's extraordinary social structure becomes evident, as about 17.0 percent of its population are students. Of this 17.0 percent, approximately 17.5 percent are of non-British origin. This affects the district's economy, as the main sources of income are related to the educational sector, the medical sector, and the response to the needs of students through the local provision of retail and entertainment facilities. As there are no major industries in the city, the major employers are the universities, the NHS, and small customer-based trades (retail and gastronomy), plus tourism and construction. The effect that this has on the employment opportunities for partners of international students is discussed in the next chapter.

Men | Women

UK Average

90 and over
85-89
80-84
75-79
70-74
65-69
60-64
55-59
50-54
45-49
40-44
35-39
30-34
25-29
20-24
15-19
10-14
5-9
0-4

10%  8%  6%  4%  2%  0%  2%  4%  6%  8%  10%
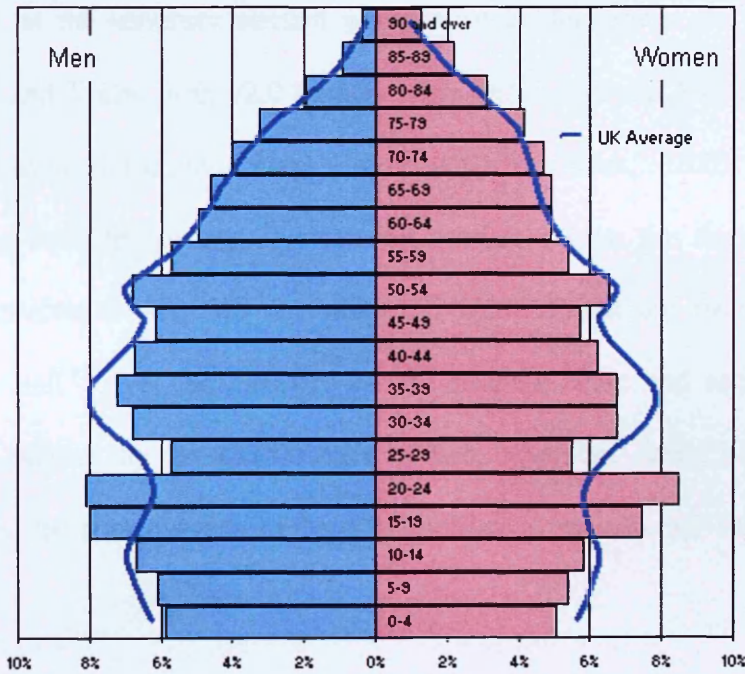
**Figure 3: Age Pyramid – Census 2001 – Lancaster District.**[11]

[11] Census Report 2001: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/Census2001/pyramids/pages/30uh.asp [last accessed 20 December 2009].

With 17.0 percent of the population being students, Lancaster's social structure is proportionally young, as shown in the result of the Census of 2001. This graph (Figure 3) shows that the number of inhabitants fifteen to twenty-four years of age greatly exceeds the average in the UK. This can be explained by the high number of students.

The Census 2001 report offers some further insights into the distribution of ethnicities in Lancaster. The whole of the Lancaster District is characterised by its homogeneity, with a population approximately 98.0 percent white and British. Only 2.0 percent of its population is of other ethnicities (Lancaster District Census 2001 Handbook, 2003: 8). Compared to the overall figures for England and Wales, which show a distribution of 92.1 percent as white and British and 7.9 percent with other ethnic backgrounds,[12] Lancaster has a significantly lower proportion of diversity. If we look only at the university election ward, however, the figures are nearly identical with England and Wales, with 92.0 percent white and British and 8.0 percent different ethnic backgrounds (Lancaster District Census 2001 Handbook,[13] 2003: 30).[14]

Taking these figures into consideration, we can assume that the two percent of Lancaster's inhabitants who are not white and native British are mainly international students and staff.[15] We can therefore assume that the ethnic and social structure of Lancaster is affected by the establishment of two universities dating back only about fifty years, and the attractiveness of those universities to international students.

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[12] Lancaster District Census 2001 Handbook:
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=273&Pos=4&ColRank=2&Rank=1000 [last accessed 20 December 2009].
[13] Ibid.
[14] The university ward includes the whole of the campus as well as surrounding rural areas, including the nearby village Galgate. We might assume that a figure for the campus alone would show even higher differences to the district's constitution. Due to an extensive increase in campus accommodations over the last ten years, it can be predicted that the figure will differ in the upcoming reports.
[15] Lancaster also includes a small Indian and Pakistani community, but in comparison to other UK cities this community is relatively small.

So far, I show that Lancaster, once a city dependant on trade, now mainly relies on an economy of serving students, who form 17.0 percent of the population. Quite a significant number of students are international (17.5 percent of all students in Lancaster), adding some diversity to the otherwise homogenous white social structure of the city.

Next I explore why international students (and with them their partners and/or children) choose a place like Lancaster for their education and what kind of support structures are provided for them. When I interviewed the International Student Support Officer at Lancaster University in November 2009, she expressed her personal opinion, based on her six years of employment in the office, of the international students' reasons for coming to Lancaster.

> Students are mainly interested in the academic reputation [...]. They want to go to where there is a good reputation for teaching, for research and whether the institution is highly placed in the 'Times 100 Index', so I think, erm, [...] I don't think personally that Lancaster is a big draw. I mean the city of Lancaster is not a very well known city. Lots of people don't even know where it is or what it is, and then they are astonished about what they find because they heard 'city', but when they get here it's just like a market town [...] with a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant community.

What she says about why students choose to study at Lancaster corresponds with the literature discussed in chapter two, which suggests that potential students are primarily interested in the reputations of the courses, departments and universities and less inclined to rest their choices on the reputation of the city in which the university is

located. The 'astonishment' regarding Lancaster's size and nature expressed by international students upon their arrival, as the International Student Support Officer states, may affect their entire stay. It may also originate in the university's habit of naming Lancaster a 'vibrant city',[16] a branding that suggests a possible comparison to other 'vibrant' places like London, Manchester or Birmingham, which are cities that most potential students are probably more familiar with. The use of the term 'vibrant' may, however, not be helpful when describing the, indeed, rather small, peripheral market town of Lancaster with its mainly white, British population.

Information given to students before their arrival further establishes the description of Lancaster as 'an ancient city and the county town of Lancashire [...] with a compact shopping centre and [...] many places of interest in the town and nearby' ('Pre-Arrival Guide'). Most support given to international students focuses on general aspects of life in the UK and covers issues such as visa matters, financial advice, arrival and accommodations, academic and language support, settling in, and an introduction to civic support structures (medical, pastoral and social).

After their arrival, international students are invited to participate in the International Student Day during Introductory Week, when they receive more information on British culture, dealing with culture shock, visa matters, and everyday life issues such as medical care, banking and employment.[17] During the academic year, the International Student Support Office organises social events for international students that include welcoming evenings; trips to the Lake District, York or Chester; and meetings with local communities, such as the Lancaster District Rotary Club. The office generally functions as the main support body for the students. Along with these

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[16] Lancaster University Homepage:
www.lancs.ac.uk [last accessed 22 January 2010].
[17] Lancaster University Intro-Week events for international students:
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/sbs/international/introweek.htm [last accessed 22 January 2010].

forms of social support, international students can also request language support from the Lancaster University Student Learning Development Centre, which offers a free Effective Learning Programme designed for international students or from the university-owned Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching, which provides the possibility of one-to-one tutoring.[18] Other support structures for students are guidance for housing, counselling, an on-site medical centre, and an on-site pre-school centre. The latter offers childcare for children from three months to seven years at prices varying from approximately £16 to £19 per session (morning and afternoon), depending on the age of the child and the status of the parent.[19] Although this set-up offers flexible childcare (full-time placement or only a few sessions per week) to parents of small children, the flexibility is often restricted by the parent's financial issues, as a full-time place in the centre (five days/week; morning and afternoon) would add up to more than £600 per month.[20] At the time, the university offered a one-off Childcare Bursary of £200 per year for international students who send their children to the University Pre-School Centre, but, given the costs outlined, this did not even cover one month of full-time care.

Apart from support structures aimed at the whole of the student body rather than only international students, the university also offers special support to international students who intend to arrive with their partners and/or children. Like the pre-arrival guide for all international students, Student Support Services publishes a handbook which focuses on the needs of families, including visa matters, financial support, and medical registration, plus a list of pre-schools and schools for older children. After their arrival, the partners of international students can participate in

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[18] Information is based on the year 2007/2008.
[19] Information is based on the year 2007/2008.
[20] Lancaster University Pre-School Centre:
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/pre-school/?Welcome [last accessed 22 January 2010].

weekly English language classes, and some can also attend the International Women's Group.

The weekly English language classes, provided by the International Student Support Office free of charge, are basic language classes especially aimed at the partners of international students.

The International Women's Group, hosted by the on-site Chaplaincy Centre, is a social support organisation that aims to create a space for female spouses and partners to socialise on a weekly basis. According to the convenor of the group, whom I interviewed in November 2009, ten to fifteen women participate in the meeting on a weekly basis. Activities include handicrafts, informational events, mornings dedicated to one particular country (including food and pictures), and outings, like trips to Williamson Park in Lancaster, the Sports Centre or the Lake District. Although the original idea was to facilitate the needs of the accompanying partner, this group is exclusively for female partners and excludes the small but growing number of male partners.[21]

In addition to the English-language classes and the International Women's Group, partners of international students are further able to participate in the Teddies group, which provides a weekly gathering for students, staff and partners with toddlers. The Chaplaincy Centre also hosts Friends International, a charity that links local Christian communities with international students and their families, and the Global Cafe, a fortnightly gathering of international students and their families. In short, international students and their families are given structural support that

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[21] In the interviews conducted in 2009 with both the International Student Support Officer and the convenor of the International Women's Group, this problem was raised. Both responded that there are currently no plans to open the group to male partners as this might distress some members of the Women's Group. The lack of support for male partners was recognised, however, and the idea of setting up a Facebook group for male partners was mentioned. To my knowledge, this never materialised perhaps because the officer I spoke to changed employment, and left Lancaster University.

includes accommodation, childcare, medical care, social support in the form of various networks and groups, academic support in the form of free language classes and tutorials, and pastoral support in the form of free counselling and one-to-one tutorials.

In summary, Lancaster has a relatively short history as a university town, as in the past it was mainly dependent on manufacturing (i.e., linoleum production and furniture-making), trade with the former colonies, and the slave trade. The creation and development of the two universities in the city have affected the social structure of Lancaster, which now has a disproportionately young population. International students and their dependants have further changed the proportion of ethnic minorities in this traditionally white British city. The university tries to accommodate the needs of international students and their partners by offering diverse forms of support.

Evaluating the support structures offered in Lancaster shows, however, that those who provide the support assume a stereotypical image of the partners of the international students. Those who provide the support tend to focus on serving non-English-speaking female partners of students. As their programmes are given during the day, we can further assume that the partners of international students are seen as not being employed full time. Support given to international students' families on campus further shows that those who provide the support assume that the partners and families of international students reside on campus and have little or no connections to the city of Lancaster. The International Student Support Officer interviewed in November 2009, commented on these assumptions:

I guess with Lancaster being a campus university, the students and their families, ninety percent of the time they are based on campus, so they are

slightly removed from the city, so, erm, obviously they have to go shopping and they have seen the town centre, but also mainly they are only here for ten weeks per term and then they go home or they go away.

Based on her personal opinion, she argued that the partners of international students reside on campus for the duration of each term, just as British undergraduates do.

The following chapters explore this stereotype of the female, unemployed, non-English-speaking partner of the international student, who is not connected to the local community, living on-campus, only staying for ten weeks at a time. In the concluding chapter of this thesis I return to this notion and ask: Is this stereotype is still correct? In what follows here, I introduce the methodology and the methods used.

**Introducing Methodology and Methods**

In order to explore the experiences of partners of international students in a peripheral setting, I chose a qualitative approach using a case study design. According to Uwe Flick (2006), qualitative research is of specific relevance to the study of social relations because it focuses on detecting patterns and is often characterised by its inductive approach (Bryman, 2008). The aim of my research was not to test predetermined hypotheses, but to draw on data and material in order to develop new theories. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2003: 4; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) define qualitative research as 'a situated activity that locates the observer in the world'. Paul ten Have (2004) emphasises that qualitative research aims to contribute to some understandings of 'some "reality"' (ten Have, 2004: 3) as a contribution to research a social reality of people living together. The aim of my study is to shed light on the under-researched experiences of partners of international students living in

Lancaster. An inductive qualitative approach was therefore seen as the most suitable choice.

The aim of a 'case study' is the precise description or reconstruction of a case. Charles Ragin (1992: 2) states that 'implicit in most social scientific notions of case analysis is the idea that the objects of investigation are similar enough and separate enough to permit treating them as instances of the same general phenomenon'. David Byrne (2009: 1) identifies case studies as the examination of 'instances of a particular situation or set of circumstances'. Seán Ó Riain (2009) writes that case studies allow the researcher access to one particular setting and the social worlds and 'local' contexts of the participants. In my understanding, a case study also offers us the ability to address specific theoretical and epistemological questions that are needed to fill a gap in existing literature. Regarding the experiences of partners of international students, this gap is empirical, as there are few studies on this particular group of migrants. The gap is also theoretical because the effect that the temporary nature of a migrant's sojourn has on his or her experiences of resettlement in a peripheral place, is under-researched. I thus chose the case study design so that I might investigate a group of people that are, to return to Ragin (1992), similar enough by resettling into one particular place, and separate enough, by being different originating from different countries.

As stated above, I selected Lancaster as my case study for four reasons: (1) the identified gap in the literature, (2) the growing importance of peripheral cities in the internationalisation of higher education, and (3, 4) for personal and pragmatic reasons. I also explain why I did not choose a comparative approach, but decided to counterbalance the lack of comparative data with literature that draws on previous observations and theory formations in order to situate my own findings in the

literature. This combination of 'emic' and 'etic' forms of research (Angrosino, 2007: 68) allows for an identification of emerging patterns and an analysis of these patterns in relation to current literature. It thus corresponds to the inductive approach. The participants in this study were chosen because they were partners of international postgraduate students enrolled at Lancaster University. I will describe sampling strategies and the sample in a later section.

My data results from a range of data collection tools, some of which might be classed as 'ethnographic'. Michael Angrosino (2007: xv) defines the ethnographic method as involving 'the collection of information about the material products, social relationships, beliefs, and values of a community'. Data collection thus relies on a variety of techniques. According to Angrosino (2007), it is desirable to approach the collection of data as from as many different perspectives as possible. Paul Atkinson and his colleagues (2001) stress that it is exactly this ability to mix different methods that allows the ethnographer to draw on a wide repertoire to research some social reality (see also: Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Fetterman, 1998). However, whilst I use a range of methods, some of which are normally seen as 'ethnographic', this study is not solely ethnographic, as the use of some methods, such as observations, was incidental and less structured, as I write in the next section. Instead, one could say that I used a qualitative approach with some methods that could be seen as 'ethnographic', i.e., some forms of observation.

Originally, my focus was on data collection with the help of semi-structured interviews, but I soon realised that my own position as an international PhD student residing in the relatively small town of Lancaster, having a relatively wide-span social network, and inhabiting the space of the university campus meant that I had insights into my participants' experiences through personal observation. My tools of data

collection were thus semi-structured interviews conducted with eleven partners of postgraduate international students at Lancaster University during the academic year 2007/2008, as well as some form of observation, a form of photo elicitation, a short questionnaire covering socio-demographic data, and two 'expert interviews' (Flick, 2006: 165) conducted with officials in the Lancaster University administration.

The interviews were conducted following the concept of the episodic biographical interview as introduced by Christel Hopf (1991; in: Flick, von Kardorff, Keupp, von Rosenstiehl and Wolff, 1995). This interview technique is characterised by a mix of openly structured narrative approaches and the introduction of new topics. According to Uwe Flick (2006), it permits different types of questions that loosely follow Andreas Witzel's (2000 in Flick, 2006) approach. These questions are, first, the conversational entry; second, general and specific prompting; and, third, ad hoc questions asked to facilitate the flow of the interview or to introduce new topics. This method differs to pure life narrative approaches in that it allows the interviewer to guide the interviewee into new topics that otherwise might not be mentioned. The combination of methods, in which life narrative approaches and semi-structured interviews do not contradict each other (Flick, 2006), adds to the diversity of the stories being told by the participants.

The interviews were characterised by what Cornelia Helfferich (2004: 160) calls the interview as 'communication situation', which allows the interviewee to gain trust by asking the interviewer questions, and aims to equalise power relations. My interviews were to some extent similar to actual conversation, as they were about the mutual interests of two people speaking with each other openly, rather than the traditional question-answer setup. Questions in both directions altered the power relations (Helfferich, 2004) and created a friendly, trusting atmosphere. Choosing this

open approach also 'broke the ice' and made participants more willing to share their thoughts and feelings with me. My friendly and outgoing personality, along with my own situation as a temporary migrant, also played a very important role in the success of the interviews.

The participants in the study met me in 2007/2008 as a German international student in her mid-twenties. I had been living in Lancaster for two years, having moved here to be with my English partner. My part-time employment as a manager in a local arts and community centre in Lancaster meant that I was recognised by some participants before the interview began. In all of the interviews, the fact that I am not British was perceived positively. We were two migrants exchanging our experiences of living in Britain. As I critically evaluate the interviews, however, I see that gender, ethnicity, and age also played a role in the interviewer-interviewee relations. Whilst I am not British, I am still a white North-Western European woman, whereas the majority of the participants were not white or North-Western European. My gender also had an effect: my female informants were more inclined to share their experiences with me. Often, however, I was only partially able to understand the full complexities of their experiences, for example, with the women who have children, as I do not. Regarding age, I need to say that I was younger than the majority of the participants I interviewed, which might have affected the interview. Nevertheless, I had the feeling that our shared non-Britishness created a commonality between me and the partners of international students that I interviewed, and often this non-Britishness came to the fore.

Most of the interviews were conducted in English, although two were conducted in German, our shared mother tongue. I decided not to use interpreters, on the one hand, for financial reasons and, on the other hand, because I worried that an

interpreter might unknowingly change what the participant was saying. This would affect the outcome of the study. Because English is my second language, I could more easily understand the participants' linguistic struggles, and so we worked together to turn the interview into an attempt at mutual understanding. Direct discourse does, however, sometimes affect the clarity of the quote. Hence, in what follows, I sometimes give rather lengthy quotes showing the informant's search for the 'right' words in English.

For some interviewees, I was also a source of information, as I had been residing in Lancaster for a longer time than they had. Some asked me where to buy good coffee, which pubs in town I would recommend, or where the nicest children's playground was. These forms of exchange formed a basis for conversation and trust and allowed the participants to talk about their private concerns.

Most of the interviews took place during the first half of the academic year 2007/2008, which meant that a few informants had only recently arrived in Lancaster. I conducted follow-up interviews with four participants in the second half of that academic year, which permitted me to observe changes in their perceptions of home and life in the UK. I followed up on other issues via email or during informal meetings later in the year. In this thesis, however, I do not distinguish between first and second interviews, as the migrants' experiences did not change as much as I originally anticipated.

Following the inductive approach (Bryman, 2004), I coded the transcribed interviews for recurring themes and patterns such as employment, home, social networks, and differences in feeling in or out of place. The participants' experiences were compared using key factors such as the length of stay (one or more years), time of arrival (recently or further back), location of residence (on- or off-campus), and the

presence of accompanying children. I further examined the material and created subcategories within the broader categories of employment, home, and social networks that concerned distinctions between current place of residence and previous place(s) of settlement. These categories allowed me to identify patterns of 'inbetween-ness', a phrase introduced above, and draw conclusions focussing on the participants' lives in a transnational setting. Given the small number of participants, my research does not claim to be representative of all partners of all international students. Still, and in the spirit of the case study approach, this case study allowed me to gather rich material that is suggestive of the experiences of a so-far largely ignored group of migrants.[22]

Before the interviews took place, I asked my participants to fill out a standardised questionnaire (Figure 4) to gather socio-demographic information (Schnell, Hill and Esser, 1999). I chose this method of preliminary data collection so that in the interviews I could focus on the participants' experiences without needing to cover socio-demographic information first.

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[22] In the conclusion of this thesis, I return to a suggestion on how my findings can be further explored in future studies.

# Socio-demographic information

## Interviewee

**Sex**

○ 1.Male          ○ 2.Female

**Nationality**

**Year of birth**

---

**Which size was the community in which you spent most of your childhood?**

○ 1.city                              ○ 2.town

○ 3.small town                        ○ 4.village

**What is your highest degree (in translation to the British system)?**

○ 1.GSEC-level                        ○ 2.A-Level

○ 3.Bachelor (BA/BS)                  ○ 4.Master (BA/MS)

○ 5.PHIL/PHD                          ○ 6.Other

**Marital status**

○ 1.married                           ○ 2.in long term relationship

**Do you have children?**

○ 1.yes          ○ 2.no

**If yes: How many?**

---

**How old is/are your child/children?**

| 1st child | 2nd child |
|---|---|
| | |
| 3rd child | 4th child |
| | |

**If yes: Did you bring your child/children with you to Lancaster?**

○ 1.yes                               ○ 2.no

**Is any of your children visiting a kindergarden in Lancaster?**

○ 1.yes          ○ 2.no

**Is any of your children going to school in Lancaster?**

○ 1.yes          ○ 2.no

**If yes: Which one?**

**If yes: Which one?**

## Partner/Spouse

**Sex**

○ 1.Male          ○ 2.Female

**Nationality**

**What degree is your partner aiming for?**

○ 1.Bachelor          ○ 2.Master (MA/MS)

○ 3.MBA               ○ 4.MPHIL/PHD

**Year of birth**

**In which department is your partner studying?**

**When did your partner start his/her studies?**

## Socio-demographic information

### Current situation

**When did you arrive in Lancaster?**

**In which form of accomodation do you live?**

O 1.College accommodation     O 2.student house/flat in town     O 3.rented house/flat

O 4.own house/flat     O 5.shared house/flat with other people   O 6.Other

**In which area do you live?**

| **Do you work in Lancaster?** | **Do you study at Lancaster?** |
|---|---|
| O 1.yes     O 2.no | O 1.yes     O 2.no |
| **If so, please specify** | **If so, please specify** |

**How do you finance your stay?**

| **Did you ever attend events organised by the International Women's Group?** | **Did you ever participate in the English language classes for spouses of International students?** |
|---|---|
| O 1.yes     O 2.no | O 1.yes     O 2.no |

**Are you a member of any other group and/or society in/at Lancaster?**

O 1.yes     O 2.no

**If so, please specify**

**Figure 4: Socio-Demographic Questionnaire.**

I also asked the participants in the study to take photographs of places, objects, people or situations that especially triggered a feeling of 'home' for them. Of the eleven individuals, six sent photographs to me before the interview or showed me their pictures during the interview, which meant that only about half of my informants participated in this method. In retrospect, I believe the number of respondents might have been higher if I had given them a camera to take pictures with, but as the respondents told me that they owned digital cameras at that time, I thought it unnecessary to provide them with additional tools. The low response rate made it difficult, however, to rely on photo elicitation as a method, especially as, although I intended to use photographs in the interviews, the interviewees did not put the focus

of the interview on their photographs. Instead, their photographs merely functioned as 'accessories to a life story' (Plummer, 2001: 48) and as an ice-breaker for the rather difficult question, 'What is home?' Therefore, while the photos do not play a crucial role in the analysis of the data, they are useful as accessories and visualisations and help me understand the full complexity of these migrants' experiences.

In order to gain further insights into the experiences of partners of international students, I conducted two 'expert interviews' (Flick, 2006: 165) with university professionals who deal with international students and their families and whom I had previously met whilst researching international students. The benefit of this more structured form of interviewing is the ability to gain specific information. The interviewees were the International Student Support Officer and the convenor of the International Women's Group, a support structure for female partners of international students. Their views of the experiences of partners of international students arose from their work with the partners over several years, as mentioned above. Their insights were especially important to me in identifying the image that university professionals hold concerning international students and their families. I return to these perspectives in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Although I did not originally intend to include participant observation in this triangulation of data collection, because Lancaster was the setting of my research, interviewing university professionals and partners of international students at Lancaster University became part of my methodology. Further, after the interviews had taken place, I randomly encountered the majority of my participants for four reasons: (1) I also lived in Lancaster (which is a small city), (2) I was studying on-campus, (3) I worked in an arts and community centre frequented by young

professionals and university students, and (4) I had overlapping social networks with some of my participants.

Firstly, I often met interviewees in the relatively small city centre of Lancaster whilst shopping or socialising. These encounters were not systematic or planned, but instead occurred randomly and unexpectedly. During these encounters, the interviewees and I exchanged small talk which provided me with a further insight into their lives post-interview.

Secondly, I saw participants on campus where they spent a lot of time, and I met and exchanged information with some of their studying partners on a regular basis due to the proximity of offices for postgraduate students. Four of my participants were partners of students in my department, so especially in these cases I was informed about the participants' state of being as well as their partners' well-being.

Thirdly, my part-time employment as a manager of the local art and community centre, 'The Gregson', also meant that I regularly met some of my participants and/or their studying partners. Although in these situations I was not a 'full-time researcher' but simply the person who served the drinks, I had access to further development of my participants' lives in Lancaster. I saw their children growing up, met family members and friends visiting from abroad, and observed relationships taking different turns.

Fourthly, having lived in Lancaster for two years at the time of the research meant that I had a rather large circle of friends from the postgraduate community at Lancaster University. This created access to some of my participants' social lives, as we were invited to the same parties, had similar circles of friends, or met at concerts and other events. In a later section, I give a detailed account of these diverse encounters, but first it is important to say that these encounters meant that I was not

able to completely detach myself from my research participants after the interviews had taken place. There is thus a form of participant observation present in my data analysis.

This, of course, raises ethical concerns. Whilst my participants had given me informed consent to use the interview material as well as the photographs and their socio-demographic information, they did not consent to my observing their behaviour whilst they were socialising with their friends and family members in the bar where I happened to work or whilst enjoying a concert or party which I happened to also attend. Neither did they consent to my using such additional information as the contents of their shopping baskets, when I happened to meet them in the shopping centre.

Apart from informed consent, another ethical issue that arose was deliberate deception. As stated above, it was not my original intention to extend my data collection to more than semi-structured interviews and supporting methods, such as the socio-demographic questionnaires, and photo elicitation, but when participants socialised in the bar where I was working, I found myself in a position where I could not fail to observe their behaviour. Because I never made that explicitly clear to the participants, one might argue that for them I was the bar manager whom they had previously met in her role as a PhD student collecting data in an interview, but who would not observe their drinking behaviour, as they thought that partaking in the interview alone was their research participation. Further, I also had to follow my employer's code of practice, and so using information obtained whilst working in the social centre was seen to be unethical in relation to my employment.

A third ethical concern that arose was confidentiality. In regards to the interview itself, I stressed that the data collected in the interview would be treated in

absolute confidentiality and encouraged the participants to choose a name they wanted me to use in the writing-up process. After the interviews, however, this issue of confidentiality became blurred. Whilst I tried to maintain confidentiality, I sometimes found myself in situations where a participant and I sat at the same dinner table, having been invited by mutual friends, and she or he started openly telling other guests about the interview we had conducted a few months ago. One time, I happened to meet one of my participants in a nightclub. The interviewee was heavily drunk and explained to his friends that I was the lady that had asked him all those questions a few weeks back. Hence, because of this blurring, my aim to keep all information anonymous and confidential became a difficult one to achieve.

Due to these random encounters and the mixing of social worlds, I sometimes found myself in a strange position between insider and outsider, both overt and covert researcher. On the one hand I was considered an insider, another foreigner, living in Lancaster, having come here to be with my partner, studying at Lancaster University, struggling to earn a living whilst studying full-time, but also a source of information about where to go, how to meet people, and, for some, even a gatekeeper to a new circle of friends. On the other hand, I was an outsider in regard to their experiences of being not an international student, but a partner of an international student. I was an outsider to experiences of discrimination based on race, as I myself am white and only identifiable as a foreigner by my German accent. I was an outsider to the struggles of bringing children to Lancaster, as I myself did not have any children. I was an outsider to living in a relationship with another temporary migrant, as my partner was English. Although I was a foreigner, but a white and young foreigner, I fit into the largely white and young (student) community of Lancaster.

In addition, I found myself in a situation where the differences between overt and covert forms of data collection blurred. John McKenzie (2009) writes about his experiences of blurring of overt and covert practices, and reveals that even an intended overt approach can turn into a covert one. I had been given informed consent on the data collected in the semi-structured interviews, but I had not been given the same consent for all other encounters, discussions, talks, and observations that took place after the initial interview stage. Further, although I was accepted in my role as a PhD researcher conducting interviews and maybe following up via email or follow-up interviews, I was not necessarily accepted as an observer of my participants' behaviour when they socialised, shopped, or met with friends and family members.

In order to avoid these ethical issues of deliberate deception and lack of informed consent, I tried to focus the analysis of the data on the semi-structured interviews. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that these random encounters and my own experiences of being an international student in Lancaster have indeed influenced my analysis because of the information I gathered during the process of writing this PhD. This was information unrelated to the initial interview stage, but it might have had an effect on my interpretations of the participants' spoken words. Brendan, whose situation I discuss in chapter seven, however, gave me informed consent to use the information I had gathered through such an unplanned encounter, hence, I include his story in chapter seven.

Having introduced the setting and methodology of this project, I now turn to the individuals and introduce the sample. In this section I also engage in a brief discussion of these various random encounters with participants after the initial interviews.

## Introducing the Sample

As the aim of this study was to conduct an inductive research following a case study approach with Lancaster as the setting, I recruited participants with certain commonalities. They had to be partners of international students, accompanying their studying postgraduate partner, and temporarily resettling in Lancaster.

The participants were recruited by self-selection and snowball sampling (Knight, 2002) using email lists, notice boards, printed flyers, contacts made through participation in the International Women's Group, and word of mouth. I had to rely on these non-probability forms of sampling because Lancaster University does not keep a record of partners/spouses of international students. First, I gained the use of several email lists at the university that especially attract international students. These included the university-wide postgraduate list, departmental postgraduate lists, and email lists of international societies based on campus, such as the Chinese Society, the Greek Society, the Indian Society and the Muslim Society.[23] Second, I posted notices describing my research on campus notice boards. Third, I distributed flyers at welcoming events for international students. As partners of international students are not registered at the university and are normally not connected through email lists or invited to welcoming evenings, I relied on other international students to forward the information about my research to their partners. This led to some problems. Because the response rate was relatively low at the beginning, I also decided to join the International Women's Group so I could introduce the research directly to this specific group. I had at first avoided taking this route because the International Women's Group is a self-selecting body exclusively aimed at female partners and constituted around weekly meetings on a Thursday morning. This set-up affects the nature of the

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[23] I tried to contact other societies, such as the Russian Society or the German Society, but found that their email lists were outdated.

group; i.e., they are only non-working women. Finally, I used my personal networks along with contacts received from participants I had already interviewed to widen the distribution of my information. The drawbacks of these forms of non-probability sampling (Bryman, 2004) are the reliance on the participants' coming forward with an interest in partaking in the study. As there are no official data bases on accompanying partners, more systematic sampling strategies following probability sampling were impossible. I acknowledge that my use of these forms of sampling had an effect on the diversity of the sample, as the majority of participants hold similar characteristics regarding access to resources, capital, and life stage. I return to a discussion of these similarities in the concluding section of this chapter.

I interviewed eleven partners of international students. The participants differ in gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and age. Here, I introduce these individuals based on the socio-demographic data gathered in the standardised questionnaire (Figure 4).

The partners of international students interviewed for this study are seven women and four men (Table 1). As there are no records of partners of international students at Lancaster University, comparisons with the student and partner population at the university are not possible. In the 'expert interview' (Flick, 2006: 165) I conducted with the International Student Support Officer, however, I learned that this administrator estimated that approximately ninety percent of all accompanying partners are female and only ten percent are male. Thus, men seem to be overrepresented in my study.

Apart from gender, the participants also differ in nationality and place of latest residence, with seven participants originating from non-EU countries and four participants having migrated within the EU, a division that had similar proportions to

the distribution of international students at Lancaster with EU and non-EU origins. The majority of my participants are married and accompanied by their children. All participants had been in established relationships for several years at the time the interviews took place.

| Inter- viewee[24] | Sex | Country of origin | Age | Marital status[25] | Length of rela- tion- ship[26] | # of chil- dren | Age of children | Care of children |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ali** | M | Malaysia | 30 | Married | 8 years | 2 | 3 & 1 | Part-time nursery |
| **Anna** | F | Germany | 36 | Married | 12 years | 2 | 4 & 2 | Part-time nursery |
| **Brendan** | M | Ireland | 30 | Co- habiting | 5 years | 0 | | |
| **Cecilia** | F | Mexico | 31 | Married | 6 years | 2 | 1 (twins) | Part-time nursery |
| **Carlos** | M | Portugal | 46 | Co- habiting | 7 years | 1 | 5 | Primary school |
| **Chun** | F | Taiwan | 34 | Married | 7 years | | Pregnant | |
| **Daniel** | M | Canada | 27 | Married | 4 years | 0 | | |
| **Heike** | F | Germany | 31 | Married | 12 years | 2 | 5 & 2 | Primary school, full-time nursery |
| **Keiko** | F | Japan | 34 | Married | 8 years | 0 | | |
| **Laura** | F | Argentin a | 25 | Married | 7 years | 0 | | |
| **Maya** | F | India | 37 | Married | 10 years | 2 | 8 & 7 | Primary school |

F-Female; M-Male

**Table 1: Basic Socio-Demographic Data.**

The sample also shows diversity in age, as two participants were in their twenties, eight in their thirties, and one in his forties. This is a relatively high average age, which corresponds to the (predicted) increase in ages of international students, which I discuss in chapter two.

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[24] All names are pseudonyms used to protect the anonymity of the participants.
[25] Gay and lesbian partners of international students are not represented because none responded to my requests for participation.
[26] The figure states the approximate length of the relationship in years at the time of the interview.

Concerning the educational level of the participants (Table 2), it is striking that the majority hold at least one tertiary qualification. Out of the three participants whose highest academic qualification is their A-Level, one holds a German vocational qualification as an orthopaedic specialist and another has been working in the publishing industry for several years translating books and articles into four different languages.

| Interviewee | Level of education (interviewee) | Profession (Current/recent) | Course (international student) | Department of international student |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ali | Masters | Lecturer in private university (and PhD student) in Malaysia | Masters | Management School |
| Anna | PhD | Paediatrician | Masters | Computing and Communication |
| Brendan | A-Level | Bar-Worker | PhD | Sociology |
| Cecilia | BA/BSc | Vet | PhD | Applied Social Sciences |
| Carlos | A-Level | Editor and Translator | PhD | Sociology |
| Chun | Masters | Journalist and PhD student | PhD | Cultural Research |
| Daniel | BA/BSc | Actor; Theatre worker | PhD | Sociology |
| Heike | A-Level | BA studies/ Orthopaedic | PhD | Linguistics |
| Keiko | BA/BSc | Housewife | MBA | Management School |
| Laura | BA/BSc | Architect | MBA | Management School |
| Maya | BA/BSc | Office worker | MBA | Management School |

BA/BSc – Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science; MBA – Masters of Business Administration; PhD – Doctorate

**Table2: Educational Level and Occupation of Interviewee and the International Student's Affiliation at Lancaster University.**

As for the international students themselves, two are studying for a Masters, six are registered for the PhD, and three are registered for the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) given to individuals who have already worked in managerial positions. The level of study undertaken by the students determines my participants' anticipated length of stay at Lancaster, as Masters and MBA courses are intended to be completed within one year, but PhD studies require three to four years.

| Interviewee | Intended stay in the UK | Arrival time | Area of living (at the time of interview) | Mode of finance of the stay of the couple/family |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ali | 1 year | Sept. 2007 | Campus | Student scholarship/ Savings |
| Anna | 1 year | Sept. 2007 | Campus | Student scholarship/ savings/ intention to work |
| Brendan | 3-4 years | Sept. 2004 | Skerton | Savings/ intention to work |
| Cecilia | 3-4 years | Oct. 2005 | Campus | Student scholarship/ intention to work |
| Carlos | 3 years | Sept.2005 | Castle Area | Student scholarship/ intention to work |
| Chun | 3-4 years | Sept. 2004 | Campus | Scholarship/ savings |
| Daniel | 3-4 years | Sept. 2007 | Campus | Student scholarship/ intention to work |
| Heike | 3-4 years | Sept. 2007 | Moorlands | Scholarship/ savings/ parents |
| Keiko | 1 year | Sept. 2007 | Campus | Savings |
| Laura | Lifetime | Sept. 2007 | Campus | Savings/ intention to work |
| Maya | 1 year | Sept. 2007 | City Centre | Savings/ intention to work |

Table 3: Length of Stay, Area of Living and Mode of Financing.

The intended stays specified by the informants (Table 3) therefore correspond with the length of time of their partner's degree schedule, except for Laura, who states that she and her partner are intending to remain in the UK, using his student visa and

her joint citizenship (Argentinean and Italian).

For this couple, studying at Lancaster University is a path into the UK, whereas for the rest of the participants, the time spent in Lancaster is intended to be temporary. They plan to either return to their place of departure or to move on to another country.

Seven of the participants live in on-campus accommodation rented out by the university, three live off campus in inner-city areas, and one informant rents a room with his partner on the outskirts of the Lancaster city centre. Apart from this couple, who share their house with their landlady, all participants live in flats and houses with only their immediate families.[27]

As for financial provision, the majority of the partners of international students are relying on their partner's scholarships (which are intended to provide for one person only), plus savings and parental support. This suggests some degree of privilege, as it implies some access to economic capital, something that might suggest a privileged position in their countries of origin. The majority of informants also stated that their original intention was to gain skilled employment in Lancaster to support the studying partner. The success of these plans is discussed in the next chapter. Here we can assume that while relying on a student scholarship might not be financially sustainable in the long term, it does provide a family with a steady income.

In order to understand the complexity of the sample, it is useful to take other socio-demographic information into consideration. This information was not covered by the initial questionnaire but resulted from the interviews and includes insights about the individuals' mobility. Of the eleven interviewees, five had been residing (temporary or permanent) in countries other than their country of origin before they

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[27] I use the term 'immediate families' when referring to the family unit consisting of the international student, his or her partner, and their children.

came to Lancaster. Ali had left Malaysia in order to study at Lancaster for a Bachelor's Degree at the end of the 1990s. He met his current wife, also studying at Lancaster at the time, with whom he returned to his hometown and whom he is now accompanying for the duration of her Masters' programme. Anna, who was born in Germany, had participated in a European Study Exchange Programme (ERASMUS) in the 1990s in Italy, where she met her current husband. After finishing her degree in Germany, she moved back to Italy, where she is now registered as a permanent resident. Her reason for migrating to the UK is to accompany her husband as he works to gain overseas experience. Carlos left Portugal to live in Canada for one year as part of his training as a translator. He is now accompanying his partner, who is studying at Lancaster University. Cecilia had already accompanied her husband to Germany for the duration of his Masters Degree. After returning to Mexico for a short time, she and her husband decided to move to the UK so that he can undertake his doctorate at Lancaster. Heike took a gap year after her A-Levels in order to participate in a charity project in Poland, where she met her Austrian husband. The couple moved to Berlin together and from there went to Denmark, where they lived for two years. Back in Berlin, her husband received an offer to study at Lancaster financed by a scholarship, so the family decided to move to the UK for the duration of his doctoral studies.

These pre-arrival stories tell us that the majority of the already mobile participants had either met their partners during the informant's time abroad or the already-formed couple had decided to migrate together. It also suggests some degree of privilege, as they might have had the capital to be able to be mobile, something that compared to other inhabitants of their countries of origins can be seen as privileged. The participants in this study are therefore highly mobile individuals for whom the stay in Lancaster is part of a *shared* experience abroad.

I write above that my research was originally intended to focus on data gathered in qualitative, semi-structured interviews, but that my physical proximity to the participants meant that I was not able to avoid random encounters after our initial interviews had taken place. Whilst this was the case with some of my informants, it was not the case for all, so here I find it important to briefly describe the post-interview relationships I formed with the eleven partners of international students.

These relationships range from non-existent to friendship. I did not encounter five of the participants, namely, Cecilia, Chun, Keiko, Laura, and Maya, after the initial interview had taken place. Their narratives as gathered in the interviews were my only source of information on them. I met two participants, namely, Anna and Ali, on campus a few times and we exchanged some small-talk. Whilst these encounters cannot be described as deep conversations, they nevertheless enabled me to develop some further insights into their lives, as Anna, for example, talked about how her children were learning Italian, German and English.

With the remaining four participants, I developed more regular contacts. Daniel, the partner of a fellow postgraduate student of mine, often hung out in our department. He and his wife also regularly visited the art and community centre where I worked, thus allowing for regular exchanges of news. Over the year, he also started to befriend acquaintances of mine, which further tightened our network connections. I often met Brendan, also a partner of a fellow postgraduate student, in town, either whilst shopping or whilst socialising. His partner regularly visited the art and community centre where I worked, and sometimes he accompanied her. I thus gathered further insights into their relationship by observing either her alone or both of them together. Carlos was a partner of an acquaintance of mine, and over the year, we often socialised at dinner parties to which we were invited by mutual friends. Later

in the year, I moved house and found myself in closer proximity to Carlos and his family, as they lived in the same neighbourhood. Then we regularly exchanged news on the street, and I saw his child playing at the playground and continued to socialise with his partner and him from time to time. With Heike I developed a friendship after our initial interview, during which we bonded not only as Germans, but as East Germans. We connected because we both felt we represented a small minority in Lancaster. We often met in the pub to play Skat, a card game that represents our shared origins, and I invited her to several parties, where she met my circle of friends. She then formed closer relations with some of my friends, and we stayed in touch via face-to-face and virtual communication. For her, I was not only a source of information and a new acquaintance, but also an introduction to a new circle of friends.

I state above that the majority of these encounters were neither systematic nor structured, but random and unexpected. I also did not follow up with all participants in the same way, and our post-interview relations ranged from no relations at all to friendship. Methodologically and ethically, this was concerning, and so I thus tried to focus the analysis of the data on the semi-structured interviews, whilst still acknowledging that these encounters might have had an effect on my interpretation of the material.

## Limitations of Data Collection

In this chapter, I introduce the setting, the methodology, and the participants. I outline the inductive qualitative approach and the case study design that I chose in order to focus on the experiences of partners of international students in Lancaster. The setting was chosen to partly close an identified gap in the literature, which I discuss in chapter

one; to respond to the growing importance of peripheral cities in the internationalisation of higher education, which I discuss in chapter two, along with my personal and pragmatic reasons for my choices.

I introduce the sample strategy and the sample, and show that the participants differ in gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and age. I write that some of the participants had already been mobile before coming to Lancaster, and I describe my own relations to some of the informants after the initial interview stage.

In this last section, I return to the sample and discuss the limitations that a self-selecting, non-probability sampling strategy creates. I focus less on the differences between the participants than on their similarities.

The main limitation of a self-selecting sampling strategy is that the researcher is dependent on potential participants being forthcoming, which is determined by the potential informants' choice (Bryman, 2004). This dependency has created a sample which is homogenous in certain aspects.

Firstly, my participants are all members of heterosexual families. Although I put special attention into recruiting non-heterosexual participants, I did not find any individuals in Lancaster who fit the criteria of being a partner of an international postgraduate student in the academic year 2007/2008. The analysis of the data is therefore based on experiences of heterosexual partners of international students in Lancaster.

Secondly, my participants all hold similar economic capital. Beverley Skeggs (1997), drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, identifies economic capital as including income, wealth, financial inheritances, and monetary assets. The majority of my participants rely mainly on their student partners' scholarships as well as their savings and support from kin overseas. Although they state that they do not have enough money to live a

life of luxury, as might be the case for spouses of expatriates, they nevertheless seemed to have access to enough economic capital before their migration that they could safely consider the move. Moving, especially across national borders, is expensive, and being able to leave employment in the place of departure was a decision they took. This suggests access to economic capital, as otherwise they might not have made the decision to accompany their student partner. This in turn suggests some amount of privilege in comparison to other inhabitants in their country of origin. I return to a discussion of this status and explore whether this privilege might be relative in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Thirdly, my participants hold similar cultural capital. Pierre Bourdieu (1986: 243) writes:

> Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.) [...] and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification resulting in such things as educational qualifications.

Since the time of this first definition, scholars have widely discussed these forms of capital, and criticised Bourdieu for ignoring gender (Adkins, 2004; McCall, 1992; Skeggs, 1997; 2004a; 2004b; Reay, 2004), and race (Anthias, 2007; Yosso, 2005). Philipp Kelly and Tom Lusis (2006) state that Bourdieu's theory is very much based on an understanding of a white, European, middle- and upper-class cultural capital as the most desirable one. In relation to migration studies, scholars have discussed the effect that cultural capital has on migrants' occupational and social mobility, often in relation to his concept of social capital (Anthias, 2007; Levanon, 2011). Hence,

authors such as Asaf Levanon (2011) declare that the migrants' cultural capital in conjunction with their origins can indeed be helpful when they are trying to re-enter labour markets due to 'ethnic social capital' opening up networks within migrant communities. Umut Erel (2011), however, criticises these 'rucksack approaches', as she calls them (Erel, 2011: 645), to the cultural capital of migrants, in which the migrants are seen to pack their capital to take to the new place of settlement. There they unpack it, and hope it fits the new environment. Instead of this simplistic understanding of migrants' cultural capital, Erel (2011) proposes that migrants also learn to capitalise their newly found knowledge, gathered in the places of resettlement, in order to draw on the most suitable forms of capital in the most suitable moments of time. Whilst this discourse offers useful ways of thinking through capital, and I will return to it at a later stage, here I use the concept of cultural capital more as an analytical tool to identify the limitations created by my self-selecting sampling strategy, in order to highlight similarities between my participants.

Kelly and Lusis (2006) state that one means of embodiment of cultural capital, especially for migrants, can be described as 'language capital'. Being able to speak the language of the place of settlement gives the migrant a broader perspective of the world, which, in turn, enhances his or her capital. Due to the self-selecting nature of my sample, the participants were all fluent in English, and we can assume that their postgraduate partners were also largely fluent in English. As I state above, I refrained from using an interpreter, but this decision meant that only potential informants who self-identified as good English speakers came forward to participate in this research.

Concerning the second form of cultural capital, the objectified state, it is difficult to draw conclusions here, as my participants left the majority of their belongings in storage in their place of departure, awaiting their return. This decision

was made due to the temporariness of their sojourn in Lancaster and due to restrictions set by flight companies. I return to this topic in chapter five.

Concerning the institutional state of cultural capital, it is striking that the majority of my participants (10 out of 11) hold at least one tertiary or equivalent qualification. This also relates to the self-selecting nature of the sample, as professionals might be more interested in partaking in such a study. We might further assume that their high educational qualifications might be beneficial when aiming to rejoin the labour market. I discuss this in the next chapter.

In summary, here I show that whilst my participants differ in categorical attributes such as gender, race, place of origin, and age, they show similarities regarding sexuality and access to economic and social capital. This homogeneity of the sample is largely determined by the self-selecting sampling strategy. However, focussing on a such a small, homogenous group of participants as my sample also offers opportunities to include a detailed focus on their particular experiences. In the spirit of the case study approach, the reflections on my participants' individual cases, allows us to re-think diverse theories on migration. Hence, iIn the next four chapters, I discuss material gathered mainly in the semi-structured interviews and focus on my participants' experiences in the local labour market (chapter four), in the home (chapter five), in relation to their kin and friendship networks, both locally and globally (chapter six), and in relation to their experiences in the local environment (chapter seven).

# Chapter four:

# Experiences in the Local Labour Market

In the previous chapters, I discuss how the image of the partner or spouse, usually the wife, of the international student or highly mobile professional is constructed as an unemployed dependant, a trailing spouse, who has given up her own career in order to accompany the student or expatriate. This image is reproduced in the literature on female spouses of corporate expatriates, and student spouses in North America, as I discuss in chapter one, and by local university professionals, as I discuss in chapter three.

The majority of the people I interviewed for this study are highly skilled with at least one tertiary or equivalent qualification, and most of them intend to finance their time in Lancaster by being employed. Compared to family expatriates and partners of international students in the U.S., the partners of international students entering the UK are able to work because they are issued dependants' visas which are granted with a full work permit.[1] Given their high level of skill and the absence of legal restrictions on seeking paid work, they are anticipated labour migrants themselves.

In this chapter, I first highlight current debates in the literature regarding highly skilled migrants and then give an overview of the experiences of the participants in this study concerning their entry into the local labour market. Scholars on skilled migration often divide families into 'lead' and 'tied' migrants. Although, I find this notion questionable as they portray the partner as a kind of appendix, 'trailing' behind, within the body of literature on labour migration the international

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[1] Applies to the years 2007/2008; UK Visa and Immigration:
http://www.ukvisaandimmigration.co.uk/
[last accessed 01 February 2011].

student could be defined as the 'lead' migrant and his or her partner as the 'tied' migrant. This should not be taken, however, to suggest that the partner of the international student does not also have personal reasons for migrating as I show throughout this chapter.

Research on highly skilled migrants has been conducted since the 1960s (Nagel, 2005), but mainly developed during the last twenty years due to the growth in numbers of highly skilled migrants in Europe and around the globe (Amit, 2007; Dobson, Latham and Salt, 2008; Salt, 1992). In a context of a global economy and due to the immigration policies of industrialised countries, corporate powers, and the migrants' own capital class resources, which allow them to cross borders with a greater ease than their unskilled counterparts (Alarçón, 2004), highly skilled migrants are seen to be less restricted in their participation in international labour markets than less skilled migrants, suggesting a higher level of privilege.

Skilled migration, according to Parvati Raghuram (2000: 429), 'represents the only "acceptable" face of migration today' due to its importance in the development of global capitalism and the need for international skills pooling. According to Bandana Purkayastha (2005: 186), the term 'highly skilled' originated in the U.S. Department of Labour, which in the 1960s and 1970s referred to the "highly skilled" [as] people with medical, engineering, science/research and informational technology training'. Research focuses on highly skilled migrants in those professions, with special attention on intra-company mobility between global cities (Beaverstock, 1994; 2002; Findlay and Gould, 1989; Salt, 1992). Highly skilled migrants are seen as important to the development of global cities (Beaverstock, 2002, Sassen 2001) and as actors in understandings of global flows, as Manuel Castells (2000: 445) argues that 'the third important layer of the space of flows refers to the spatial organisation of the

dominant, managerial elites (rather than classes) that exercise the directional functions around which such space is articulated'. The importance of research on highly skilled migrants can be seen in the development of network theories and theories of translocalities (Beaverstock, 2002; Vertovec, 2002). Originally, the focus was on the global transient manager who is free in his (for the focus was on men) movements and relocations. As I state above, often, the characteristics of today's highly skilled migrants are their large amounts of human capital and their middle class status.

Eleonore Kofman (1999; 2000), amongst others (Hardill, 1998; Kofman and Raghuram, 2005; Purkayastha, 2005; Raghuram, 2004), criticises the body of literature on highly skilled migrants for its 'invisibility of skilled female migrants'. She argues that by focussing only on labour migrants with medical, engineering, science/research and technology training, the male migrant is favoured, as 'few women have reached senior positions in those fields [...] and still fewer appear within the migrant labour force in such sectors' (Kofman and Raghuram, 2005: 150). Instead, women are seen as 'tied migrants' following the 'lead migrant', in this sense, the 'male breadwinner'. Parvati Raghuram (2004: 304) argues that women are 'usually cast as the followers, and as losers within patriarchal systems within the context of this form of migration'. Although many women originally migrate as 'tied migrants' through forms of family unification or dependants' visas (Iredale, 2001; 2005), the narrow focus of research on highly skilled migrants, being carried out on the primary migrant only, ignores the human capital of the female family migrant. Thus the scholars cited here argue for a broader understanding of skilled migration not only in the definition of 'skilled' (Erel, 2009) but also in connection to more inventive labour migration theories that move beyond the understanding of the 'lead migrant' who participates in paid labour and the 'tied migrant' who re-domesticates without the

intention of participating in the labour force. Caroline Nagel (2005: 200), for example, argues that the focus on 'conceptions of skilled migration [that] have become associated with business professionals and intra-corporate transfers within a global city network [... do] not capture the diversity of experiences among skilled migrants or the wide socio-economic disparities that exist within this category'. Critiques of the usage of the term 'highly skilled' voice the need to change the definition of 'highly skilled' to include those 'in possession of tertiary degrees or equivalent experiences' (Iredale, 2001; 2005; Vertovec, 2002). Although normative assumptions still favour the image of the highly skilled, *male*, manager in information technology professions or multinational corporations, a broader definition of 'highly skilled' as 'highly educated' opens up possibilities for discussions of more inventive forms of labour migration. Hence migrants that make entry through student visas or dependants' visas and with the intention to further develop their own careers once they are settled in the receiving countries can be taken into consideration.

Attempts to include both partners' participation in the labour market can be found in the body of literature on dual-career couples, but even there, a distinction between 'lead' and 'tied' migration is made. Research on dual-career couples' decisions to migrate dates back to the 1970s (Bartel, 1979; Duncan and Perrucci, 1976; Mincer, 1978; Sandell, 1977). Taking an approach based on the human capital theory, these studies claim that the decision to migrate is taken mutually between the partners, as the increase of the husband's wage would offset the wife's loss of employment and benefit the whole family. This is said to be something the wife would accept and agree to. This assumption might have been expected in the 1970s, when the employment of female highly skilled migrants was only just emerging, but one might assume a change in that assumption during the last few decades. In the 1990s, studies

(such as Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 1999; 2001) emerged that tested the human capital approach of the 1970s. Thus, Paul Boyle and his colleagues demonstrate that 'women's employment status [still] suffers from family migration, even in those rarer cases where her occupational status is higher than the man's' (Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 1999: 117). A pure reliance on a human capital theory, which argues that the more 'occupationally "powerful"' (1999: 127) migrant would determine the re-settlement, is therefore not adequate enough to explain dual-career resettlement decisions. Instead, Boyle et al. (also Bielby and Bielby, 1992; Cooke and Bailey, 1996; Menjívar, 1999) argue that in order to understand why women are still disadvantaged in double career migration, gender ideologies have to be taken into consideration (Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 1999: 129). They state that gender roles within patriarchy can be seen as a good explanation for the disadvantage of female workers, as patriarchy operates internally and externally to the household, leaving Boyle et al. (1999: 132) to explain the disadvantages due on the one hand to familial decision-making and on the other hand to occupational segregation and employers discrimination. They state that 'families may make the conscious decision that the woman will wish to drop out of the labour force at some point in the near future because of plans to have children' and she is therefore more likely to follow her husband. They also argue that 'much of the employer's expectations may be influenced by the fact that women are *expected* to be more likely to follow their partners and are thus less likely to be supported by their employers – "tied migration" may foster "tied migration" and so on' (1999: 130; italics in the original). The empirical data of the 1990s also shows that the female migrant is still more likely than the male to be the 'tied migrant' and that the personal loss (economically as well as related to job prestige) is still higher for the female partner,

especially if she is highly skilled. In a more recent study, Mark Taylor (2007) argues that women are still twice as likely as men to be 'tied' migrants, which is surprising, given the increase in female participation in the labour market. Taylor's study does, however, take into consideration a (slowly) increasing occurrence of male 'tied migrants' who are as disadvantaged as their female counterparts. Taylor (2007) states, that gender does not play a necessary role in determining the disadvantage in employment and/or job prestige for the 'tied migrant'. Instead, he argues, the position in dual-career couples – as 'lead' or 'tied' migrant – dictates the disadvantage.

Because most of the studies on migration patterns in relation to employment deal with analysis of general statistics and do not specialise in the occupational status of the migrants, it is useful to focus on the few studies that explicitly highlight the experiences of highly-skilled dual-career couples. The first analysis of highly skilled dual-career couples, to my knowledge, occurred in 1978 in the work of Barbara Strudler Wallerston and her colleagues, where they argue that 'since professional women are very likely to marry males who are also professional [...], dual-career couples are likely to become more prevalent in western industrial societies' (Wallerston, Foster and Berger, 1978: 10). Their interviews reveal that in the 1970s, couples followed an egalitarian approach when discussing migration, but they also faced restrictions by employers who favoured the male 'lead' migrant. Wallerston et al. (1978: 19) argue that the decision to give significance to the man's career was led by 'institutional constraints' and 'appeared to be more of a forced than a desired choice'. In the mid 1990s, Nancy Adler (1994: 30) drew similar conclusions with the claim that 'over half the companies reported that they hesitated to send women managers abroad', and later Irene Hardill and Sandra MacDonald (1998: 28) argued that 'expatriate work appears to be emerging as a vital part of the career development

of senior managers, and women often appear to be denied it'. Taking both male and female lead migrant managers into consideration, Michael Harvey (1997) argues that whilst the male migrant's stress levels are mainly connected to work performance, the female 'lead' migrant's stress levels appear mainly in the home, as she not only has to perform well in her role as a manager, but she also has to reassure the male 'tied' migrant in his gender role (conflicts) when facing un- (or under-) employment after relocation. Brigitta Rabe argues in her recent (2011) study on family dual-career migration that the female migrant is still more likely to suffer employment loss caused by relocation, but that this loss is mainly prevalent in the first year. She claims that later on, the female migrant will enter the labour market again so that, according to Rabe (2011), the one year of unemployment will be counterbalanced later. Although Rabe (2011) does not discuss it, her argument suggests that the woman's loss of employment during the first stage of migration could be connected with the traditional assumption that the female migrant is responsible for resettlement (including forming social networks and finding child care). This shows that gender differences in the experiences of migration between the members of highly skilled dual-career couples still prevail today.

This thesis adds to the existing literature on highly skilled migrants by focussing on my participants' attempts to enter the local labour market. Although they migrate in order to be in physical proximity to their partners, which would characterise the partners of international students as 'tied migrants', my informants intended to gain skilled employment in Lancaster, their new place of residence. It is also important to acknowledge that this study focuses on participants residing in a small, peripheral university city, introduced in the previous chapter. Questions I explore below include the following: What is the experience of the partner who

attempts to find a job in Lancaster, and how are her or his experiences in the labour market shaped by the peripheral character of Lancaster?

First, however, I want to define the participants in this sample as highly-skilled migrants and as members of highly-skilled dual-career couples. As stated, the definition of 'highly-skilled workers' can be broadened from a focus on particular branches of the transnational labour market to a definition in which 'highly-skilled' becomes synonymous with 'highly-educated', in the sense that 'highly skilled workers are generally taken to be those who possess a tertiary qualification or have equivalent experience' (Iredale, 2005). As I identify above, the majority of the participants in this study hold at least one tertiary or equivalent qualification,[2] which, following Iredale's (2005) approach, clusters most participants and their international post-graduate student partners as 'highly skilled migrants'. Iredale (2005) herself claims that international students have to be considered when we speak of migrants as 'highly skilled' because 'students not only bring [...] income into universities and colleges but they also provide a pool of student labour supply' (2005: 157). Hence, we could define both students and their partners as 'highly skilled' migrants, and members of highly-skilled dual career couples.

In this chapter, I first discuss my participants' current employment status, second explore whether 'deskilling' is an option to get employment and third whether spatial mobility is an option out of unemployment. I conclude the chapter by discussing my participants' resorting to 'cruel optimism.

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[2] Three participants in my study do not hold tertiary degrees, but two of them (Carlos and Heike) are in possession of equivalent qualifications. Carlos is a translator and proof-reader who works in four languages and has worked in this profession for several years. Heike is a qualified orthopaedic technician, a qualification that is not clustered as a tertiary degree in Germany, but has its equivalence in the British tertiary sector. Brendan is the only participant who has neither a tertiary degree nor an equivalent qualification, as he worked mainly as a bar steward and construction worker before migrating. Here, I take him out of the argument and instead focus on the highly skilled migrants. In chapter seven, I return to a detailed analysis of his experiences.

**Seeking to Enter the Local Labour Market**

The participants in this study moved to Lancaster in order to accompany their partners who registered to study at Lancaster University. In this respect, they can be seen as 'tied' migrants. However, most of them held the intention to find employment suitable to their qualifications. For example, Maya, who is from India, describes her decision to migrate with her husband:

> the prime reason was that my husband wanted to pursue, you know, his higher studies [...] and the reason for me to come was that, you know, when you go to a new place you kind of have to have finances, so I thought he can continue with the studies and I can financially support the family.

The participants entered the country with a dependants' visa (as non-EU citizens; EU citizens are free to move between EU countries). This type of visa holds no restrictions on labour market participation and allows the partner of the international student to seek full-time employment. Most of the studies on 'tied' migration (for example, Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 1999; 2001; Raghuram, 2004; Taylor, 2007) argue that entry into the local labour market is particularly difficult for the partner who follows the 'lead' migrant, so it is not surprising that none of the participants in this study held a position suitable to their qualification at the time of the interviews. This finding could be suggestive of their specific experiences as partners of international students in a peripheral city, but it also relates to the limitations of a self-selective sample. As I discuss in the previous chapter, when choosing the sampling strategies of self-selection and snowball method, the researcher has to rely on participants coming forward. The aim of this section is therefore not to

explore whether or not spouses of international students do not work or to draw a generalised conclusion from this, i.e., they do not work. Rather, the aim of this section is to consider reasons for the exclusion of these highly skilled professionals from the local labour market. I explore three interconnected but discrete explanations here: loss of networks, the peripheral character of the place, and the temporary nature of their stay in the UK.

As research (especially Beaverstock, 1994; Nowicka, 2005) on skilled 'lead' migrants emphasises the importance of networks for career improvement, research on skilled 'tied' migrants highlights the loss of networks as a primary barrier for re-employment. Bandana Purkayastha (2005: 188) shows in her analysis of female highly skilled 'tied' migrants in the U.S. that the disconnection from professional networks affects the migrants in their search for employment in two different ways:

> [f]or those with 'generalised' degrees, it meant they had few ways of finding out about job options and how to go about accessing them. For those with professional degrees, it meant putting in a lot of time to first locate and develop appropriate networks, before they could find a niche in their professions of choice.

She further highlights that even after the migrants in her study managed to find out about job prospects, their not having an active professional network restricted them from being considered for employment, as 'each advertisement for a full-time job attracts hundreds of applications, and without the networks, no one would even consider her [or him] for an interview' (Purkayastha, 2005: 188). Informal networks are seen as crucial for highly skilled migrants, as occupation possibilities are rare,

which means that 'breaking in' (2005: 188) from the outside without useful informal network connections is difficult.

In my study, Daniel (from Canada) explains his attempt to enter the local theatre community:

> finding the networks has been incredibly difficult because I am not attached to the theatre community here. OK, I have friends that are actually in the theatre community in England, but they're in Leeds or they're in Newcastle or they're down in London or they're up in Edinburgh and it's because of the geography of England, erm, it's very segmented and rarely crosses over [...] and generally when you are dealing with artist communities [...] you need about three years to actually be fully broken into the sort of communities. [...and here] no one knows my work, no one can even really reference my work because no one here has even seen my work as a technician, as a performer, as a director, as a creator, so trying to find a way to break into that has been incredibly difficult.

He says that it is vital to be included in certain networks in order to find employment in the theatre and adds that the theatre world in England is highly segmented. Although he has informal contacts to other places, they do not help him in his attempt to find employment in the two theatres that exist in Lancaster. Relating these thoughts back to social networks as described in chapter one, we could therefore see that the assumption that migrants arrive in pre-formed ethnic networks which would function as social capital and support entry into the local labour market are too simplistic. Instead, the place of resettlement can have an effect on their ability to be included in local networks.

The rarity of positions for highly skilled people is also greatly determined by the place of residence. With its peripheral character and no major industry, Lancaster's economy relies on the two universities, plus the service industry, health, tourism and retail. This paucity of positions makes it difficult for my participants to find suitable employment. Laura (from Buenos Aires) talks about her attempt to find employment as an architect:

> the thing is that the big practices for architects are in Manchester or in London or in Birmingham. [...] here [in Lancaster] you don't have so many things.

This tells us that the size of the place of resettlement also determines whether jobs are available. Lancaster is not in fact the 'vibrant city' advertised on the Lancaster University homepage. It is a northern English market town that is geographically distant from the major cities in the UK. It is thus peripheral and employment opportunities are few, which makes it harder for the participants in this study to find work.

The last of the three reasons for unemployment is the temporary nature of the sojourn. My participants plan to leave Lancaster after one year (in the case of partners of Masters students) or three to four years (in the case of partners of PhD students), which increases their difficulties in finding suitable employment. One solution might be to try to apply for non-permanent jobs, but these are rare. When the participants apply for permanent positions, their intention to leave signals employers that it will not be worthwhile to invest effort into training a potential candidate whose departure is already envisioned.

Any of these three reasons is individually strong enough to set barriers to employment, but they are also interlinked. If job applicants do better if they belong to networks, then the temporary nature of migration hinders the formation of such networks, as this takes a considerable amount of time, which the migrants do not have. As I show in chapter three, the demographics of Lancaster show that 17.0 percent of all inhabitants of the city are students. The participants in this study are therefore competing with a high number of graduates who might have had a possibility of forming informal networks. The peripheral character of Lancaster – it is not a global city with a variety of skilled industries – might suggest that jobs for the highly skilled are more likely to be permanent and are therefore less likely to be suitable for temporary migrants. The unemployment of the highly skilled migrants in this study is not something they intended or desired, but is determined by external factors. As partners of international students, they are struggling to be considered by employers and are not able to gain employment that would correspond with their qualifications. In the next two sections I discuss their attempts to deal with this state of unemployment: first, through considering to 'deskill' and, second, through considering different forms of spatial mobility.

**Deskilling: A Possible Way Out of Unemployment?**

This section explores whether my participants chose 'deskilling' as an option. Similarly to literature on deskilling of labour migrants, I use this term on the one hand to refer to downgrading within the migrants' professions and on the other hand the acceptance of work in less skilled professions.

In relation to the first aspect of deskilling, Eleonore Kofman and Parvati Raghuram (2006; also Raghuram and Kofman, 2004), in particular, show that even

when migrants are able to stay in their own professions, such as medicine, they often face being downgraded as they enter the labour markets at levels far below those they occupied before migration. Migrant female medical doctors in the UK, for example, face the disadvantages of being employed in the lower and middle grades of their profession (Raghuram, 2004; 2006). Quite often, migrants even fail to enter their own professions, especially when they are engaged in family migration (Man, 2004), due to loss of networks and the devaluation of their credentials (Purkayastha, 2005). Parvati Raghuram (2006) also argues that 'tied' migrants, particularly from non-EU states, fail to get their qualifications accredited, which further devalues their skills and puts them into less advantaged positions in the labour market.

In relation to the second aspect of deskilling, Brenda Yeoh and Loisa-May Khoo (1998), in their study on expatriate wives in Singapore, reveal that most of the women in their study worked part-time in less skilled professions than their own status would suggest.[3] Although Yeoh and Khoo's participants say that their participants' reasons for working are not connected to financial need, as higher costs of migration are covered by their husbands' wage packages, employment ensures that the women are able to escape their daily domestic routines. My participants also experienced the need to having to consider to deskill.

Concerning the first aspect of deskilling I want to draw on two examples: the architect Laura from Argentina and the paediatrician Anna, who was born in Germany but had been living in Italy for ten years because she is married to an Italian information technology (IT) specialist. Both women came to Lancaster intending to find employment in their professions at the level they achieved before migration.

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[3] This special case of Singapore granting wives partial access to the labour market differs from other countries, as I mention in chapter one.

Laura had worked as an architect in Buenos Aires before migrating. Referring to her level of expertise and her experiences in the British labour market, she states:

> the thing is that in architecture you have three levels: part one is a person that just recently finished the studies; part two is a person who has three years' experience which is my case and then part three is someone with much more experience. I was trying to look for jobs in part two but here I don't have previous UK experiences [...] and maybe here I need to start in a trainee position [level one].

Her knowledge in the field of architecture was not accredited here in Lancaster. After she applied for posts at the second level, she told me that she was turned down because of a lack of UK experience, and it was suggested that she should start applying for trainee positions at level one. Those positions normally pay less and are less prestigious than level two positions. At the time of the interview, she had stopped applying because of the disappointment that her skills were not recognised. Furthermore, trainee positions are less likely to be found in peripheral places like Lancaster, which also affected her ability to enter the local labour market. I return to spatial mobility in the next section.

Anna's experiences in getting her medical qualifications recognised were unlike Laura's. She compares her experience in Lancaster with previous experiences in Italy:

> in Italy it took me two and a half years to get my German certificate fully accredited and to register with the Italian medical association [...] and here it

was no problem whatsoever. Here that works with the GMC and they have a homepage and there you have a button which says 'European' and you press it and then you need some other documents, certificates and an authenticated title, and then you send it to them. No letter, only the documents. And I sent it on a Wednesday and the following Thursday I got a call from London and they said 'we got your letter. If you could come by this afternoon, you will be able to work tomorrow.' – unbelievable!

The opposing experiences of these two women suggest that it is much easier for migrants within the European Union to be fully accredited than for overseas migrants. This corresponds to Raghuram's (2006) findings concerning migrants in the medical sector in the UK. In reality, however, Anna still struggled to gain employment at her stage of expertise:

I registered with recruitment agencies and they called me back straight away, asking when I could work. [...] I did realise, however, that I might have to go to the hospital unpaid just to learn all the different names of medication and so on [...] also they are mainly looking for people in the lower levels, so not really qualified paediatricians, [... which means] I have to downgrade about three or four levels.

Although Anna did not have any problems to get her qualifications accredited, in reality she faced the same problems that Laura did. She had to downgrade within her profession and accept lower wages or take unpaid voluntary positions.

Another drawback of participating in employment at a low grade, especially in the medical sector, is the requirement to be able to work flexible hours, including night shifts. This limited Anna's success in entering the local medical labour market, as the available jobs mainly required working four nights a week. As a mother of two preschool children who is solely responsible for childcare (without practical support from members of her extended family), Anna could not accept employment at the local hospital.

Concerning the second aspect of deskilling, the acceptance of work in less skilled professions, I now focus on participants who had already concluded that it would be impossible to gain employment in their own field of expertise in Lancaster, namely Maya and Carlos. These informants also talk about the need to be flexible in their working hours, which restricted them to find employment.

Maya had worked in administration in Delhi before she came to Lancaster with her husband and her two children. She intended to work in Lancaster in order to financially support the family. After her arrival, however, she changed her mind:

after coming here, I realised the whole scenario was different, you know, support systems and all is not that easy to get, and even if you get [a place], it is very expensive, so I just dropped that idea of picking up any job [...] I just manage everything.

Maya emphasises that if she wanted to secure a job, living in a country where she cannot receive practical support from members of her extended family, she would have to rely on support structures, especially childcare. These forms of support are, however, expensive, with an estimated £88 for twenty-five hours of childcare per

week (Day Care Trust, 2010[4]).[5] For families of international students, there is no state support to cover these costs. When we consider that the average weekly earnings for semi-skilled employment are £153 per week,[6] it becomes evident that the cost of childcare and the costs of working itself outweigh the benefits of employment. Older literature (Jenkins and Symons, 2002; Kimmel, 1998) on single parents (before the rise of childcare benefits for nationals) came to the same conclusion: without considerable state support, it is financially disadvantageous to take on full-time semi-skilled employment when one is solely responsible for the upbringing of the children.[7]

For Carlos, who is also the main child-carer in his family, the demand for flexibility in working hours for less skilled jobs restricted him from taking on employment:

> there are some constraints because [my partner] goes abroad a lot so I can't take any job that implies working during the weekends or after five o'clock, and, erm, for instance in the end of September and the beginning of October, Sainsbury's [the supermarket] had a lot of vacancies, but it was, erm, some implied working during weekends or if it wasn't, it implied some days working until nine o'clock, so I couldn't take it, erm, that's the problem, I can just work from nine to five, more or less, and that's that.

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[4] Day Care Trust: Summary of the child care costs survey 2010:
http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/summary-of-the-childcare-costs-survey-2010.html
[last accessed 22 February 2011].
[5] As I show in chapter two, in the year when the interviews took place, a full-time place in the university childcare centre would have added up to more than £600 per month.
[6] Day Care Trust: Summary of the child care costs survey 2010:
http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/pages/summary-of-the-childcare-costs-survey-2010.html
[last accessed 22 February 2011].
[7] Proposed cuts in childcare benefits might further affect these disadvantages: *BBC News* (4/10/10):
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11470983
[last accessed 02 April 2011].

If a migrant is solely responsible for the upbringing of the children without support from members of the extended family, she or he cannot work at a job that involves flexible work hours. As jobs at lower levels, as well as semi-skilled employment, rely especially on the flexibility of the employee, the participants in this study are further disadvantaged on the local labour market.

In summary, it can be said that high childcare costs plus the demand for flexibility in low skilled employment such as retail or customer-based trade exclude migrants with children. They simply cannot 'afford to work' (Immervoll and Barber, 2006). This is a finding which contradicts literature on partners of expatriates. Yeoh and Khoo (1998) state that the wives of expatriates tend to participate in the labour market as a means of escaping their daily routine of housekeeping. They are less likely to gain financial benefits, as they have to pay for childcare, but as the husband's wage covers the increased costs of migration, and in most cases they are expected to employ a maid anyways, they can afford to work. For the partners of international students, however, low skilled employment does not counterbalance the costs of childcare, and the participants in this study simply cannot afford to work at low paid jobs. Having to be flexible in scheduling also acts as a restraint for partners of international students who were able to gain employment offers in their own fields of expertise, but at lower levels than their own. Hence, they also decided against participation in the local labour market.

It can thus be concluded that deskilling is not an option for the participants of this study because the costs for buying into support outweigh the money earned. Jobs in low grade positions are more difficult to find in a peripheral city like Lancaster, and therefore the option of spatial mobility was considered by some of the participants.

**Spatial Mobility: A Possible Way Out of Unemployment?**

Magdalena Nowicka (2005: 36) argues that spatial mobility, that is, travelling for work, 'has become a requirement'. According to Nowicka, the stereotype of the highly mobile successful employee is a 'mobile man – flexible, independent, and highly efficient' (2005: 36). Highly skilled individuals thus need to be spatially mobile if they are to gain suitable employment. David Conradson and Alan Latham (2005: 228) criticise other studies for adopting this stereotype and forgetting that 'even the most hyper-mobile transnational elites are ordinary: they eat; they sleep; they have families who must be raised, educated and taught a set of values'. As I show above, most of the literature (Beaverstock, 1994; 2002; Findlay and Gould, 1989; Salt, 1992) on highly skilled migrants focuses on their presence in global cities, which assumes a spatial proximity to employment opportunities for the highly skilled migrant. I argue that it is difficult for the participants of my study to find employment in Lancaster because it is a peripheral city. That is why some of the partners of international students considered the need to travel for work, both short-distance travel (everyday commuting) and long-distance travel (migration to a major city in the UK). Next, I explore how the participants considered their options.

As for the first possibility, it is well documented that many people have to rely on everyday mobility in order to fulfil the demands of everyday life (Cass, Shove and Urry, 2005; Jirón, 2011; Peters, Kloppenburg and Wyatt, 2010; Urry, 2003). One of these everyday mobilities is commuting. Several studies (i.e., Cervero, 2002; Dargay and Hanly, 2007) discuss the daily commute in connection with modes of transportation and show that both the characteristics of the housing environment and the work locations influence the choice of transport mode (Maat and Timmermans, 2009). Living in the city particularly affects one's choice, as commuters are more

likely to rely on public transportation when the workplace is located in city centres. This is due not only to the higher presence of public transportation but also to the difficulties in car use, such as traffic congestion, and costs and availability of parking. Literature on mobility in rural areas (Noack, 2011) suggests that individuals who live outside the city or in a more peripheral place that lacks public transportation rely mainly on private modes of transportation, such as the car. Eva Noack (2011) argues that the lack of access to private modes of transportation in areas with low public transportation restricts individuals in their participation in the labour market. Lancaster University is situated outside the city centre. Taking the temporary nature of the participants' sojourn and high maintenance costs for car use into consideration, it is not surprising that the majority of participants do not have access to private modes of transportation, such as cars or even bicycles, and instead have to rely on public transportation in order to commute to work.

Again, I focus on Anna and Laura. These two women struggled to find employment in Lancaster. For Anna, the local hospital was the only prospective employer, and Laura had to deskill before she could find any potential employer. Hence, both considered mobility as an option. Anna said there was a possibility for her to work in Barrow-in-Furness, a town approximately ten miles from her house, but she was restricted from taking the employment there:

well, I don't have a car, and to get there it takes about an hour on the train and I have to pay something like £18 and then I thought, no, that's too complicated.

Distance and having to rely on public transportation also limited Laura's consideration of re-employment as she would have to commute to Manchester which itself bore its problems:

> Manchester is only an hour on the train, but the problem is that if I want to stay at, if I need to stay at nine am in Manchester, I need to take the 7.15 train, but the thing is here [from campus] we don't have any bus that can take you [to the train station in the morning], so it's very difficult.[8]

The inconvenience and non-existence of suitable modes of transportation thus restricted these two women in their search for work outside Lancaster. Instead of being highly mobile, as the stereotype of highly skilled migrants suggests, the participants in my study are in fact *immobilised*. The peripheral character of Lancaster, the lack of a private mode of transportation, and the restrictions of access to modes of public transportation at needed times or places makes it almost impossible for them to find work. In short, commuting was not seen to be an option out of unemployment.

The partners I spoke with also considered migrating to a major city in the UK, such as Manchester, Birmingham and London. Studies on internal migration (Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 1999; DaVanzo, 1978) show, that the main prompt for migration is unemployment. People migrate to find work. In this study, however, the primary reason for migrating to the UK –a desire for proximity to the family – weighs heavily on the participants' decision to stay in Lancaster rather than pursuing their own careers through relocating elsewhere in the UK.

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[8] Here I want to highlight, that rental agreements for on-campus accommodations are issued for one academic year. Leaving the contract beforehand is nearly impossible.

Laura, for example, assumes that finding employment in London would not be a major problem. At the same time, she says that going to London is not an option, as it would separate her from her partner:

in London you have plenty, plenty of work and I already rejected two positions because I would have to move to London. I can't move this year, it's impossible for me. I was away from my husband too long [they had a four-year long-distance relationship in Argentina before moving to the UK together] and now I want to live here with him.

This physical proximity to her partner is therefore more important to Laura than the development of her own career. This takes us back to the fact that the primary reason for migrating to the UK was this desire for physical proximity, which now restricts my participants' abilities to move to another city within the UK.

This desire for physical proximity, and the wish to support her studying partner, is likewise significant in Anna's accounts of her experiences with recruitment agencies for medical staff:

well, I got all sorts of calls. One was from London, where they told me, 'Well, you could do that, no? Commuting to London for two days a week.', or they offered me to commute to Carlisle every day; or they called me and told me I could work in Glasgow for two weeks non-stop. And I said to them: 'I CAN'T! I have two small children and a husband here'. I even called a friend of mine who lives in London and I asked her: 'How do they do that here in

Britain? Are they expecting mothers to leave their kids behind?' Well, at the end I gave up and decided that that would not make sense for me.

These examples show that although employment for highly skilled migrants is available in the UK, such employment requires flexibility and a willingness to travel or migrate within the country. My participants came to the UK because they wanted to be in physical proximity to the partner and their children, the participants in this study are tied to Lancaster, even if living here means being unemployed.

These findings are interesting, as they stand in opposition to the image of the highly skilled transient who is highly mobile and flexible. As 'tied' migrants, the partners of international students are highly skilled individuals who are *immobilised mobiles*: that is, they are mobile in a global sense of relocating to another country, but in the new place of residence, they are rendered immobile by external factors like access to modes of transportation and by internal, private factors like the choice to remain in close proximity to their partners.[9] Spatial mobility is therefore not an option the participants consider to be feasible. They, reluctantly, accept unemployment, a topic I discuss in the next section.

## Conclusion: Disappointment or Cruel Optimism?

The participants in this study struggle to find suitable employment. They are unsuccessful for several reasons. First, they experience a lack of networks, which is a factor of the temporary nature of their sojourn in Lancaster. Second, they realise that their qualifications do not transfer and they have to face deskilling, either in the form of downgrading in their profession or through acceptance of employment in less

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[9] I return to the concept of the 'immobilised mobiles' in the concluding chapter.

prestigious positions. Third, deskilling is not an option, either because of low job availabilities in their professions or because acceptance of less prestigious positions is not affordable, given the costs of childcare and the lack of practical support by members of the extended family. Fourth, mobility is restricted, on the one hand as a result of poor infrastructure and on the other hand by the desire to stay in close proximity to the partner (and children). Hence I argue that the highly *mobile* individuals are in fact *immobilised* in their everyday travel which further restricts their access to the labour market: they are immobilised mobile professionals.

These external factors lead to a retreat into the private sphere (or a re-domestication, as the majority of the literature refers to it, such as Purkayastha, 2005). This was not the original aim of migration, but a result of external factors like the labour market itself. How do the participants deal with unexpected unemployment? Are they disappointed or do they adapt to it?

Ian Craib (1994: 3) defines disappointment as 'what happens, what we feel, when something we expect, intend, or hope for or desire does not materialise'. Having to rely on outside factors, the individual is not solely responsible for the materialisation of his or her expectations and is forced to respond to challenging situations. Focussing on partners of international students in the U.S., Renata Frank de Verthelyi (1995; 1996) talks about the disappointment her informants express concerning their inability to be recognised in the labour market. Minjeong Kim (2006: 163) claims that partners of international students are '"forced" into unpaid care work', because the U.S. and Canadian student dependants' visas do not allow these spouses of international students to participate in work without an additional work permit. Both, de Verthelyi (1995; 1996) and Kim (2006; 2010), discussing the unemployment of the partners of international students in the U.S. and Canada

respectively, claim that being unable to work, caused mental and physical health problems such as depression or anxiety in some of their participants. Whereas the exclusion from paid employment for their participants was a result of institutional and legal factors, the partners of international students in my study face the need to deal with disappointment that originates from their inability to find work, even though in the UK the dependants' visa is issued without any restrictions concerning participation in paid employment. Instead of legally being 'forced' into the domestic sphere, they have to deal with their state of unemployment caused by their inability to find work, their problems in getting their qualifications and abilities recognised, and the local labour market itself. Hence, some of the participants could be described as disappointed that their expectations of financing the family through employment were not met. As Carlos said, 'most of the time I have nothing to do, which is not very good, but well, I tried'.

Most of my participants, however, did not talk about disappointment or the development of mental health issues. They express that they came to terms with their unemployment by adopting a positive attitude. Earlier research (Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 1999; 2003; Kofman and Raghuram, 2005) suggests that this 'pragmatism' and 'looking on the bright side' might actually mean that the 'tied migrants' enjoy their re-domestication. I would go further and argue that the partners of international students adopt a form of 'cruel optimism'.

Lauren Berlant (2006: 21) argues that '"cruel optimism" names a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility'. Drawing on examples from U.S. American literature, she shows that cruel optimism is a mode of adapting to loss and disappointment by fantasising a better future. Individuals try to imagine an improved future by, for example, valuing the current situation by trying to find a way

to see one's condition positively or by concentrating on the development of one's abilities, such as language skills. 'Cruel optimism' can therefore be seen as a way to adapt to one's situation and translate one's failure into a positive feature, as the current situation might hold benefits for the future. Individuals also get attached to the changed condition and view it positively, forgetting the origin of the state of being. The participants in my study adopted this way of 'looking on the bright side' in two different ways: through a positive translation that the time spent in the domestic sphere might benefit the relationship with their children, and through fantasising that the time spent in the UK will benefit their own future career path, as it involves improvement in their English language skills and increases their cultural capital through 'overseas experience'.

Considering the first aspect, I return to Anna. She tried to find suitable employment in the medical sector in Lancaster, but became frustrated by the need to have a flexible schedule to accommodate working hours. As a mother of two preschool children, she decided that not being able to work can be translated into a positive experience:

> I really enjoy the time that I have here to be able to spend with my children, especially as I realise that the kids are really happy just because they can spend so much time with me. [...] and also, when we arrived the little one did not speak at all, but now he is really getting a grasp of German and he now speaks even more German than Italian and also [the older one] really starts forming sentences in German, so I really think that the time I have here to be with my children is good for me and it is also an investment for the children.[10]

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[10] Here I want to remind the reader that Anna is German, but is a permanent resident in Italy, married to an Italian husband, and normally lives in the same house as her Italian in-laws, receiving a lot of

Having the time to invest in the children's education and be close to them is thus experienced as a luxury, something the highly skilled migrants enjoy as a break from their otherwise busy working lives. It is also a condition they get attached to, as suddenly the quality time with the children becomes their highest priority.

Ali (from Malaysia), who accompanied his student wife, gives a similar account. He explains that in Malaysia, his parents are the main child carers, as he and his wife both work full-time. There and then he is spending a lot of time away from home, which affects the time he has for his children:

> when we work in Malaysia it is, erm, sometimes we go back, we reach home around eight o'clock, [...] in Malaysia it is quite different, you know, sometimes, for me, sometimes you have to go shopping at ten o'clock [in the evening], so it's quite, erm, so your family, you know, you don't have much time for your family.

Although both he and his wife are occupied by their studies, they still feel that in Lancaster they are able to spend more time with their children than they could in Malaysia:

> so here we usually spend with us and we travel anywhere we want, sometimes even we just go to the duck pond for the kids to play around, [here] we spend time with them.

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support with childcare from her mother-in-law. Although she tries to educate her children bi-lingually, in Italy she does not have as much time to spend with her children as she has in Lancaster, because there she is working full-time as a paediatrician.

The participants can enjoy this time together as a family because they plan to return to their homes (and sometimes to their old employment). Otherwise they would have taken more effort in relying on childcare opportunities. Anna states:

> well, if we had decided to stay here in England, then I think I would have made more of an effort to find a nanny and also to find a job, but as we know that we are going back, I can just enjoy the time together we have here.

It can be said that the temporary nature of the sojourn in Lancaster affects the happiness of the participants, as unemployment is viewed as temporary and in this contest it is turned into an opportunity for a better family life. Although participation in the workplace was originally envisioned, the time in the UK is seen as a positive investment in the relationship between parents and children. The participants get attached to the time spent with the family that busy, dual-career couples do not often have. They can afford this 'cruel optimism' because they know when it will end.

The second way to adopt a positive approach to disappointment is to acknowledge that their stay in a different country will be useful after repatriation. Although they are not able to experience employment in the UK, they see the stay itself as an enhancement of their own cultural capital. They are able to live in an English-speaking environment, which is seen as a chance to improve their linguistic abilities and 'language capital' (Dustmann, 1999). The spread of English as a global language (Kachru, 1992; Strevens, 1992) creates a demand for linguistic fluidity in the language for highly skilled individuals. They can improve their knowledge of the English language simply by living in an English-speaking country, which is in itself a

betterment of the current situation for the migrants. Time spent abroad improves their cultural capital and gives them valuable 'overseas experience' (Urry, 2004).

Cecilia, for example, explains that she envisions better career opportunities after her return to Mexico because she has lived in the UK:

> well, the people think that when you study or live in another country, you are better than the ones who stay [...] you can speak English and you will get a better job.

Similarly, Anna also predicts improvement in future career abilities due to her better in knowledge of English (her third language):

> we live between Bologna and Milan [...] and we just got the European Food Safety Authority and therefore a lot of English-speaking people, and, erm, patients, so that will be good for me as well, as I am able to speak German, Italian and English, especially as English is still not so standard in Italy.

It can therefore be said that the time spent in the UK is seen to be beneficial for the improvement of English as a second (or third) language, which is seen as bettering their future career opportunities. While these aspects are only anticipated outcomes, they show how participants adopt a positive attitude toward their current situation of unemployment.

In summary, we can say that although the participants might have been initially disappointed that they could not find paid employment, they adopted positive feelings through forms of 'cruel optimism', which they get attached to and shine a

more positive light on their failure to find employment. The temporary nature of their sojourn in Lancaster enables them to 'make the best of the situation' as they see themselves returning to the labour market at the places of departure. The temporary nature of their stay is therefore seen as a key factor that makes them to not only adopt a form of 'pragmatism' but also translate their situation into positive terms. Unemployment is thus characterised as a break from the working routine, which they see as a positive experience that allows them to spend more time with their children. Living in Lancaster also enhances their cultural capital through: increase of language capital and overseas experience.

To return to the ideas of privilege, we can here assume that the partners of international students are able to adopt these forms of cruel optimism *because* they anticipate that they will return to employment. Additionally, their reluctance to accept difficult working conditions also suggests that they have some form of regular income that allows them to be able to make this choice. This then suggests some form of privilege compared to other migrants in the UK who would not be able to decide not to work because getting to work seems 'too difficult' to facilitate. I return to these thoughts in the concluding chapter.

So, the lack of employment means that they spend more time in the private sphere. To fill their time, the partners of international students interviewed in this study spend a large amount of time and effort in creating what I call an 'intimate diasporic space'. Their homemaking practices are explored in the next chapter.

# Chapter five:

# Home in a Transnational Context

In chapter one, I introduce studies on family expatriates and the spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada and show that these temporary migrants are described as being 'forced' (Kim, 2006: 163) into the domestic sphere because they are legally denied access to employment. In chapter four, I discuss my informants' attempts to find employment in Lancaster's local labour market and show that they fail due to lack of opportunities. I further highlight that they adopt a form of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2006) in order to deal with this lack of employability and that they state that they anticipate having a better future because they can both put their efforts into the domestic sphere and improve their English language skills. The aim of this chapter is to explore how partners of international students construct feelings of home. A secondary aim is to see what kind of home they are constructing, i.e., are they constructing home through material goods, feelings, practices? I also attend to the ways in which my participants' positions as temporary migrants, unemployed partners and, in some cases, parents come to the fore in their constructions of home. In the pages below, I address issues of temporariness, diasporic intimacy, emotional labour, and the creation of what I call an 'intimate diasporic space'.[1]

When researching home, one must first ask several questions. What is 'home'? Is it the physical entity of the dwelling? The family? A feeling of belonging? Do perceptions of home change when one is on the move, such as migrating to another

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[1] Because the key focus of this chapter is 'home', it is beyond its scope to offer a detailed literature review on the concept of diaspora. For a discussion of such, see, for example, Atilgan, 2002; Cohen, 1997; Dufoix, 2008; Fortier, 2002; 2005; Gilroy, 1994; 1997; 2000; Hall, 1998.

place? Is there always just one home, or can home be multidimensional, occurring in different times and different spaces?

The most common perception of home is probably the conflation of home and dwelling: a house or other shelter. It is the idea that home can be pinpointed to a place where one's feelings of safety and belonging are fixed and raised. This place allows people to experience a 'sense of [...] belonging in an increasingly alienating world' (Mallett, 2004: 66). Home is where one can rest and leave the sorrows of the outside world behind. It is perceived as a safe haven (Blunt and Dowling, 2006), or a place of retreat and relaxation (Moore, 1984). The walls of the dwelling separate the public and the private; the 'familiar' is inside, the 'strange' outside (Ahmed, 2000). The ideal of the detached house hosting one family only, as an entity of familiarity (Porteous, 1976; Wright, 1991), is often described as the most desirable form of home. In Britain, this perception of 'home as house' dates back to the seventeenth century, when Jacobean judge Sir Edward Coke declared:

> the house of everyman [*sic.*] is to him as his castle and fortresse, as well as his defence against injury and violence, as for his repose (Rykwert, 1991: 53).

Joseph Rykwert (1991) argues that this notion of home holds the connotation of the house safeguarding one's belongings and well-being as it stands like a fortress protecting the inhabitants from the dangers of the outside world. Shelley Mallett (2004: 72), however, claims that this idealisation of safety occurring in the physical entity of the house can be seen as a 'romanticised even nostalgic notion of home at odds with the reality of people's lived experiences'.

Focussing on perceptions of home as a safe haven, a place of retreat and relaxation, feminist writers highlight that the idea of a safe haven characterises a male perception of home. Linda McDowell (1999: 75) states:

> home was constructed as the locus of love, emotion and empathy, and the burdens of nurturing and caring for others were placed on the shoulders of women, who were, however, constructed as "angels" rather than "workers".

By highlighting the gender segregation of work, she argues that for the female inhabitant, home is not a place of relaxation, but a place of domestic labour (see also Schwartz-Cowan, 1999). Other authors (including Pain, 1997; Walby, 1997) also claim that the home is not always perceived as a safe haven or as a defence against violence, but can on the contrary be identified as a site of patriarchal oppression and domestic violence. This removes the romanticised notion of the dwelling as a place of safety. Feminists of colour (including hooks, 1991; Tolia-Kelly, 2004) engage with these critiques but criticise them for not taking intersections of class, ethnicity and race into consideration. They offer an alternative definition of home as both a site of patriarchal oppression and a site of refuge from racial oppression. bell hooks (1991: 47) claims:

> we could not learn to love or respect ourselves in the culture of white supremacy, on the outside; it was there on the inside, in that "homeplace" most often created and kept by black women, that we had the opportunity to grow and develop, to nurture our spirits.

Introducing different subject positions into the discourse, black feminists therefore criticise liberal feminist approaches concerning the critique of home as a safe haven for focussing on white, middleclass, and western perspectives of home. We thus have to ask what exactly creates a feeling of home in the dwelling. Instead of looking only at the physical entity of the dwelling as home, we must see that it is not just the dwelling itself that becomes home, but also the interactions that happen within, and beyond, the boundaries of the house or shelter.

Focussing on the strict dividing lines between the inside and the outside, where the former is identified with familiarity and the latter with strangeness, creates a danger of projecting strangeness only beyond the walls of the home (Ahmed, 2000: 88). Sara Ahmed (2000: 88), amongst others, claims that because the public can interfere into the private and the private is never solely private, it is impossible to draw distinct dividing lines between the public and the private at the boundaries of the home. Instead, the place of dwelling is characterised by constant communication with the outside world, for example, through material goods.

Literature on material culture in the home (Cieraad, 1999; 2010; Miller, 1998; 2001; 2008; Shove, 2003; Shove, Watson, Hand and Ingram, 2007) focuses on the 'things that matter' (Miller, 1998: 1). Researching the homes of individuals, the authors cited concentrate less on the physical entity of the dwelling and more on the furniture, ornaments, and objects that hold a certain amount of importance for the inhabitants. These objects can transform the place of the dwelling into a 'kind of space within the home' (Miller, 1998: 7). Jo Tacchi (1998) for example looks at the radio and argues that while it is turned off, the radio is merely a box inhabiting a corner of the home. When the radio is switched on, however, the sound that it produces turns

the home into a completely different space which connects the inside with the outside world.

Not only sound, but also the feelings attached to goods can change the space of the home. Many objects hold memories of people or distant times and places and through encountering these objects, the individuals also encounter the memories (Marcoux, 2001). In relation to this, Svetlana Boym (1998: 521) argues that, especially for migrants, 'the proverb "My home is my castle" doesn't quite work. "My home is my museum" would be more appropriate'. Boym researched Soviet immigrants in the U.S. who arrived as political refugees in the late 1970s. Visiting their houses, she found huge collections of Russian souvenirs such as 'nestling *matreshka* dolls, wooden spoons and *khokhloma* bowls' (1998: 516), which were purchased after their arrival in the U.S. or during their first visit back to Russia. Some of these objects were bought cheaply from the 'nostalgia industry' (either in the U.S. or in Russia) as mass-produced goods. For the migrants, however, they were precious objects with 'an aura of singularity' (1998: 518). Mostly displayed on the living-room bookshelves, they function, according to Boym (1998: 516), as a 'personal memory museum' displaying an emigrant identity and difference for the visitor in addition to having 'both a nostalgic and aesthetic function' (1998: 520). These collections of 'domestic kitsch' are displays of a collective memory which is not the memory of the lost roots, but the 'cipher for exile itself and for a newly found exile domesticity' (1998: 523). In this sense, objects are not only kept safely within the boundaries of the house, but they also 'turn' a space into a place as they tell a story about the inhabitants themselves. Daniel Miller (2008: 2) argues that objects on display in the home can function as 'an expression of [a] person or household'. This is how objects can 'talk' and 'speak for their owners' through their presentation in the home. Every time

individuals move houses, they try to make a place 'their own' by investing time and energy in, for example, refurbishing their new dwellings, decorating the rooms, and arranging furniture and artefacts according to their preferences (Chevalier, 1998; Cieraad, 2010).

So far we can see that merely relying on an understanding of 'home as house' is not sufficient. On the contrary, the physical entity of a dwelling is not 'a home' itself; home is the relations that take place in connection to objects and things 'that matter'. According to Mary Douglas (1991), home is a 'localizable idea', which, referring to Elia Petridou (2001: 103), can be characterised as '"a kind of place", which acquires its meaning through practice'.

Home can also be found in relation to people rather than objects. Douglas (1991) argues that social interactions which are predominantly imagined to take place within the setting of the nuclear family can create a space of the home. Tamara Hareven (1991: 254) claims that the conflation of home and family dates back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the idealisation of the house as a site of retreat for the family:

> over historical time, however, "family" and "home" were overlapping concepts, but were by no means identical. The close identification of home with family is a relatively recent phenomenon that can be traced to the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. The concept of the home as the family's haven and domestic retreat emerged only about one hundred fifty years ago, and was, initially, limited to the urban middle classes [... but] the common interpretation has been a "trickle down" theory, which assumed that middleclass ideals of the home gradually spread to the working classes.

Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling (2006: 101) argue that western idealisations of home often portray 'belonging and intimacy amongst members of a heterosexual nuclear family'.[2] These relations might take place within the localizable idea of the home place, but they can also be more abstract. Hence, even when certain family members are physically absent, the idea that home is connected to family appears in several studies (Kenyon, 1999; Rose, 2003).[3] Gillian Rose (2003: 15) argues that family photographs signify presence and absence 'through a relation with people, places and times that are not in the home at the moment of looking' but nevertheless highlight the importance of connectivity between these family members as a unit. Liz Kenyon (1999) researched undergraduate students residing in college accommodations in Sunderland and states that for her participants their college 'homes' were characterised as 'in-between stages' because they describe one's 'real home' as connected to one's family life. The students said that they considered their parents' homes as their past family home and predict their future home as where they reside with their own families. Their present residences are therefore seen only as a means to an end. In response, Irene Cieraad (2010) draws attention to the fact that it is not only the absence of family that might have caused feelings of un-attachment towards the students' residences in Kenyon's study, but also the students' lack of ability to turn the already furnished student accommodations into places of their own. She compares the British students in Kenyon's study with Dutch students in her study and argues that for the Dutch students, the move away from their parents' homes involves furnishing and decorating and is characterised as a 'real rite passage into

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[2] This notion of home as a site for hetero-normativity has been criticised by queer scholars. See, for example, Fortier (2003).
[3] For a detailed description of transnational family bonds and home, see, for example, Baldassar, 2001; 2007; 2008; Gardener and Grillo, 2002; Olwig, 2002; Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lam, 2001; Skrbiš, 2001; 2007; Svašek, 2008. I return to this body of literature in the next chapter and therefore refrain from discussing it here.

adulthood, domestic independence, and public citizenship' (Cieraad, 2010: 87), which would prepare them for marriage. Hence, although the actual practices of residing in college accommodations differ in relation to place, they show that other forms of housing, such as student residences, are seen as a stage between the past family home and future family home, thus emphasising the connection between 'home and family'.

So far, I describe theories that emphasise the connections between home and house as well as home and family. I draw attention to the idea that the relations to objects and people are 'home', rather than the house itself. Even in absence, homes can be remembered and units of families can be imagined. Current homes can be characterised as in-between stages which might not hold a strong feeling of belonging, but instead function as a bridge between past homes and imagined future homes. Home can, however, be even more.

Home can also be a feeling of belonging or a feeling of 'being at home' that can be connected to a place or dwelling or experienced through the imagined unity of the family. This same feeling can also arise in other household arrangements, such as shared houses (Saunders and Williams, 1988) or retirement homes (Winstanley, Thorns and Perkins, 2002), where groups of people are formed due to similar ideologies or life-stages. Theano Terkenli (1995) argues that feelings of belonging can further be experienced in geographical regions where not only the house, but also the neighbourhood, the hometown, and the home region are localizable ideas of home. Simon Schama (1991; 1995) argues that familiar landscapes and the sensory attachment they create become yet another form of home. Moving through landscapes familiar to the person is seen as experiencing 'a sense of home'. People can also feel connected to imagined communities of the nation-state (Anderson, 2006) or the homeland itself (Hage, 1996). Home can therefore be a localizable idea which moves

beyond the physical entity of the house or the dwelling, or it can be completely detached from geographical boundaries. Detaching the concept of home from the connection to house and family, Ahmed (2000, 87) argues that:

> home is associated with a being that rests, that is full and present to itself, and that does not over-reach itself through the desire for something other. To be at home is the absence of desire, and the absence of an engagement with others through which desire engenders movement across boundaries.

This state of not desiring anything else does not, however, have to be territorialised in a particular place. It can take form in non-places like the airport lounge one hangs out in,[4] as 'home is here not a particular place that one simply inhabits, but more than a place: there are too many homes to allow place to secure the roots and routes of one's destination' (Ahmed, 2000: 77). This understanding of home takes away the one-dimensionality of the concept and calls for an understanding of home as being a multidimensional concept that is constantly re-created rather than fixed and given (Mallet, 2004). Every day, migrants reconstruct their sense of home and belonging through certain practices, but they also dwell in memories and ideologies which function as imagined connectors to other places that can also be called 'home' (Ang-Lygate, 1996).

How, then, do perceptions of home change when the individual is on the move, travelling, for example, across the boundaries of nation-states? Whilst Manuel Castells (2006) argues that one becomes homeless due to migration, other more favourable notions of home in migration show that 'being grounded is not necessarily being

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[4] For a definition of 'non-places', see Marc Augé's (2008) work.

fixed; being mobile is not necessarily about being detached' (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller, 2003:1).

Migration and the ideas of home are intertwined, and for mobile individuals, home can occur in different ways. Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (1998: 7) suggest that home for the transnational migrant can be found 'in a routine set of practices, a repetition of habitual interactions, in styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in stories carried around in one's head'. Alison Blunt and Robert Dowling (2006: 199) offer the explanation that home for the transnational migrant can be seen 'through, for example, the relationships between home and homeland, the existence of multiple homes, diverse homemaking practices and the intersections of home, memory, identity and belonging'. Katie Walsh (2006: 126) states that home for expatriates can be found in a feeling of 'belonging' and as 'a sense of home' which can be connected to places, but can also be re-created through practices, memories and imaginations. She emphasises how for a British expatriate a DVD from Britain can create a stronger feeling of 'a sense of home' than the actual dwelling in Dubai, thus further emphasising the detachment of home from the place of dwelling. Susan Digby (2006) similarly assumes that for the traveller, home can be found in a personalised 'casket of magic'. She concentrates on 'salvaged-objects souvenirs' (2006: 174) which are ordinary, sometimes useless, things, such as 'ticket stubs to a concert [or] a pebble from a favourite beach' (2006: 175) which 'serve as mnemonic devices to provide a physical presence, an access to the world of the past, a flexible and changeable world created through nostalgia' (2006: 174). Through encounters with these objects, which are 'handled, gazed upon, and associated stories are recalled and reworked before being safely encapsulated to await another visit' (2006: 184), home is remembered and recreated.

Magdalena Nowicka (2005) points out that 'home and family' are especially important in the experience of 'being at home' for temporary migrants. She researched highly mobile professionals who frequently change places of residence and do not normally stay in one place for more than three years at a time. They form attachments to more than one country and place. Home, she states, comes to be found in the close bond to immediate relatives:

> to become home, it has to be a shared point of reference, a shared focal point. It is not the place that makes home but the social relations that orbit around this focal point. The immediate family itself, spouse or partner and children, located, physically present at a certain place, is a focal point for mobile individuals. The immediate family is therefore so very important because it gives a feeling of security that results from the stability of arrangements. (Nowicka, 2005: 144).

Nowicka (2005) thus shows that for mobile individuals, the place of dwelling itself becomes less important and it is the sense of belonging to the family unit that gives a feeling of security and structure and becomes a focal point in itself. She argues that the concept of home has become fluid, 'a space in becoming' (Nowicka, 2007: 73) which can be characterised as a mobile location, recreated through relationship networks with people and objects. By taking their attachments with them, the highly mobile expatriates in her study are able to reproduce similarity and familiarity regardless of where on the globe they temporary resettle. In response to this notion of home as a fluid concept, Melissa Butcher (2010: 23) notes that 'the desire to fix home with a particular meaning by attaching it to place is still apparent even for highly

mobile migrants'. She states that the highly mobile professionals in her study still feel the need to connect a feeling of home to a particular place, be that the homeland or the new place of residence, but she also shows that it is possible for migrants to change the place of the home and identify that feeling of home with another place over time.

In summary, this brief literature review of theories of home explains that home can be understood as more than just an individual's current dwelling. Although home can still be that place, it can also be found in spaces, objects, feelings, practices, and as one's understanding of the world. Home is not a one-dimensional concept, but is multidimensional. Home is also not always singular. One can have more than one home at the same time, in different times, at the same place, in different places, and home can move beyond the boundaries of physical entities and nation states.

Perceptions of home for the temporary transnational migrant, who already knows the (approximate) end date of his or her stay in the foreign country, are under-researched (some exceptions include Nowicka, 2005, 2006, 2007; Walsh, 2006). This chapter therefore also focuses on the question 'What role does this temporariness play when considering ideas of home?' The next section describes the temporary migrants' attempts to make their homes and create what Svetlana Boym (1998) calls a 'diasporic intimacy'. The subsequent section draws on emotional domestic labour and shows how certain homemaking practices, such as food consumption, are important for the creation of that 'diasporic intimacy'. The final section of this chapter takes these aspects of home into account and, drawing on Avtar Brah (1996), argues that home for the temporary migrant involves turning the physical place of the dwelling into an 'intimate diasporic space'.

**Homemaking and Diasporic Intimacy**

Svetlana Boym (1998: 499) defines the notion of intimacy in connection to home as "'innermost', "pertaining to ... one's deepest nature", "very personal", "sexual". She argues that through 'uprootedness', Russian emigrants residing in the U.S. re-create their intimacy, which is not only connected to their 'innermost' desires, but to exile itself. Boym shows that the concept of 'intimacy' is not only a private matter, but that 'it may be protected, manipulated, or besieged by the state, framed by art, embellished by memory, or estranged by critique' (1998: 500). She further states that 'immigrants to the United States often bring with them different traditions of social interactions, often less individualistic than those they encounter in their new surroundings' (1998: 500). In order to deal with their new surroundings and their encountered feelings of estrangement, emigrants have to reinvent their ideas of intimacy, which are coloured by their experience of movement and resettlement. This is what Boym (1998: 499-502) calls 'diasporic intimacy', which is defined as follows:

> diasporic intimacy can be approached only through indirection and intimation, through stories and secrets. It is spoken in a foreign language that reveals the inadequacies of translation. Diasporic intimacy does not promise an unmediated emotional but only a precarious affection – no less deep, while aware of its transience. In contrast to the utopian images of intimacy as transparency, authenticity, and ultimate belonging, diasporic intimacy is dystopian by definition; it is rooted in the suspicion of a single home. [...] It is haunted by images of the home and homeland, yet it also discloses some of the furtive pleasures of exile. [...] Diasporic intimacy does not promise a comforting recovery of identity through shared nostalgia for the lost home and

homeland. In fact, it's the opposite. It might be seen as the mutual enchantment of two immigrants from different parts of the world or as the fragile cosiness of a foreign home.

Diasporic intimacy arises in the state of being a migrant and the transience of the new setting. It is the state of being experienced by migrants, which is less formed through a loss of the homeland and a desire to return than through life in a new, strange environment. Diasporic intimacy can thus be characterised by an intersection of longing for the homeland whilst enjoying the excitement of resettlement and being, to a certain extent, proud of being a migrant, because this state of being a migrant distinguishes the individuals on the one hand from inhabitants of their places of relocation, and on the other hand from inhabitants of their new places of resettlement. Boym also shows that the Russian emigrants in her study display this intimacy though their own 'personal memory museums' (1998: 516) in central positions in their dwellings in order to highlight their emigrant identity and their difference in relation to the inhabitants of the receiving country. To the outsider, these objects are 'domestic kitsch', but to their owners, they hold a personalised meaning. The placement of these objects becomes an important part of homemaking and turning the physical dwelling into a personalised place.

The importance of the common practices of homemaking, such as choosing favourite colours and style of decoration, buying the right furniture, and displaying one's meaningful objects around the dwelling, is also highlighted in studies on material culture within the home (Cieraad, 1999; 2010; Gram-Hansen and Bech-Danielsen; Marcoux, 2001; Miller, 1998; 2001; 2008). Irene Cieraad (1999; 2010) draws attention to the work that is involved in decorating a new dwelling place that

turns a strange house into something individual. This work is often seen as the result of a strong drive to identify the dwelling as a 'home'. By focussing on family expatriates, Heather Hindman (2008) and Leonie Gordon (2008) show that the decoration of new dwellings takes up the majority of their informants' time. Their aim is to turn the new dwelling into a familiar home away from home.

With these thoughts in mind, I half expected my informants to reveal similar connections to objects in their houses when I asked them, 'What is home?' As I explain in chapter three, my intention was to ask my informants to show me significant photos in order to explore their attachment to things that symbolise 'home' for them. I was thus surprised to receive photos not only of meaningful objects, but also of their immediate families, including their partners and children. In order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of my participants, I cannot, however, display these pictures in this thesis. Although some participants also gave me photos of objects, as I discuss shortly, the most important identification of home is in connection to their intimate familial relationships. Laura from Argentina states, '[m]y partner is home; he is my little family'. Similarly, Cecilia, who travelled to Lancaster from Mexico pregnant with twins, and who has lived in Germany as an accompanying spouse for the duration of her husband's study for his Masters Degree before coming to Lancaster, states:

home for me is not furniture. It's the people [...] so home is just where my family is and then I, and family for me is just my husband and my children, yeah, and my extended family is my parents and my brother and my nieces, but, erm, if my husband is in Germany, my home is there, and, so home is where my family is.

Home for the partners of international students is therefore based on a very strong connection to the intimate couple or family relationship. It is exactly this connectivity that forms a state of 'being at home' for the participants in my study. The place of resettlement is thus of secondary importance, and the dwelling, the region, and the nation-state are less important than the stability of the intimate relationship. Although an understanding of the connection between home and family is not a new approach, the specificity for partners of international students is the emphasis of connecting feelings of home to the family relations as the first and foremost feeling of 'being at home'. In that sense, my findings here echo Nowicka's (2005; 2007) explanation of home as a 'shared focal point' (2005: 144) found in 'the immediate family itself' which is 'so very important because it gives a feeling of security that results from the stability of arrangements' (2005: 144). Like Nowicka's participants, the partners of international students in my study consider the current dwelling as a focal point where the familiar social relationships are to be found. They state that they find a sense of security in their partnership/marriage and their relationship with their children, which becomes 'home' to them. The unimportance of the dwelling is highlighted by Daniel, who came from Canada:

> the place where we are staying is in university residences, but it is not our home, [...] we've basically taken [living in the flat] as looking at it as "camping", that is the best way of, like, because it's a space that isn't really ours, erm, we are not trying to decorate it and put stuff on the wall, trying to make it our own because it's not [...] so basically, why I have taken a picture of my wife is because she is really the only thing that makes it home for me.

To Daniel, his relationship to his wife is 'home'. Using the metaphor of 'camping', he explains that the place is a liminal space: a place they will leave after a certain amount of time, highlighting the temporariness of their sojourn. In this sense, the partners of international postgraduate students in Lancaster take a similar understanding towards their university residences to the British undergraduate students in Kenyon's (1999) study: as a stage of inbetween-ness. Whilst the students in Kenyon's study saw their time in campus accommodation as step between the past homes of their parents and the imagined future homes of their own families, the partners of international students in my study see the 'inbetween-ness' as a time between their residences in their places of departure. This then affects the participants' attachments to objects.

The majority of my informants arrived with one suitcase each[5] and moved into already furnished accommodation, either on campus or in town. Due to airline restrictions and postal costs, they decided not to bring a large number of possessions with them. As their intention was to stay in Lancaster for a more or less fixed period of time, they also did not spend a huge amount of money obtaining goods such as furniture, as they knew that everything that they bought would have to be disposed of at the end of their stay. In this way, they also feel in a state of 'transience', something Boym (1998) refers to in her analysis. Also, my informants did not decorate their dwellings, either because this is discouraged in college accommodation or they did not see a need to decorate a place which does not hold many meaningful objects. Instead, they left their personal belongings stored in boxes at family and friends' houses awaiting their return. Anna and Ali, who came to Lancaster as partners of Masters students, and for whom the stay in the UK was envisioned to be fixed at only twelve months, left their entire dwellings and all their contents in the hands of family

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[5] Apart from Heike, who brought all her belongings from Germany in a hired van, all participants arrived via air travel.

members, to be looked after during their absence. Although some objects might have feelings of home attached to them and hold stories, as discussed in the literature on material culture, for most of my participants, these objects are not in Lancaster. The reliance on home as the stability of the immediate intimate relationship[6] therefore becomes even more apparent because homemaking practices, such as decorating the dwelling, were absent.

In relation to Boym's (1998) concept of 'diasporic intimacy' as portrayed through objects around the house, I would argue that for the temporary migrants in my study, reliance on a 'personal memory museum' is not apparent or necessary, as they are not emigrants forced to leave their homelands, but voluntary migrants who envision a return. This does not suggest, however, that they do not create their own forms of 'diasporic intimacy'. Their diasporic intimacy is found in the intimacy of familial relationships and becomes especially clear when we analyse everyday practices of homemaking, such as food consumption (I return to this in the next section). It also shows in some of the objects displayed around the dwelling which signify both their familial intimacy and their non-British origins. These objects thus serve as testimonials to their status of temporary migration as a family unit. The objects that hold these notions for the partners of international students in my study can be described in three categories: (1) objects brought with them, (2) objects obtained to portray differences, and (3) objects which signify the practice of family life and portray diasporic intimacy.

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[6] Here I use 'immediate family' to refer to the individual's partners and children only.

The objects which the partners of international students brought with them in their suitcases are small objects which fit into the luggage. They are in that sense similar to Susan Digby's 'casket of magic' as they hold a special value for the migrants. This value is, however, not so much the memory connected to distant pasts or places, as Digby (2006) argues, but something that connects the transnational migrant to distant family members. Laura, for example, arrived from Argentina with her own small casket of magic (Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Laura's Casket of Magic.**

This consists of an alarm clock that she received from her mother before departure, pencils that her aunt gave her for her fifteenth birthday, a ruler she acquired when she was three years old, and a paper clip that her sister gave her. As an architect, she encounters these objects on a daily basis as she uses them when drawing. They are

therefore not only memorabilia but practical objects, and using them reconnects her with her distant family:

> I always have this one [the alarm clock], my parents gave it to me and, well, I just, it's part of me, it was, the first thing I saw, erm, I see when I wake up in the morning.

Like Laura, Chun, from Taiwan, brought an alarm clock with her that was a present from her mother (Figure 6). She was able to comfortably store the alarm clock and a tiny purse in her luggage as both are very small items. Answering my question of why these objects express the understanding of home for her, she replies:



**Figure 6: Chun's Casket of Magic.**

this digital clock my mother gave me when I went to college, so it's now twelve years old, and this is a little purse [that my husband's] mother made for me, erm, stitched it. I put coins in them.

The objects that are important for Chun are items that remind her of distant family members, but they are also practical objects that are used on a daily basis. Comparing these objects with the ones Digby (2006) refers to, it seems obvious that in both cases, the objects that are emotionally important are economically meaningless. Whereas Digby (2006: 175) refers to a 'pebble from a favourite beach', the items Laura and Chun brought with them are objects they use on a daily basis and which carry symbolic value that reconnects them with their families still residing in geographical distance. A reason for carrying items that are also practical rather than pure 'salvaged-objects souvenirs' (Digby, 2006: 174) is, again, the weight restriction the migrants were subjected to. The knowledge that other important objects are waiting for the migrants' return creates feelings of imagined stability for the migrants and also functions as a constant reminder that the duration of their stay in Lancaster is temporary.

Another form of making home through the attachment to objects is, as Boym (1998) proposes, the signifier of displaying difference through objects. Chun took a picture of two red Taiwanese greetings (Figure 7) which the couple had hung on the door of their college accommodation. They received these banners from her family, which again shows that the most important objects are connected to people rather than, or in addition to, places.

**Figure 7: Banners on Chun's College Accommodation Door.**

By displaying them on the outside of the door, they also make a claim that there is a Taiwanese couple living in this flat and display their 'identity' to passers-by. These passers-by are not only British but also Chinese students (the largest minority at Lancaster University). Hence, by displaying these greetings, the couple show their non-Britishness and also distinguish themselves from the mainland Chinese students by proclaiming their Taiwanese identity. For other participants, however, these kinds of goods did not play an important role, which is again connected to the temporary nature of the stay. Boym's (1998) Russian emigrants were forced to leave Russia without any certainty of return. They purchased items over a long period of time in order to not only imaginatively reconnect with Russia but also to display their diasporic identity. For a temporary migrant who already envisions his or her return, this display of difference might not necessarily be established materially in goods, but

is imagined by different practices of daily routines and organisation around family life, as I show in the next section.

For the majority of the transnational migrants in my study, the items that signify an intimacy with the family or partnership rather than the objects they brought with them or the objects they obtained from different countries whilst being in migration, are the objects they consider important symbols of home.

For Anna from Germany, who had been living in Italy for the last ten years and who is married to an Italian Masters student, the little mermaids (Figure 8) that she handcrafted with her children for decoration are her main expression of home. 'For me', she says:



**Figure 8: Anna's Mermaids.**

this is home because we have lots of things on the walls and windows that the kids made, such as paintings or those little mermaids that [my daughter] cut out and put on the window.

Here it is not the decoration itself that creates a homely atmosphere, but the memories of time spent together as a family whilst handcrafting these artefacts. This intimacy of the immediate family is the symbolic value of the economically meaningless objects.



**Figure 9: Daniel's Sofa.**

Daniel's motives for taking his pictures were also to display an intimacy within the family and partnership. He took photos of his couch (Figure 9) and his wine glasses (Figure 10), as for him, it is spending time with his partner on that couch and drinking a glass of wine that signifies home. He does not describe any of the furniture in the dwelling as belonging to him and his wife, as they were not able to bring any large

**Figure 10: Daniel's Wine Glasses.**

items from Canada and did not see the need to purchase any furniture in the UK. What really turns the place of the college accommodation into a home for him is his proximity to his wife. The settee therefore becomes significant not as an object but through the practices of intimacy with his spouse.

Laura also took a picture of the armchair (Figure 11) where she spends most of the day, either on her laptop, working and communicating with geographically distant family members and friends,[7] or relaxing with her partner. This chair symbolises the most important time for her, which is the time they spend together, when she is able to tell him about her day and he is able to tell her about his course. Although neither of them took a picture of the objects, Carlos from Portugal and Brendan from Ireland

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[7] I return to virtual communication with geographical distant kin and friendship networks in chapter six.
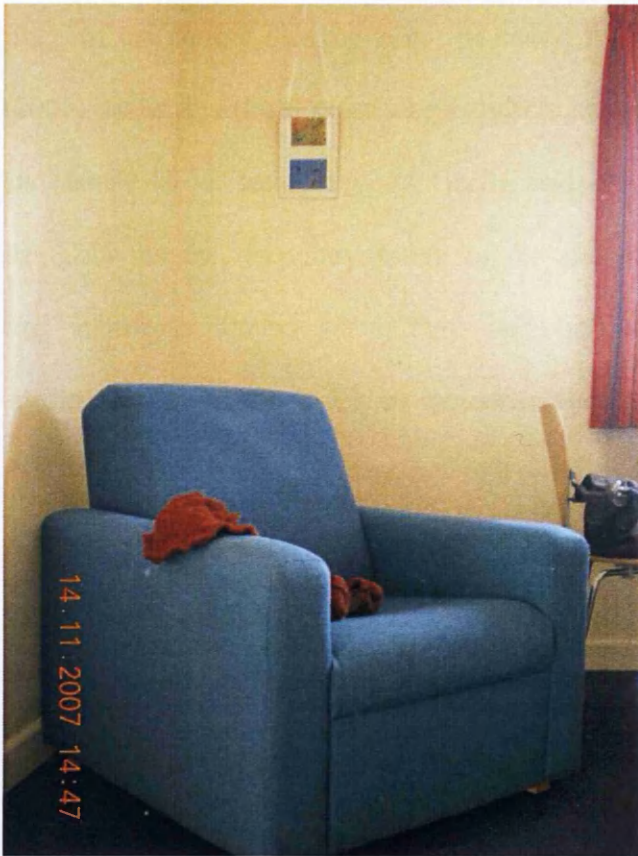
**Figure 11: Laura's Armchair.**

both talk about their sofas as being the place that mostly turns their current dwelling into a home. For Carlos, his practice of daily reading of Portuguese newspapers and books, as well as the afternoons he spends with his son drawing or handcrafting, are the main practices that turn the sofa into a meaningful object. For Brendan it is the place where he spends most of his time, watching TV.

In summary, it could be said that although some of the participants arrived with their own personalised small 'caskets of magic', these objects are practical ones rather than pure memorabilia. All the objects that represent home for the participants are connected to people rather than places, as the objects brought or displayed are objects that the participants either were given personally before their departure or were sent after their arrival. Objects such as furniture are not their own belongings, but represent the intimacy of the partnership or family in their current dwelling. The

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place of the current dwelling is not perceived to be home, but rather, as in Nowicka's (2005) findings, a focal point where objects are stored and the intimacy of partnership and family life is happening. As Cecilia said, the actual place could be anywhere on the globe as the temporary nature of the arrangement is constantly present. Because my informants know when they will be departing, work on designing and invidualising the place is felt to be unnecessary and unpractical. This is also because they know that everything they buy will need to be sold. Hence, the current place of dwelling is a stage of 'inbetween-ness' imagined to stand between the past family home and the predicted future home after return.

Although the participants in my study do not widely portray their differences with the use of decoration and a 'personal memory museum' (Boym, 1998: 516), they nevertheless display a stage of diasporic intimacy through their emphasis on the intimacy of the couple relationship which can be found in some of the objects portrayed, but also through daily practices of food consumption. The latter is discussed next.

**Emotional Domestic Labour: The Creation of the Taste of Home**

As I discuss in chapter four, the partners of international students struggle to find suitable employment in the local labour market. In order to deal with their state of unemployment, they adopt a form of 'cruel optimism' based on the anticipation of a better future. The domestic sphere thus becomes their main focal point for the present, and their 'job' is the creation of a home away from home. As the migrants in this study are restricted from bringing a large number of meaningful objects with them and may not redecorate their dwellings, they focus on the creation of a diasporic intimacy – their state of being an intimate unit of the family whilst in migration – through

homemaking practices such as food preparation. This is how they not only try to turn the homeplace into a 'hyper-national' home (Hindman, 2008),[8] but they also apply forms of emotional labour.

Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983: 7) defines 'emotional labour' as 'labour [that] requires one to induce or supress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others [...]. [It] calls for a coordination of mind and feeling'. Hochschild (1983; 2003) highlights that this form of labour can be found in the private, such as displaying feeling according to the societal norms at, for example, funerals or weddings, as well as in the public, where the control of emotions can become a commodity itself, such as the smile of flight attendants or bar tenders. Here, I apply emotional labour in connection to the domestic sphere and argue that the partners of international students deploy emotional labour whilst carrying out their household shores. I propose the phrase 'emotional *domestic* labour' which is applied for the creation of diasporic intimacy.

I discuss in chapter one how family expatriates who accompany their working partners to a new location are expected to support their spouses and families during that posting abroad, to smooth over familial conflicts and generally to put their own interests second, in order to successfully reproduce the expatriate family abroad (Fechter, 2007a). Similarly, the partners of international students in Lancaster, seek to ensure that the family space is sorted.

The partners of international students in this study invest emotions into domestic labour when turning the unfamiliar place of living into a 'home away from home'. They apply creative approaches to turning ordinary life, such as meals, into

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[8] In chapter one, I introduce Hindman's concept of the 'hyper-national' home. There I highlight that she claims that the preparation of 'traditional' – which in her study means 'American' – food becomes the main task of U.S. American expatriates in Kathmandu. She also indicates that in order to be able to create this 'traditional' taste of home, shopping might involve long travel and significant amounts of research.

something special, for example, through the consumption of freshly prepared food. This translates into creating a diasporic intimacy in the sense that food preparation and consumption are especially seen as tasks that enhance the intimacy of the family unit on the one hand, and on the other hand shows differences towards their social environment, mostly British students.

Donna Gabaccia (1998) claims that 'we are what we eat' and argues that the consumption of familiar food constitutes an important marker of identity formation for Italian migrants in the U.S. The preparation of food, starting with shopping, is perceived to be very important because the labour put into it is seen as creating a sensual form of belonging, of being 'at home'. Nick Clarke (2005) argues that the flavour of familiar food from one's personal past in the place of origin reconnects the transnational migrant to that home place (Clarke, 2005). Michel deCerteau, Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol (1998: 184; italics in the original) argue that:

> when political circumstances or the economic situation forces one into exile, what remains the longest as a reference to the culture of origin concerns food, if not for daily meals, at least for festive times – it is a way of inscribing in the withdrawal of the self a sense of belonging to a former land *[terroir]*.

Although the migrants in this study were not forced to migrate or go into exile, and they intend to return home after a set period of time, they still feel the need to create a familiar taste of the past because food is seen to matter for identity formation, both as a connector to nationality (Scholliers, 2001) and as a signifier of difference (Bradby, 1997; Caplan, 1997). Peter Scholliers (2001: 5) argues that identities are often 'built, interpreted, negotiated, narrated and altered by means of food' which in turn create

national stereotypes concerning food; such as 'bread and wine' being seen as stereotypically French. At the same time, these identity constructions also take place in relation to difference, as we are not only what we eat, but also what we do not eat. Elia Petridou's (2001) research on Greek Masters students in London shows that the preparation of fresh food becomes a practice which reconnects the Greek students to their homeland. It also demonstrates their difference to their British peers, as the participants in her study emphasise that preparing fresh food implies caring, not only for the food, but also for the local Greek producers. The British students are perceived as uncaring because they rely on pre-made meals and do not cook. The Greek students in Petridou's study therefore felt a sense of superiority, which was their way of portraying their diasporic intimacy.

Like these Greek students, the participants in my study also emphasise their habit of preparing fresh food as opposed to eating convenience food. They further state that they try to create a familiar taste of home by concentrating on the preparation of food known from the place of origin. Cecilia, who took a picture of her kitchen in order to highlight her feelings of home (Figure 12), states that:

I try to prepare the Mexican food, everything is just like in Mexico [...] yeah, I mean try because you can't find the ingredients here. It's impossible, but [I try to create a] Mexican flavour with the ingredients I can find.

The first hurdle to creating a familiar taste of home is obtaining the right incredients. Although one might assume that in this age of globalisation, everything is available everywhere, the place one migrates to still plays an important role. For those living in Lancaster which, as I explain in chapter three, is a small, peripheral market town

**Figure 12: Cecilia's Kitchen.**

rather than a 'vibrant' city, the options for retail purchases are relatively restricted. There are a few supermarkets in Lancaster, such as ASDA, Sainsbury's and Booths[9], as well as smaller shops, such as SPAR or Summerfield's. The city centre also hosts a whole-food store, Single Step, and a daily indoor market where fresh, locally sourced products can be obtained. The two outdoor market days (Wednesday and Saturday) offer a variety of fresh food stalls, including a French bakery stall and a Mediterranean food stall.

At the time of the research, there were also two small Polish shops, one Chinese shop, and one Indian shop in Lancaster. Although shopping outlets seem to be quite diverse, Cecilia still struggles to find the right ingredients for a familiar taste of Mexico. This is partly, she explains, due to financial restrictions. Although some supermarkets have international food sections, she is restricted in her shopping habits

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[9] Whilst ASDA and Sainsbury's are supermarkets that are common throughout the UK, Booths supermarket originates from and operates exclusively in the North of England.

to ASDA, as it is the cheapest outlet in Lancaster. This is different to the participants in Hindman's (2008) study on shopping as being part of the experience of being a spouse of an U.S. American expatriate in Kathmandu. Whereas for the women in her study, the financial burdens are not an important issue, financial burdens determine the shopping behaviour of the partners of international students for whom money is restricted. Apart from financial restrictions, the participants in my study also talk about their need to travel in order to obtain the proper ingredients for their dishes. Ali, who arrived from Malaysia with two children in order to stay in Lancaster for the duration of his wife's Masters Degree, states:

> we can buy chicken at Preston, just travel there, they've got one, actually there are many stalls that provide Halal meat, even though in Lancaster they sell the Halal meat, but in Preston it's much more cheaper, so we just travel around just for thirty minutes and then we shop round over there.

Ali and his family travel to Preston (a city approximately twenty miles from Lancaster), which has a larger variety of ethnic market stalls, on a fortnightly basis. It is not absolutely necessary, as he states, but the travel per se becomes a family ritual in which the whole family travels together in search of the right ingredients. Through creatively translating the necessity of obtaining food products into a joyful adventure, the ordinary task of shopping turns into a special occasion. In order to maintain this habit of enjoying the necessary, the partners of international students have to apply a form of emotional labour whilst performing a domestic task. Like Ali, Heike (from Germany) states that she cycles with her children to Morecambe (about five miles from her house in the city centre of Lancaster) in order to shop in the German

**Figure 13: Heike's Bread Maker.**

supermarket, Aldi, where she can buy authentic German bread mix for her German bread maker (Figure 13). She explains that she is able to combine this necessity of travel for food with time spent with her children at the local beach. This habit then turns the necessity into a joyful experience which is shared with her children.

Shopping as a routine spent with other members of the family is not only important for the participants who arrived in Lancaster accompanied by their children, but also for the participants without children, as Daniel from Canada states:

I don't wanna say, like, a nice routine, but we go and get groceries on the Saturday and we buy groceries for a week, so we're going to town and then we go to the Single Step and then we go to the farmer's market and do all the shopping.

The couple thus uses the time spent together during market days to talk about the week, meet other people who are shopping on Saturday in the city centre, or take advantage of the proximity to the theatre and cinemas to 'see shows' (Daniel). For the partners of international students, shopping is therefore not only a means to an end, but both the obtaining of goods and the creation of intimacy. By investing time and energy in travel, the migrants constantly remind themselves that they are different from their surroundings. They travel because they want to prepare and eat food that tastes of home. Shopping then changes from a purely domestic necessity into a form of emotional labour, and the shared experience strengthens the family unit. Emotional domestic labour, then, can also be characterised as offering both practical (Baldassar, 2007a) and social (Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara, 2008) support, as the emphasis to turn necessary household tasks into enjoyable events is itself a way of emotionally supporting the partner and the family.

Apart from investing time and energy into the practice of shopping, the participants in this study also mention remittances as a way to obtain important ingredients. These remittances may be brought back from visits to the place of departure, sent on demand, or arrive as surprise packages sent by family members or friends the transnational migrants have left behind.[10] On visits to their places of departure, which in most cases is seen to be the other home, the participants in this study try to obtain goods that are perceived to be connected to their origins. Those goods might consist of special ingredients and herbs which are meant to turn goods bought here into a taste of home, such as Chun's dried fruits (Figure 14), or they

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[10] They also send or take gifts from Britain to their places of departure. As I state in the introductory chapter, remittances can thus be characterised as an exchange of goods. Here, Marcel Mauss' (1923 [2001]) work on the gift exchange comes to mind. As the focus of this chapter is on home and diasporic intimacy, however, I here concentrate on goods my participants receive, or obtain, from their places of departure.

**Figure 14: Chun's Dried Fruits.**

might be luxury goods that cannot be found in the UK, such as special chocolates, teas, or coffee.

Anna (from Germany), who is married to an Italian husband and who had been living in Italy for the last ten years, reported that she has not found a substitute for the Italian coffee that she needs for the Italian coffee maker the family brought to the UK (Figure 15). She therefore tries to bring Italian coffee back from every visit to Italy. Her Italian mother-in-law also sends the particular coffee from the coffee shop in the village where the family used to live (and to which they are planning to return to). She states that in this village, the local coffee stall knows exactly the size of the coffee bean that is needed for every family's coffee maker, and that although it might be possible to obtain similar coffee in Lancaster, the coffee sent from Italy 'just tastes

**Figure 15: Anna's Coffee Maker.**

nicer' (Anna). Furthermore, she states, it is also a way to maintain a family connection to her family-in-law, the grandparents of her children. 'Well', she says, 'it's just, like, the grandparents in Italy really enjoy putting the things together as a parcel and then to take it to the post office and send it away' (Anna).

She emphasises that it is not only a joy to open the parcel and to taste the coffee (as well as the Parmesan cheese and the Parma ham), but it is reciprocally a joy for the family members in Italy to send these 'care-packets' to the migrants as a form of practical support as well as an emotional connection. These 'care-packets' can be sent on demand or as a surprise for birthdays or for Easter, Ramadan, and the like. Receiving luxury goods, such as chocolate, that one might have forgotten to miss, not only reconnects migrants to their distant homes and families, but the taste of these

goods also creates diasporic intimacy. As Boym (1998) documents the purchase of stereotypical Russian objects that are displayed in the living room, here, the display of luxury goods, such as chocolate that one cannot obtain in Britain, functions as another form of display of diasporic intimacy. That is, the domestic labour of obtaining the right ingredients is a form of emotional labour that creates intimacy with family members. These family members can be the immediate family, such as the partner and children, or the extended family that stayed behind. Whether one is shopping, or packing or opening a parcel, one remembers the distant place. Through this reconnection, the temporary migrants are reminded of their non-Britishness. As they shop for and/or display their luxury goods, they display their diasporic intimacy.

Not only shopping, but also food preparation is used to portray their difference from British inhabitants. Like Petridou's (2001) students, the partners of international students in my study emphasise their habit of preparing fresh food 'cooked from scratch' (Inness, 2006: 18), which stands in opposition to their perception of British food culture. As Anna acknowledges:

the eating culture in Britain is catastrophic [...] they [the British] go and get themselves a burger which they then quickly put in their mouth and then they run on [...], you can also see it in all those adverts about healthier eating [...] or, I mean, you can see it in the shopping baskets in Sainsbury's, you don't need to know more about that, it doesn't seem that they are cooking much, I don't know [...] or I started reading books about family life here and I always think, do they just eat a few biscuits and drink a bit of milk in the evening?

Here, Anna may well be drawing on stereotypes concerning British people's consumption of fast-food and ready-meals. As Scholliers (2001) argues, food is often used to stereotype culture, and here Anna is engaging in this stereotyping. What is important, however, is that through stereotyping she also highlights her own preference for stereotypical Italian food preparation in opposition to stereotypical British food culture. She furthers her argument by stating that, although back in Italy they had never prepared pizza 'from scratch', she spends a huge amount of time here in Lancaster trying to cook fresh food and flavouring it with special Italian spices. This is then seen to be a way of not only creating a healthy meal for her children, but also reconnecting the children and her Italian husband with their Italian home. In addition, this is her way to differentiate herself from the British and their food, as she perceives it on the one hand from her observations and on the other hand from British popular culture and the amount of advertising for healthy eating. She also uses this example to highlight that she feels a certain superiority in 'caring' as opposed to this British eating culture which, like in Petridou's (2001) example, is seen to be 'uncaring'.

Similarly to Anna, Carlos also talks about his daily cooking habits:

before I pick [my son] up from school I go shopping [...] and then I pick up [my son], I play with him a bit in school first in the playground, [...] then we come home, he has his snack, [...], then, Erm, I tidy the flat and I have to make the dinner for us [...] we always have soup at every meal and a main meal [...], mostly we have home-made food [...]

Carlos also tries to provide freshly prepared food for his family. He highlights that he mostly buys fresh ingredients and that he shops daily. He also stresses that they always have soup for their dinner, something which, he explains to me later, is 'very Portuguese'. Maintaining specific food consumption habits and putting effort and time into obtaining and preparing fresh food cooked from scratch therefore reconnects him and his family to their other home, Portugal.

After purchasing and preparing the food comes the eating of it. Like the discussed practices of shopping and cooking, eating also shows differences to the British mainstream culture as perceived by the participants. They emphasise the familial habit of dining at a dinner table. Anna states that:

> two times a day, it is all four of us around the dinner table and we sit there and we eat. That is not about quantity of food, but quality, especially life quality. It is the space where the kids can talk about school and sometimes when they have enough they leave the table and my husband and I sit opposite to each other and we actually can talk to each other.

Anna characterises British eating culture as 'catastrophic' because she believes it relies on convenience food consumed 'on the go', meaning whilst on the move. She feels that British people care neither about fresh, healthy food nor the time spent preparing and consuming food around a dinner table. Studies on cultural habits of food consumption with a special focus on British and U.S. American families draw similar conclusions. Mary Martini (1996) argues that at the beginning of the 1990s eating at the dinner table was still an important part of white, middleclass U.S. American family life. The daily habit of dining around a dinner table was seen as a

'clear-cut event' where 'experiences, wishes, plans and perceptions' (Martini, 1996: 23) were discussed on a daily basis. Kenneth Herbst and John Stanton (2007: 654) show that although the knowledge that communal evening meals are 'an instrumental part of a healthy family' still exists, time-shortages in family life have led to the situation that dinnertime becomes 'part of the daily multi-tasking ritual' wherein family members 'also watch TV, listen to the radio, talk on the phone, read, use the computer, do homework, work, and play games while eating meals together' (2007: 652). Victoria Rideout, Donald Roberts and Ulla Foehr (2005: 11) estimate that sixty-three percent of all U.S. American households watch TV during dinnertime. Jaclyn Hirschhaut (2004) argues that this combining of tasks has led to a decline of the use of the dining table, which has been replaced by the sofa and coffee tables as sites that would provide a more comfortable space in which to perform these multitasking activities.

By emphasising their daily habit of eating at a dinner table, the participants in my study therefore also highlight their differences to British (and U.S. American) culture. In so doing, they portray their time at the dinner table as an important signifier of difference and as a stabiliser for their felt diasporic intimacy. Although this portrayal is normally inaccessible to the public, as it happens behind closed doors, my informants were able to talk about it in our interviews and, if nothing else, display their diasporic intimacy to me.

In summary, it can be said that whilst the partners of international students are restricted from bringing a large number of objects to the UK and refrain from obtaining goods due to their temporary stay, they create a diasporic intimacy through their habits of food consumption. By purchasing goods, displaying them around the home, preparing fresh food and consuming it around a dinner table, the participants

imagine themselves as being different from the kind of British culture they are surrounded by (mainly British students). Their diasporic intimacy is not only displayed through objects, as Boym (1998) argues in her study, but is also shown by their eating habits. The partners of international students further deploy emotional domestic labour by investing a huge amount of creativity in their efforts to turn the otherwise dull tasks of domesticity into a habit of constant recreation of diasporic intimacy. Place is important, as although this display occasionally happens outside the dwelling (for example, during shopping), the majority of the time, it takes place within the boundaries of the dwelling.

**Conclusion: Home as an Intimate Diasporic Space**

In this chapter I show that the actual place of the dwelling does not solely constitute 'home' for the partners of international students. As their stay is temporary, they do not furnish their accommodations or obtain more than a minimal amount of goods. In this regard, the material elements of home appear to be less important for my participants.

Instead, they describe home as belonging within the immediate family unit, something that, following Boym (1998), can be called 'diasporic intimacy'. In order to keep this form of intimacy stable, the partners of international students use a form of emotional domestic labour by putting creativity, effort and fun into obtaining, preparing, and consuming familiar food. This creates a feeling of diasporic intimacy because the taste of home substitutes for memory of distant places on the one hand and stands symbolically for the perceived difference between the migrants and mainstream British society on the other hand. They are constructing home through feelings and practices.

This finding stands for both male and female partners. It seems that the similar constructions of home are connected to my participants' similar life stage as unemployed temporary migrants, and, in some cases, parents. Literature on spouses of transnational migrants, which I discuss in chapter one, often highlights that putting effort into the domestic sphere helps these 'accompanying wives' to counterbalance a lack of purposeful activities caused by unemployment. Similarly, literature on fatherhood (Cohen and Durst, 2001; Jump and Haas, 1987; Stelton and John, 1993; Wheelock, 1990) discusses that unemployment can motivate men to take on household shores and child care responsibilities, especially when their wives become sole 'breadwinners'. This phenomenon is reflected in my study, as male participants took on additional household and childcare tasks in order to support their studying wives and partners. As I write above, Lancaster University does not keep records on accompanying spouses of international students. Hence, it is impossible to say how this thesis reflects the actual gender distribution compared to the whole of the population. From the findings here, we can assume that my participants' positions as temporary migrants, unemployed partners and, in some cases, parents come to the fore, and that this life-stage motivates them to put effort into the creation of diasporic intimacy in the home.

What emerges from my finding is the question of whether the practice of a constant re-creation of diasporic intimacy actually turns the place of dwelling into an intimate diasporic space. Following arguments from Avtar Brah (1996), I look at how the perception of the dwelling turns the actual place into a space that is imagined to be detached from the immediate surroundings. It becomes a space with diasporic intimacy attached to it.

In her argumentation about 'diasporic spaces', Avtar Brah (1996) draws attention to the importance of borders in connection to diaspora and the 'politics of belonging'. She argues that the border 'marks the intersectionality of contemporary conditions of transmigrancy of people, capital, commodities and culture' (1996: 242). This intersectionality then depends on the understanding of borders as being both physical and cultural, and imagined entities of being. The idea of 'different kinds of borders' (1996: 244) and the addressing of the transmigration across these 'borders' of people, cultures, capital and commodities, marking a space where new forms of belonging and otherness are appropriated and contested, moves beyond the notion of the physical borders of nation states. The imaginary borders, where different cultural identities can be performed, are an important aspect of home as a diasporic space (Brah, 1996). Using the approach that the understanding of borders moves beyond the common boundaries dividing nation-states, it could be argued that the border within the 'politics of belonging' for the transnational migrants in my study might be seen as the borders of the physical structure of the dwelling: in short, the walls that keep the surroundings of the different culture (here British) out. When describing her feeling of belonging in her flat, Cecilia states:

> I think that Mexico is here. I don't think this is England. It's like my house, it's like just Mexico. And the food also and the mealtimes. Everything, because we don't eat at the time here. We have all the routine, all the Mexican routine and the food, I try to prepare the Mexican food, everything is just like in Mexico.

Within the borders of her dwelling, Cecilia (and the other transnational migrants) imagines a space which is just like Mexico (or the other places of origin). It is merely coincidental that this space happens to be in the UK. For these temporary migrants, geographical location is not important so long as the feeling of diasporic intimacy (constantly recreated through the emphasis on familiar practices such as food and mealtimes) is to be found in the home. This place then turns into the main place of practices for the transnational migrants. The outside world of Britain is left at the other side of the imagined border, outside the walls of the house or flat, and the place itself becomes a place that is detached from its grounds (uprooted) and imagined as a space that is not Britain, but functions as an imagination of the place of departure. The feeling of belonging is constructed not only by sensual experiences of food production and consumption, but also through other routines which are performed within the dwelling and are not connected to the outside world. One example of such a routine is the use of a familiar language. The physical boundaries of the place of residence also construct the borders where British society and the English language can be kept out. Inside, the couple or the family can speak their native language without having to conform to certain expectations of including themselves in the wider culture of the outside world. The perception that outside the boundaries of the flat is England, but inside is Mexico, creates a space which is felt to be important for the recreation of family intimacy, and therefore the place where home is reconstructed. Whilst the inside space of the imagined boundaries of the flat are perceived as a safe haven and a place to re-create a form of, say, Mexican identity, the space outside of the walls is perceived as 'other', here, British. This finding strongly corresponds with black feminist critiques of liberal feminist critiques of home as introduced above. Authors such as hooks (1991) and Tolia-Kelly (2004) argue that critiques of home as only

gendered spaces fail to take intersections of gender and ethnicity into account. For my participants the home is indeed an ethicised space as they stress that it is there, in the home, that they can leave 'the other' outside.

Brah (1996) further draws attention to what she calls 'the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of "staying put"'. This concept is used to complicate the notion of 'indigenous'. Hence, she highlights that the relation of what is 'indigenous' and what is not; what is moving and what is not, is not simply characterised by an opposition, but by a mixing. Sara Ahmed (2000: 88) draws on that notion of the diasporic space and argues that 'there is always an encounter with strangeness at stake, even within the home'. I might argue that whilst the spoken language is the native language of the couple or family, the language of entertainment in the house (radio, TV) is still English. Whilst the food is meant to taste Mexican, the ingredients are mainly sourced and produced in Britain. Whilst the feeling is Mexican, the furniture and the design of the accommodation (especially already furnished college accommodation) is created with a British understanding of decoration. Hence, the place of the dwelling cannot be seen as Mexico itself, as Britishness comes through the boundaries. It is this intersection of people, capital, commodities, and culture that turns the place of the dwelling into a diasporic space. It is not a fully British place, but neither is it a fully Mexican place, it is a space where the diasporic identity is felt and reconnection takes place on a constant level.

Scholars on diaspora have identified 'hybridity' as a key concept (Bhabha, 1994; Gilroy, 1993; Young, 1995). This concept highlights the mixing of different cultures and the creation of something new. In relation to the different food practices outlined here, we can argue that blending English ingredients with, i.e., Mexican herbs and flavours, produces a totally new product which is not quite 'indigenous' Mexican,

nor quite 'indigenous' English. Through these forms of hybridisation of food practices, the intimate space of the family dwelling becomes a diasporic space, as the home turns into a transnational space that blends the here and there at the same time. It is neither absolutely there nor absolutely here, so, it is neither purely Mexican nor purely English, but rather a mix of both.

The home is, however, not only a diasporic space, but an *intimate* diasporic space. The diasporic intimacy seen in the emphasis on the stability of the intimacy of the couple or family relationship through practices and, to a certain extent, objects, is mainly felt in the home. It is there, in that space, that most emotional domestic labour is performed in order to strengthen the feeling of diasporic intimacy. It is there where they spent most of their time, where they cook in order to create a taste of home, and where they reconnect on a daily basis whilst consuming the food that tastes like home. It is this diasporic intimacy, with all the emotional work attached to it, which turns the place of the home into that intimate diasporic space.

More can be said about Avtar Brah's concept in relation to genealogies of movement and staying put, which I return to this in the concluding chapter. But first, it is useful to focus on the participants' relationships that move beyond the home and the immediate family unit. In the next chapter, I therefore focus on kin and friendship relations.

# Chapter six:

# Kin and Friendship Networks

*'No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe' (Meditation XVII. In: Donne, 1975)*

John Donne's quote draws attention to the idea that everyone needs to belong in certain forms of relationships. These are important for receiving support, and for individuals' well-being. In chapter one, I introduce Baldassar's (2007a) forms of support which she believes to be important for migrants. In this chapter, I focus on my participants' networks, both in Lancaster and abroad, which largely provide emotional and moral support. In addition, although I do not want to suggest that the temporary migrants in my study are lonely, I briefly address the issue that connections outside the immediate relationship are vital to their well-being.

Robert Weiss' (1987) distinction between 'emotional (intimate or personal) loneliness' and 'social loneliness' is of particular importance. He argues that intimate loneliness occurs 'when one feels entirely isolated from others, has no one with whom to share one's life, and/or longs for an intimate, one-to-one relationship or friendship' (McWither, 1997: 296), and social loneliness is characterised as the situation 'when one has limited means of developing friendships with others and has a lack of supportive networks' (1997: 296). According to Enrico DiTommaso and Barry Spinner (1997: 417), Weiss' differentiation originates in the identification of six social provisions: 'attachment, social integration, reliable alliance, guidance, reassurance of worth and opportunity for nurturance'. 'No single relationship', they write, 'can meet all the needs, although intimate relationships (e.g. spousal relationships) can satisfy a multiplicity of these needs' (DiTommaso and Spinner, 1997: 417). Both forms of loneliness can occur independently and one can be lonely within a stable one-to-one

relationship or whilst being well integrated into a network of friends. Inclusion into these different networks would, they argue, enhance the individuals' well-being. The most important relationships are kin and friendship networks.[1]

In this chapter, I first define kinship and friendship as the terms are used in sociological and anthropological literature. Then I draw attention to the importance of kin and friendship networks for the transnational migrants in this study. I first focus on their new friendships in Lancaster, and second on their global kin networks. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the traditional dichotomy of intimate relations in proximity and less intimate relations over distance.

Robin Fox (1967) argues that traditionally the definition of 'kinship' is related to a 'genetic' model following consanguinity and marriage, and Makarius (1977: 710) defines kinship relations as 'biological relations'. These simple definitions have been criticised widely regarding both genealogy and marriage. Judith Schachter Modell (2005) argues that adoption whilst not based on consanguinity is still a form of kinship. Similarly, Roger Greeff's (1999) international perspectives on foster care in regard to kinship highlights that basing the latter purely on genealogy is excluding. Anthropological critiques, such as done by Dwight Read (2007), raise awareness that the genetic model does not hold for non-Western perspectives of kinship. Instead, he highlights that kin relations are established through different practices, such as feeding and nurturing, through residence, via nursing, through a name-giver receiver relation and through godparenthood. He suggests a paradigm shift in the way kinship is defined, moving away from its close connection to consanguinity or biological relations. Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon (2001) suggest that focussing on

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[1] People also meet other people without forming meaningful relationships. Being recognised in the corner shop might also be seen as a form of connectivity. George Herbert Mead (1934) calls these relations 'significant others'. Here, however, I focus on more *intimate* relations, such as kin and friendship networks.

biology and marriage alone, is adopting a Euro-centric approach on dealing with kinship theory. Instead, they aim to complicate the notion, taking an intersectional approach, drawing on cultural aspects of diverse understandings on kinship. Anne-Marie Fortier (2000) discusses that even these cultural understandings on who counts as a relative are fluid, and can change due to migration.

Not only genealogy is criticised by sociological and anthropological literature, but also the concentration on marriage as a base for establishing kinship relations. Judith Butler (2002) asks whether stressing 'marriage' as kin formation would mean that kinship is per se always heterosexual, and Graham Allan (2008) highlights the change in the importance of traditional kinship ties. Drawing on theories on the growing individualisation of people within the structure of western (post-) modernity, he shows that more flexible methods of family construction such as co-habitation and non-heterosexual forms of relationships are rising. Andrew Cherlin (2004) states that marriage itself has become 'de-institutionalised' and today merely functions as a symbolically significant statement about the couple's future. Co-habitation therefore takes equal value in relation to kinship as marriage.

Allan (2008) further argues that relationships formed between members of the same kinship group are more flexible now than they were in the past, as individual life-choices affect kin relations. Although, according to Allan (2008: 4), 'moral and normative beliefs about the responsibilities of kinship remain', relations to parents, siblings, and other members of the family are negotiated upon considerations concerning 'the history of the relationship, the circumstances and personalities of the different individuals involved [as well as] the other commitments and responsibilities they have'. The connection to kin does not therefore imply the formation of intimacy

per se, as this relies on personal choice and the individuals' willingness to work on the construction of bonds depending on their negotiation.

In this study, I refer to kinship when referring to my participants extended family members. The individuals I interviewed mainly refer to their parents and siblings, as well as their, married or cohabiting, partners' parents and siblings. Therefore, this chapter is largely based on these forms of kinship.

Whereas kin relations are relations that are relatively 'firm and clear cut, [...] who counts as a friend depends on personal understandings of what characterises friendship as well as on personal judgements of whether particular relationships match these generally implicit understandings' (Allan, 2009: 223). Claude Fischer (1982) uses the word 'friend' to refer to a person who is non-kin and non-lover, but who nonetheless plays a certain importance in the individual's life. He further distinguishes carefully between 'friend' and 'friendly relations'; what characterises friends is a certain form of commonality which can be found in shared experiences or intimate relations through, for example, the trust that comes from discussing personal matters. Fischer (1982) assumes that friendships seem to occur after a long period of shared experiences, and Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary (1995: 500) claim that belongingness in meaningful friendship relations is established though a 'gradual accumulation of intimacy and shared experiences', which take time. According to Fischer (1982), further distinctions can be found in the use of the word 'friends' as opposed to 'associates' and 'acquaintances'.[2] In this regard, 'associates' and 'acquaintances' refers to persons with whom certain amounts of experiences are

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[2] Here it is interesting to add that Claude Fischer (1982) claims that the differences in these words are related to cultural differences. U.S. Americans are more likely use the word 'friends' when talking about all kinds of relations, whereas British individuals are more inclined to distinguish among 'associates', 'acquaintances' and 'friends'. Although I tried to be careful not to confuse these relationships, I cannot fully discuss these differences with the material I use. This is mainly due to the situation that I did not originally intend to research friendship matters, as I underline in chapter three.

shared without the need to discuss personal matters. In order to distinguish even further, the notions of the 'best friend' (Jamieson, Morgan, Crow and Allan, 2006) or the 'close friend' (Eve, 2002) are used to describe 'intimate friendships' which move beyond shared experiences towards a functionality which can be characterised by filling roles traditionally associated with networks of kin, such as giving the 'best friend' our emotional and financial support, trust, and intimacy.

Liz Spencer and Raymond Pahl (2006) introduce the term 'suffusion' in order to demonstrate that kin and friendship networks can overlap in their functions. They argue that, on the one hand, certain family members are more like friends in the sense that the relationship moves beyond 'social obligations accruing through the existence of the kinship connection' (Allan, 2008: 7) towards a relationship which is characterised as one of pleasure and liking; and on the other hand, certain friendships can be similar to kin relations 'because they have demonstrated a strong commitment and solidarity across time that is above that normally expected of friend ties based on personal liking and sociability' (2008: 7).

From what we have seen so far, then, understandings of kinship and friendship show that the boundaries between them can be blurred. Some close friends can take on (support) roles traditionally assumed to be those of family members, and some family members become closer than others because they act like friends. Friends can also be categorised according to the degree of closeness. That is, some friends are only 'associates', 'acquaintances' or 'mates'[3] with whom certain experiences can be shared without the need to share personal matters, and others are seen as closer friends due to higher degrees of emotional intimacy and trust through privileged knowledge of the other person. It can also be asserted that adult friendships are increasingly important in

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[3] Indeed, in specific friendship networks, even these words may have subtly different meanings to those who use them to describe their friends. Here I use these words without further distinction.

individuals' lives (Jamieson, Morgan, Crow and Allan, 2006), especially when access to kin networks is restricted, for example due to geographical distance between its members.

In this chapter I comment on how migration and the physical relocation of individuals might change practices concerning kin and friendship networks. I first focus on new relations formed by the research subjects in Lancaster. Then I discuss how the temporary migrants work to stay connected with their geographically distant families. As friendships spanning national borders were largely absent in my informants' accounts, I concentrate on issues concerning relations to their transnational kin networks only. This should not suggest that the temporary migrants do not remain connected to distant friends, but their main focus concerning connectivity lies in maintaining intimacy with geographically distant family members rather than chosen friends.

## Friendships: New Relations in Lancaster

David Conradson and Alan Latham (2005; 2007) researched young, mobile, highly-skilled New Zealanders residing in London and state that upon their subjects' arrival, co-national 'friendship networks offer important, if informal, systems through which new arrivals obtain accommodation, learn about job opportunities, and generally find their way through London' (Conradson and Latham, 2005: 294). Friendship networks are therefore 'significant as a means of negotiating housing and employment opportunities upon arrival, moderating the unfamiliarity of a new city, obtaining travelling ideas (and sometimes travel companions), and simply providing a group of like-minded others with which to socialise' (2005: 246). These authors further claim that the strengthening of friendship networks determines the migrants' mobility as the

increase in emotional intimacy with new friends creates a strong incentive for the New Zealanders to remain in London. Some friends therefore become the new chosen 'family' at the place of relocation, counterbalancing the distance from relatives in New Zealand and fulfilling tasks traditionally associated with kin relations, such as providing incentives for migration as well as practical, accommodation and emotional support. In contrast to earlier studies on migrants, today's young transnationals rely more on friendships and less on neighbourhood and kin networks.

Paul Kennedy (2004: 169) argues that for skilled migrants in Manchester, newly formed friendship networks compensate for 'a kind of emotional deficit' experienced by leaving one's homeland, family, and friends. Cementing friendships thus helps migrants to overcome stages of emotional vulnerability, such as anxiety and loneliness, and mediates the settling-in process. Kennedy draws attention to the formation of *transnational* friendship groups as the participants in his study recount feelings of being slightly '"cut-off" from the host society' (2004: 169) and form friendships mainly with other transnational migrants either of the same nationality or of different, non-British nationalities. In a later account, Kennedy (2010: 480) argues that this formation of mixed, transnational groups of friends propels 'actors in a more cosmopolitan direction because they are exposed to other foreigners [...] through the close friendships [...] they establish'. He suggests that relocated individuals are more inclined to form intimate relations with other relocated individuals of different nationalities than they would have been if they had stayed in their countries of origin. Kennedy (2010) also shows that the establishment of close bonds with British nationals is not entirely impossible, but depends on how long the migrants are intending to stay in the country, as well as on a promise that the friendships will last. In short, he believes that British inhabitants only tend to form friendships with

transnational migrants if they perceive the migrants' stay to be long-term.

Literature on the adjustment processes of international students offers further useful insights into the importance of friendships for those who have come to a different location. According to James and Ruth Dyal (1981) international students' friendship patterns can occur in three categories: (1) 'host national'[4] friends who act as cultural informants, (2) 'co-national' friends who act as referents of values from the home culture, and (3) friends of other nationalities who act as a general social network. Whilst relations with other transnational migrants are characterised by sociability, friendships with British students are further envisioned to be links to the improvement of linguistic abilities and 'increased satisfaction with the total student experience and greater host communicative competence' (Brown, 2009: 439). Lorraine Brown (2009) states that a lack of friendships with British nationals led to disappointment in the international students in her UK-based study because they felt deprived of opportunities to speak English and fully adjust to life in Britain. Studies concerning aspects of international students' mental health issues (Lackland, 2001; McWither, 1997; Mori, 2000; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland and Ramia, 2007; Wiseman and Guttfreund, 1995) also emphasise that the lack of new, intimate friendships is one of the major reasons for loneliness, which may lead to international students' 'dropping out of college, suicide and suicide ideation, and alcoholism' (Wiseman and Guttfreund, 1995: 232). In turn, the formation of meaningful friendship networks would enhance the students' well-being.

Drawing on these studies of friendship, I first explore the different approaches to meeting people holding the potential for the formation of friendships, which were

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[4] Acknowledging the sensitive notion of 'host society' or 'host national', as suggesting that migrants are 'just visitors' that need to be hosted, in what follows, I refer to Britain and natives of the British Isles as 'British society' and 'British nationals'. I thereby do not distinguish between white British and non-white British because neither the sources I used, nor my participants themselves draw these distinctions.

carried out by the partners of international students in Lancaster, and the new relations' level of intimacy. Second, I examine these friends' nationalities in order to determine whether the participants in my study form relations within a 'transnational bubble'.

In chapter one I show that the literature on expatriates (Fechter, 2007a; 2007b; 2008) and the families of international students in the U.S. and Canada (de Verthelyi, 1995; 1996; Kim, 2004; 2010) examines differences in connectivity upon arrival between 'lead migrants' and 'accompanying' spouses. The authors cited argue that the 'lead migrant', who may be a corporate expatriate or an international student, is brought into a new network of colleagues and peers, whereas the family expatriate and the spouse of the international student, being unconnected to any institutions, struggles to meet new people. This phenomenon also occurs in my study. Whilst the international students are invited to introductory events, join new departments, and meet new people who hold potential for the formations of new friendships, their partners arrive without any connections to the university or workplace. This lack of connections affects their ability to meet people and makes them rely on the networks that the students form through their institutional attachments. Daniel from Canada states:

> I would not say, well, I would not classify that I have a circle of friends. The people that I am sort of associate with is what [my wife] is developing as her circle of friends through the department [...] but as in making contact with any people here to sort of call my friends or anything like that, erm, it's really not existing right now, at this point, just because of sort of the limitations of I am living on campus and [...] I am not working with people and I am generally

continuously just surrounded by undergrads which, erm, there is nothing wrong with undergrads, but at the same time their focus is a little different than my focus where they go to all the pubs and all the drinking and all that sort of stuff. I am at home with my wife [...], so I don't right now have a circle of friends, but it's like I am included in [her] circle of friends, I think that's the best way of describing it because I haven't really met anyone of my own that I go out and have a drink with or that I have sort of consistent type of conversations with. (Daniel had lived in Lancaster for approximately four months at the time of the interview.)

Here Daniel explains why living on campus restricts his ability to meet people who could become his friends because he sees himself as surrounded by undergraduates whose forms of socialising are not what he is interested in. He also talks about his lack of employment, which further deprives him of an ability to meet like-minded people. Therefore, and as he had been in Lancaster for only four months at the time of the interview, his only social networks thus far were developed through his wife's relations with fellow students.

When asked to describe her circle of friends in Lancaster, Laura, who accompanied her husband for the duration of his one-year MBA studies,[5] gives a similar account:

I still don't have any friends here, I just have people that I know, erm, we try to get on with everyone in the MBA, I know almost everyone, they are seventeen-six people, so plenty of people and sometimes we invite people back

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[5] MBA – Masters of Business Administration.

home and we have dinner and things like that, but maybe, well, the thing is that they are coursing the MBA, so they are very busy still and it's very complicated and they don't have time to spend with like doing nothing or just talking and the thing is that once, when we are all together and we have a meeting they talk about the MBA, so it's still very hard for them to separate life from university. (Laura had lived in Lancaster for approximately three months at the time of the interview.)

Laura states that although she quickly met people connected to her husband upon arrival in the department, she considers these relations as 'people [she] know[s]' rather than as friends. She further states that the connections through her husband's new circle of friends do not satisfy her needs, as even during social occasions such as dinners, the conversation circles around matters of their shared experience of studying for the MBA. Because she is not participating in the course, she is excluded. She also acknowledges the fact that the majority of these people do not have much time to meet and 'just talk' or 'do nothing' and that she feels that they have problems in separating daily life from their academic life. The relations she makes through these encounters are therefore not coloured by a shared experience, but by feelings of exclusion in a circle of people who themselves share similar experiences.

Carlos, who came from Portugal with his wife and their son approximately 2.5 years before the interview, also speaks about the perceived fact that he does not believe he has many friends in Lancaster:

well, I don't have that much, erm, but, erm, sometimes, last year, yes, last year, [my wife] and [her] work colleagues [fellow international students] were doing

what they called an 'International Cuisine Festival', so in the beginning, every other Sunday someone was cooking something from their own country, erm, so, well, they are more or less the closest people I have, but, erm, they are more [my wife]'s friends, erm, I won't say the same regarding to myself, because [...] it was *them* when they gathered for those meals.

Although Carlos talks about a group of international students who are studying at his wife's department as 'more or less the closest people [he has]', he adds that they are more his wife's friends than his. Like Daniel and Laura, he participates in their gatherings, but although he is physically present, he feels he is not an integral part of the gatherings. Later he states that these gatherings ended because the participants were too busy with their studies. While his wife maintained contact with these people in the department, he lost their acquaintanceship due to lack of regular contact.

So far, we might say that although the accompanying partners of international students are able to quickly meet new people through the students' newly developed networks of peers, the non-academic partners realise that they are 'out of place' in the gatherings of these new acquaintances[6] because they do not share the experiences of being a member of the department or taking the same courses. Because they are unemployed, these partners of international students both lack opportunities to meet like-minded people on their own and also have more time on their hands than the members of the students' new circles of friends. This means that they are eager to meet people unconnected to the students' course through participation in sports, childcare activities, or religious circles.

Indeed, several informants state that they have joined sport clubs in order to

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[6] I return to the experience of being 'out of place' in chapter seven.

meet other people. Ali from Malaysia reports that he plays badminton every Saturday morning and sometimes this group of what he calls friends plays football in the afternoon. Daniel meets people through daily visits to the University Sports Centre and his participation in a local Tai Chi club. He states that he would not call these people friends; however, they are familiar faces he meets regularly and with whom he sometimes enjoys a coffee break. Brendan, who arrived with his partner from Ireland approximately 2.5 years before the interview, participates in a local weekly pool league where he meets people with whom he also regularly goes to the pub in order to watch football. He identifies friendships as meaningful relations that develop from shared experience and categorises his new relations as associates and acquaintances rather than friends:

> I wouldn't call them friends, you know, acquaintances more nearly, more than any, I don't really have many friends over here because I am not from here and I haven't lived here very long.

Brendan draws attention to time in the formation of friendships as he states that he thinks that one reason why these individuals are acquaintances rather than friends is his state of temporary migration.

Other participants state that their role as main child minder gives them the possibility to meet other people through support structures such as the International Women's Group or through regular visits to school and community playgrounds. With regard to the former, Anna, a German paediatrician who is an Italian resident, states that she formed a friendly relation with an Egyptian mother, Aisha, whom she met whilst joining the International Women's Group and with whom she developed a

closer bond:

> well, I really get on with Aisha. We met in the International Women's Group and now we meet about two times a week and take the kids to the playground or something and that is really quite nice. (Anna had lived in Lancaster for approximately nine months at the time of the interview.)

The support structure of the International Women's Group enabled first encounters with other people who are in a similar life stage as the accompanying, female, partners of international students (and staff). Through the participation in the weekly meetings, Anna formed an acquaintanceship with Aisha which now moves beyond time spent within the group and involves regular meetings for shared child care. Unable to attend at the International Women's Group due to his gender, Carlos reports that he met other parents at the playground through the friendships his son developed with other children:

> there are the other parents at the school [...] and [after school] we talk a bit while the kids are playing [at the playground], erm, sometimes we go, I go with two of them, erm, to, to the Magic Castle [in Morecambe], so it's a place where the kids play indoors, they have a bouncing castle and, erm, slides and other things where they can play and sometimes we go there, erm, the three of us with the kids and, well, then we talk a bit and of course it tends to be around kids the conversation and around school and so on, but, erm, well, it's better than nothing.

These encounters enable Carlos to participate in after-school activities and give him access to transportation (as he does not drive), but concerning intimacy, he states that these contacts stay on an impersonal level as he and his contacts discuss child care or school-related issues and do not engage in emotionally intimate exchanges of personal matters or simply share common interests. He characterises these contacts as 'better than nothing', which, again, draws attention to the situation that for him these relations are more on the level of 'associates and acquaintances' than friends.

Apart from participation in sports and child care, some of the partners of international students also meet people through regular religious practices. Ali explains:

and then of course my Muslim friends because we usually, well, every Friday we go to the mosque, so we know them and we know most of them, [...] and the Malaysians usually, we are quite close because we are a very small community and usually we have, we can say like study circles, OK, we meet at the mosque once every two weeks, OK, this is when we discuss things, not necessary for religious things, but whatever, whatever happens. (Ali had lived in Lancaster for approximately five months at the time of the interview.)

In a later report, Ali states that in these meetings they also decide on how to provide practical and accommodation support for new Malaysian arrivals by discussing modes of transportation from the airport, decorating the new place of residence, and helping each other out in the settling-in process. The connection to co-nationals and its manifestation in regular meetings functions as a form of first contact and the provision of mutual support. Ali does not, however, report more in-depth relations but says

merely that these relations are maintained at the level of shared experience – of being Malaysian and Muslim in Lancaster. They are what we might call, paraphrasing Dyal and Dyal (1981), co-national acquaintances.

So far, we can highlight that the participants in my study meet other people through their partner's newly developed networks of fellow students and through participation in sports, child care, and regular religious practices. Drawing on the literature on friendship discussed above, these relations do not seem to have characteristics such as 'strong commitment and solidarity', which were identified as necessary for the formation of strong, emotionally close friendships ties (Allan, 2008). Instead, they are based on certain forms of shared experiences such as life stage, common ground of nationality, or interest in sports, but they lack emotional intimacy. The majority of the participants describe these relations as 'people they know', 'associates' and 'acquaintances' – people with whom they can socialise and share some experiences – and they reveal that they do not consider anyone in Lancaster to be their 'friend' in the sense of forming an intimate relation involving shared experience and trust and the ability to discuss personal matters. But who are these acquaintances?

In chapter one I discuss the literature on expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S., and argue that these studies show that the majority of their informants formed friendly relations with other transnational migrants but lacked connections to people of the nationality of the place of relocation. This is a situation that, drawing on Fechter (2007a; 2007b), I call life in a 'transnational bubble'. Expanding on this term, I show that whilst the formation of friendly relations with other transnationals is a choice that expatriates make, spouses of international students in the U.S. claim that they would have liked more contact to U.S. American

citizens. They felt that they were, like Kennedy's UK-based informants, slightly 'cut-off'. The formation of relations within the transnational bubble was not therefore seen as a choice but a result of their struggle to meet and befriend local inhabitants.

Likewise, most of the partners of international students in Lancaster[7] also feel that they are unable to befriend British inhabitants of Lancaster.[8] Trying to explain this lack of connections by comparing it with his previous experience of living in Lancaster as an international student himself, Ali assumes that his disconnection from any institution limits his ability to meet British nationals. He argues that although he was previously able to meet other people in courses, he does not see this window of opportunity as being available for him as an accompanying partner:

> OK, I can say, most of [my friends] are Malaysian, because I do not have a chance, like the last time when I was studying [here] I met others, I met other people, other students, but this time I am a house-husband so I have no choice to, let's say, communicate with other foreign and English people [...] actually I would like to have more diverse friends to get to know their cultures, but during this time it is quite difficult for me, erm, let's say, if you are in class, your class mates are from other countries and you can communicate.

Ali thus reveals how his limitations in meeting British, and other international, people are caused by lack of opportunity. This could be for individual reasons, or it might be structural. Daniel, for example, thinks that he finds it difficult to meet new people because he lives in on-campus accommodation and does not see many commonalities

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[7] Brendan's accounts highly differ from the other informants' accounts. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

[8] As I state above, my participants do not clearly state whether they make any racial distinctions when using the words 'English' and 'British'.

between him and British undergraduate students. Concerning his lack of British friends, he further gives his opinion on why he thinks British residents in Lancaster do not want to form new relations to temporary migrants such as himself:

> [when you are new] in the Lancaster area, people normally ask: 'So, what are you doing?' – 'Oh, I'm a student', [and then they sarcastically reply] 'Oh, yeah' – but it's more like: 'Oh, I don't wanna invest time in a friendship, because I'm gonna be here, living in this city for the rest of my life and you gonna move on in three years, so why should I invest in a friendship that is going to go away?', so and that's like, I can understand that as a sense of, and I think that might be why even for let's say a PhD or a Masters partner that come along or someone who is coming here for like a year, or six months – it's still a sizeable time – but, erm, people don't want to invest in the friendship because how close can you get in six months? And then, by the time things start to click, you go away again.

Daniel speculates that the unwillingness to start acquaintances or even friendships with foreign students and their partners on the part of British nationals arises from the fact that the end of the relations is constantly envisioned. Daniel draws conclusions that are similar to Kennedy's (2010), which describe the findings of his UK-based study. Kennedy argues that the formation of friendships with British nationals only took place if and when the migrants in his study made a decision to remain in the UK for longer than just a few years. What we do not know, however, is if this is really the case, or if Daniel is projecting his own reluctance to connect with British inhabitants because of his fear of having to leave the friendship in the future. Here, the place of

relocation might also be important. As I describe in chapter three, Lancaster is a largely homogeneous space with a high proportion of 'white-British' population compared to the rest of England and Wales. Maybe temporary migrants residing in more ethnically heterogeneous spaces might have different experiences, for example by establishing connections with ethically minoritised British people. Such questions are beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say that for these partners of international students, friendships with British residents in Lancaster are not forthcoming, for a number of reasons.

As the majority of the partners of international students in this study find it hard to form friendly relations with British nationals, their new associates are other foreign nationalities, either co-nationals or different, non-British nationals. The participants state that they meet international students who are studying at their partners' departments or other partners of international students through the participation in groups such as the International Women's Group or societies formed on common nationalities (such as Ali's group of Malaysians). These acquaintances tend to be temporary transnational migrants themselves, residing in Lancaster for a certain amount of time only, and the common experience of being foreign in Lancaster is why they connect.

Paul Kennedy argues that this formation of transnational networks of friends would propel 'actors in a more cosmopolitan direction because they are exposed to other foreigners [...] through the close friendships [...] they establish' (Kennedy, 2010: 480). Although the participants in my study would not categorise their new relations as 'close friendships', as their time in Lancaster is restricted, some acknowledge that their status as migrants enables them to meet other migrants. Anna, for example, suggests that an encounter between her and her new acquaintance, Aisha from Egypt,

would not have occurred in their ordinary places of residence. In Lancaster, however, they have in common that they are both partners of international students, unemployed, and full-time child minders. Through these commonalities, the two women have formed a bond which allows them to discuss different cultural understandings of patriarchal oppression, which for Anna is a 'very interesting' opportunity to hear a non-western comment on Muslim women's lives:

> [Aisha and I] think it is somehow funny, because we both say that in Cairo she would not have come so close to a Christian woman from central Europe, and I probably would not have such a contact to an Arabic and Muslim woman [in Italy], but here we get on with each other [...], also because she is at home with her child as well and does not work [...], and also we talk quite openly, like I say to her, 'I find it bad that Muslim women get oppressed all the time' and she replies, 'Well, also as a Muslim I do not have to have six children. I also take the pill', so that is very interesting, these conversations.

These encounters then originate in a shared life stage (female, unemployed, primary child minder, non-British). The two women like each other and their acquaintance allows them to discuss perceived cultural differences they would otherwise not be able to discuss. For Anna, this is interesting because it changes her perception of the 'oppression' of Muslim women. Discussing her perceptions with a Muslim woman, she slowly moves away from her own prejudices. Furthermore, Anna's example shows that just because she lives in the UK and meets a Muslim women, she is not propelled into a 'post-national', cosmopolitan direction, as suggested by Kennedy (2010), but this encounter simply enables her to reflect on her own prejudices.

Apart from meeting other internationals, the participants also talk about encountering individuals who are of the same nationality as them through accidental contacts on the university grounds, in school playgrounds, or in the city centre. Carlos, for example, explains how he met another Portuguese couple just by hearing them speaking in their native language whilst shopping for groceries. Because the Lancaster city centre is relatively small, he felt comfortable approaching this couple:

> there is a Portuguese couple that we met, erm, in February or something like that, [...] well, being Portuguese I think that also helps, it helps because we met on the outdoor market, and then we talked a bit, and then we exchanged contacts and then we started to meet more regularly.

Carlos highlights that meeting other temporary migrants of the same nationality randomly on the street is possible due to the small size of Lancaster. By feeling comfortable to just approach these strangers, Carlos met new acquaintances and their encounter developed in new relationships.

In summary, the partners of international students in Lancaster form relationships with other people outside their immediate family, but these connections are mainly at the level of acquaintance in which certain experiences are shared but close intimate friendships are not formed. Their associates are most likely other temporary transnational migrants, either international students or their partners. The lack of contact to British nationals is described as arising from a lack of opportunity caused by lifestyle and life stage differences or a perceived un-willingness of British residents to form relationships with temporary international inhabitants.

Comparing these findings with studies on expatriates (Fechter, 2007a; 2007b)

and on spouses of international students in the U.S. (de Verthelyi, 1995; 1996) as examined in chapter one, I believe the participants here also hold an 'outsider' position in the community of Lancaster and socialise inside a 'transnational bubble' made of other international migrants. Like de Verthelyi's (1995) informants, my informants feel slightly 'cut-off' from connections to British people. They do not choose to live in the bubble as the expatriates in other studies (Fechter 2007a; 2007b; Nowicka, 2005; 2006; 2008; Walsh, 2006; 2008; 2009) do. Instead, their lives in the bubble arise from a lack of relationships with British inhabitants.[9] This bubble is characterised by other temporary migrants, who are not intimate close friends, but function as associates. Thereby the end of their relations is envisioned, caused either by their associate's departure or the end of their own stay.

In order to maintain intimate relations beyond their immediate family, the participants rely on 'keeping in touch' with emotionally close, geographically distant kin networks, as I show in the next section.

## 'Keeping in Touch': Relations within Transnational Kin Networks

In chapter one, I introduce theories on support networks and transnational families. Above, I state that Graham Allan (2008) claims that within postmodern approaches, relations to kin are seen to be negotiation processes depending on the individual's choice and life-stage. It is interesting to explore how migrants negotiate their attachments to geographically distant family members.

Maruška Svašek (2008) argues that transnational migrants invest a huge amount of time and energy in maintaining ties to geographically distant relatives in order to re-establish intimacy. Zlatko Skrbiš (2008) states that these practices can be

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[9] I return to the discussion on life inside the 'transnational bubble' in the concluding chapter.

seen as a form of 'emotional labour', as the maintenance of long-distance kin relationships implies the need to emotionally reconnect with family members and to deal with emotions such as longing and missing those from whom one is absent. The latter is especially true when one's relatives are one's children (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff, 2004; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lam, 2001; Skrbiš, 2007) or aging parents (Baldassar, 2001; 2007; 2008; Boyd, 1989). Loretta Baldassar (2008: 247) argues that the emotions involved in missing kin and longing to be together can manifest themselves in four different ways of imagining transnational family life into being: 'discursively (through words), physically (through the body) as well as through actions (practice) and imagination (ideas)'. She further claims that in order to facilitate the re-establishment of intimacy and to manage 'the heartache of longing for and missing' (2008: 252), migrants try to create (co-) presence in four main ways: 'virtually [through the usage of diverse modes of communication, such as via phone, text messaging, email or Skype], by proxy [through the sending and receiving of letters and parcels], physically [through corporeal travel and co-presence] and through imagination [through inclusion of distant kin into regular prayers]' (2008: 252). In this section I focus on virtual and physical co-presence because these two forms of co-presence are the two forms that are most prevalent in the lives of my participants.

Concerning physical, or corporeal, and virtual travel, several authors (Boden and Molotch, 1994; Gardener and Grillo, 2002; Greschke, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2008; Fortunati, 2005; Licoppe, 2004; Nowicka, 2005; 2008; Johnson, 2001; Olwig, 2002; 2007; Panakagos and Horst, 2006; Pellegrino, 2011; Walsh 2008; 2009; Urry, 2002) debate whether virtual co-presence can substitute for the lack of physical co-presence or whether it can be merely seen as complementing it. Deirdre Boden and Harvey

Molotch (1994) argue that forms of virtual travel will never fully replace the need for physical proximity. Leopoldina Fortunati (2005) claims that 'body-to-body' communication holds a stronger element of trust and intimacy than virtual forms of communication. Magdalena Nowicka (2005; 2008) questions whether it is possible to establish intimacy on the phone. Katie Walsh (2009: 437) suggests that 'virtual communication can only be understood as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, corporeal travel'. Karen Fog Olwig (2002) claims that corporeal travel is required for participation at certain family rituals, such as births, weddings, funerals and religious celebrations. Katy Gardener and Ralph Grillo (2002) argue that the participation at these family celebrations can be seen as a statement of membership and a claim for belonging, even when one is physically absent for the majority of the time. Loretta Baldassar (2008) and Zlatko Skrbiš (2008) further draw attention to the importance of 'crisis visits', which are characterised by 'the specific need to *care for* distant kin, often through the provision of "hands on" personal care or respite care, and usually in response to a sudden emergency (death, serious illness)' (Baldassar, 2008: 261). In response, both Amy Janan Johnson (2001; 2009) and Heike Monika Greschke (2008) comment on the concept that for close bonds of kin (and geographically distant friendship) networks, spatial proximity is less important than trust, which implies an understanding that intimacy is still a given, even when relations are geographically distant. They claim that forms of virtual communication can be considered as substitutes for physical travel, especially when the migration is seen as temporary and the migrant will return to geographically distant family members and friends. In what follows, I focus on my informants' accounts of corporeal and virtual travel.

In regard to corporeal travel, the majority of the participants state that they have to restrict their physical mobility due to financial considerations. Renata Frank de Verthelyi (1995: 400) argues that the spouses of international students in her study have to 'tighten the budget'; this is likewise true for the partners of international students in Lancaster. As I show in the introductory chapter, most of my participants rely financially on their partners' scholarships and their own savings. Unable to find employment in the local labour market, they complain about a lack of financial resources, which affects their ability to travel. Concerning the question of whether she would go to Argentina for Christmas, Laura, for example, says:

we don't have the money. We would love to and [our families] want us to, but, even they were thinking of paying us the tickets, collect money to pay us the ticket, but it is too expensive.

The ability to travel is determined by the costs of airline tickets, which, especially for non-EU participants, are quite high. Although cheaper airline travel is available within the EU, European participants also offer accounts of a financial restriction on frequent visits. As Heike explains:

we would like to go to Germany more regularly, also so that my parents can see my kids, but when we want to travel together, all four of us, that is quite expensive. There are cheap planes, but to get to the airport [Manchester or Liverpool] and then from Berlin to where my parents are and everything, it adds up. And we don't have a car, so going with the ferry is not really possible

and with the kids I cannot take the cheap buses, so, yeah, it's quite expensive so we cannot go as often as we would like to.

These two accounts reveal that although the participants would like to be able to be physically co-present on a regular basis, the costs of travel are too high. They would need additional income. The majority of the participants state that they restrict their corporeal travel to their places of departure to once every one or two years. This adds an additional feature to the 'immobilised mobile' status of partners of international students discussed in chapter three. That is that they are immobilised and cannot visit their loved ones 'back home', because they are restricted by their finances.

In order to counterbalance their lack of physical proximity, most of my participants spend up to two hours every day connecting to geographically distant kin and friends via virtual communication. They occasionally rely on e-mail or international telephone calls, but mostly they connect through Skype.[10] First developed in 2003, Skype is 'a peer-to-peer VoIP [Voice-over Internet Protocol] client developed by KaZaa that allows its users to place voice calls and send text messages to other users of Skype' (Baset and Schulrinne, 2004: 1). Chia-Chen Yen and Jih-Shih Hsu (2008) see that Skype has become the most popular Voice over Internet Protocol technology deployed both in the home and in enterprises. The benefits of Skype lie in its ease of use (Descy, 2005) and the fact that once it is set up on the computer, calls between Skype users are free of charge. As most of my participants live in on-campus

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[10] Here it is vital to remind the reader that my interviews took place in 2007/2008, when social networking sites were only slowly becoming popular. None of my participants mentioned using these forms of connectivity. Due to the growing popularity of network sites such as Facebook, MySpace, renren and the like, we can assume that they might slowly replace Skype and e-mail in the networking behaviour of migrants; or at least work alongside them. Some studies, such as Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007), focus on the importance of social networking sites for undergraduate students. Others (Meier, Oswald, Schmid and Wattenhofer, 2008) remark on the perils of social networking sites regarding security. On the whole, however, literature on the usage of Facebook and the like in the lives of transnational migrants remains to be written.

accommodations, they benefit from free Internet access, which further influences their decision to use Skype, as they can avoid any extra costs for communication. This is why, Daniel says that 'Skype is wonderful just because it's free'.

A further benefit of Skype, as opposed to e-mail and phone calls, is the user's ability to send live video through the connection via a webcam, which enhances the quality of communication. Hence, whilst e-mail communicates to visual sense, and the phone to the audio sense, Skype combines sensory input. The migrants are therefore able to not only hear the distant loved one, but also to see facial expressions, body language or objects. All this can *simulate* proximity. Referring to Boden and Molotch (1994) and Fortunati (2005), I deduce that the ability to see facial expression and body language through the medium of Skype enhances feelings of proximity. Chun from Taiwan explains:

> before I came here, I set up a computer, Internet connected and webcam for my mother and she can only use Skype. She knows how to switch on [the computer] and sit in front of it in the morning and then waiting and then I set up like, erm, the webcam for her like, so we can see each other, so if I grow some flowers in my garden I show her and she shows me hers.

Chun thus explains how through the use of the webcam, she and her mother can simulate physical proximity by showing each other flowers they have grown. Although they are geographically distant, Chun's mother is able to see the place where her daughter lives, her daughter's face, and even the flowers her daughter is growing while they are talking.

Simulated proximity is especially important for participants who arrived

accompanied by their children. As they cannot physically travel to their places of departure on a regular basis, the images generated by the webcam allow the geographically distant grandparents to see their grandchildren immediately and more intimately than the use photographs might allow. Cecilia talks about her experience of giving birth to twins in Lancaster and says that her parents have only once briefly met the children, who are now sixteen months old. She states that she thinks that her 'parents are sad because they can't see the babies' (Cecilia). In order to counterbalance this lack of physical proximity, she uses 'Skype [so that her] parents can look at their grandchildren' (Cecilia).

Virtual travel also aids in the migrants' simulation of 'attendance' at family celebrations. Olwig (2002) and Gardener and Grillo (2002) suggest that family celebrations motivate physical co-presence. Unable to afford physical travel, however, the temporary migrants try to find creative ways to be present at family events. Ali says that:

during my father's birthday, OK, we bought a cake here, and then they got all my brothers in the house [in Malaysia], in the kitchen and then my sister just brought her laptop and then you have the webcam here and then we sing together and my son is happy and then even my father takes the cake and then my son give ice-cream to him, you know, even though we are far away, but using the technology we communicate.

Being able to see his geographically distant family members, to sing together, and to simulate co-presence helps him re-establish intimacy even when far away. Ali's story

again highlights the benefits of Skype, as it allows users to both hear and see the communication partner (if not to eat the cake).

In summary, existing literature on transnational families suggests that maintaining contact 'back home' is seen as necessary for the migrants' emotional support and well-being, and their state of connectivity to geographically distant family members. The literature highly rates physical travel to maintain intimacy within kin relations, and considers virtual communication to be a complement to physical travel, but not a substitute for it. I argue that due to financial restrictions, the partners of international students must rely on virtual forms of communication in order to maintain emotionally close relationships, and they therefore become inventive with their virtual travel. This is why the majority of my informants use Skype for both visual and audio communications that simulate proximity. As they fully intend to reconnect with distant family members after they finish their course of study (between one to four years), the temporary migrants find virtual communication efficient in maintaining bonds stretched over sometimes vast geographical distances. For them, virtual travel can to a great extent compensate for the lack of corporeal travel.

## Conclusion: Network Support on Different Scales

In this chapter, I argue that the partners of international students connect to friends and kin outside their immediate intimate relationships. These connections happen at different geographical and temporal scales.[11]

In regard to geographical scales, the partners of international students in Lancaster that I studied recount spatial perceptions and the formation of networks. On the micro scale of the locality, the participants try to connect with people in Lancaster

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[11] For a detailed discussion on scales, see: Brenner 2001; Marston, 2000; Marston, Jones and Woodward, 2005; Sheppard, 2002; Smith, 1992.

in their search for meaningful relationships. First, they might rely on the friends their partners meet through their attachment to institutional settings within the university, but after seeing that these connections lack a certain amount of shared experience, they try to form connections that are unconnected to their partners. They do this through participation in sports, child care, and/or religious practices. These formations of friendly relations circle around the common experience of being a transnational migrant in the UK and usually remain within a 'transnational bubble' of non-British temporary sojourners. Whilst these relationships function as important contacts which are seen to counterbalance families and friends left behind, and also give support normally associated with familial practices, such as help in childcare, they lack long-term commitment. Financial restrictions might also restrict the extent to which they can maintain these relations on a regular basis, because socialising activities, such as going the pub or the cinema, normally costs money. The people they meet are therefore described as 'associates' or 'acquaintances' rather than friends.

On the macro scale, the participants in this study maintain relations to geographically distant family members in order to counterbalance their lack of close friendships in Lancaster. They invest a lot of time in staying connected. Whether this would also be the case if the relations they form in Lancaster were more intimate needs further exploration. It can be said, however, that their financial difficulties restrict their physical mobility and turn them into immobilised mobiles – mobile because they were able to migrate, but immobilised because they are unable to afford further spatial mobility. Instead, the participants in this study rely largely on virtual communication, especially Skype, in order to receive emotional support across geographical distance. They have become highly inventive in the use of audio and visual simulations of proximity, including participation at transnational family

celebrations. This maintenance of emotionally close, geographically distant relations can then be interpreted as a substitute for the lack of intimate friends at the place of relocation.

The relations on both geographical scales, micro and macro, are affected by a temporal scale. Some of my participants, for example Daniel and Laura, had arrived in Lancaster only a few months before the interview. As intimate friendships are characterised by an accumulation of shared experiences and intimacy, with time they might develop their own networks of friends. Others, such as Carlos and Brendan, had been residing in Lancaster for about 2.5 years at the time of the interview, but still talk about a lack of meaningful friendships. Time alone might therefore not necessarily matter for a formation of friendships. Other issues, such as personal choices, opportunities to meet like-minded people, and infrastructures, meant to facilitate these encounters, might also be important. In addition, temporariness might affect my participants' formations of intimate relations in Lancaster. Hence, some of these migrants might not want to invest into meaningful relations, because the end of their sojourn is always envisioned. Instead, they might focus more on their geographically distant friends and family members, because they know that after their stay in Lancaster has ended, they will return to these networks. In order to stay connected, my participants spend up to two hours a day on the computer or phone, talking to relatives and friends. I discuss that these practices could be seen as chosen to substitute for a lack of friends in Lancaster. Retrospectively, we might wonder, whether they also hinder formations of such intimate relations at the place of relocation.

What can these narratives offer us to understand intimate relations for temporary migrants? Katy Walsh (2009) shows that traditional approaches to relations on different geographical scales in relation to emotional closeness often focus on a

dichotomy: emotional intimacy in proximity versus emotional distance in absence. In her research on British expatriates in Dubai and their 'geographies of the heart' (Walsh, 2009: 427), she states that her participants are able to construct intimate relationships in absence (in Britain), whilst acknowledging a lack of intimate relationships in proximity (in Dubai).

Following Walsh (2009), I believe that my informants' 'geographies of the heart' are also contrary to the traditional dichotomies characterised as intimacy-as-proximity and distance-in-absence. My participants are able to maintain certain forms of intimacy and emotional support stretching over sometimes vast geographically distances, whilst acknowledging a lack of intimacy and emotional support in their relations in Lancaster. The relations they form here are described as 'acquaintances' and 'associates'. They might offer practical support and assistance, but lack in-depth connections. For the temporary migrants residing in a transient environment of a transnational bubble, intimate relations might thus be described as: the formation of non-intimate acquaintanceships in physical proximity and intimate kin relationships at distance. These findings then, not only contest the traditional dichotomy, but also offer us new possibilities for thinking about intimate relationships. Hence, including notions of 'acquaintances' and 'associates' into the debate I show that these forms of relations add to kin and friendship networks. Although they are less intimate, they are not less important, as they facilitate the basic needs of, and offer support to, these temporary migrants.

In the next chapter, I focus on my participants' subject positions and discuss that they not only experience difficulties of including themselves into certain networks, as I discuss here, but even encounter situations in which they feel excluded from their surroundings.

# Chapter seven:

## Feeling In or Out of Place

I show in the previous chapters that the experiences of the partners of international students are coloured by their understanding of the importance of the home. This understanding arises in the creation of an intimate diasporic space, exclusion from the British labour market, and the struggles participants face when reconnecting to friendship networks in Lancaster. In this chapter, I turn to some of the experiences which relate to their subject position and occur in situations in which they feel more in or out of place. To this end, I find it useful to draw on some aspects of theories of intersectionality. It is worth pointing out from the outset that although the genealogy of intersectionality is linked to feminist critiques of the limits of some theories of gender inequality, my focus here is not on gender or gender inequality *per se* but how different categories of identity come to the foreground and background at different times and places (more on this below).

In the pages that follow, I begin with an overview of theories of intersectionality in order to show where the concept originates from. Then I relate the stories of three participants, Brendan, Cecilia, and Ali, and discuss their individual experiences in Lancaster. Last, I discuss their feelings of being in or out of place.

Intersectionality is described by Leslie McCall (2005: 1771) as 'the most important theoretical contribution that Women's Studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far'. According to Kathy Davis (2008), it refers to 'the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power' (2008: 68). The term 'intersectionality' was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) in her critique of identity politics and work on

violence against women. Coming from a background in legal studies, Crenshaw (1991) argues that violence against women cannot fully be understood or explained by gender per se, but has to be analysed at the point of the intersection of gender and race. In patriarchal regimes, she claims, women of colour are marginalised or made invisible because of their gender; whilst in racist regimes women of colour are marginalised or made invisible because of their race. Although she mainly focuses on the intersection of gender and race in her analysis and ignores aspects of class (Crenshaw, 1991), she contributes greatly to the acknowledgement that identity formation and the status of subordination within concepts of power cannot be seen as dependent on only one aspect of identity formation (such as gender *or* race), but has to be seen as an intersection of these aspects. Rather than viewing the connection between gender and race in a cumulative way, Crenshaw uses the metaphor of the crossroad, which Krishna Ahooja-Patel further developed:

> intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group ... tries to navigate the main crossing in the city.... The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then [comes] Patriarchy Street.... She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression (Ahooja-Patel in WILPF – Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, UK; in Yuval-Davis, 2007: 14).

The concept of an intersection of gender, race (and class) is, however, not new, but dates back to black feminist critiques of the 1970s and 1980s in both the U.S. and the UK (Brownmiller 1975; Crompton and Mann 1986; Davis 1981; Hartmann 1976;

hooks 1981). Avtar Brah and Anne Phoenix (2004) argue that during those decades, the idea of a 'global sisterhood' of all women was critiqued on the basis of its failure to take differences between women into consideration (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Davis, 1981). In her article 'White woman listen!' Hazel V. Carby (1997: 61) argues:

> the black women's critique of history has not only involved us in coming to terms with 'absences'; we have also been outraged by the ways in which it has made us visible, when it has chosen to see us.

The creation of the subaltern subject, in this case the 'black woman', by white feminists was criticised, and these critics created a different approach to feminism. In addition, they tried to invoke some measure of critical race/gender reflexivity in mainstream academic thinking. Their purpose was, however, not to establish a 'black feminism' per se (Mirza, 1997). In the introduction of the collection *Black British Feminism*, Heidi Safia Mirza (1997) argues that as black British women, the authors perceive society from what Homi Bhabha (1994) calls the 'third space' (Mirza, 1997). By seeing 'from the sidelines' (Mirza, 1997), non-white feminists might therefore reveal other ways of knowing which challenge the normative discourse of white feminism and take gender as well as race into consideration. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991a: 3) states that 'histories of colonialism, capitalism, race, and gender [are] inextricably interrelated' and that it is the 'intersections of the various systemic networks of class, race, (hetero)sexuality, and nation, then, that position us as "women"' (Mohanty, 1991a: 13). Black feminism is not the creation of a singular entity called 'black feminism' that stands in opposition to 'white feminism'; it is 'an

internal critique of hegemonic "western" feminisms, and the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically, and culturally grounded feminist concerns and strategies' (Mohanty, 1991b: 51). These aspects of critique of white feminist thinking are not only a historical phenomenon, but are still prevalent in current political feminist writings, such as in the works of Gloria Wekker (2004; on gender and race) and Anjali Arondekar (2005; on race and sexuality).

How, then, does intersectionality as a theoretical concept contribute to a discourse that was prevalent twenty years before the first usage of the term? It has been argued that intersectionality is a 'handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it' (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006: 187). Kathy Davis (2008: 67) suggests that broadly speaking the success of intersectionality as a theoretical framework is not simply due to its character as a 'buzzword' that names a twenty-year-old struggle only, but that its success relies on the fact that it 'addresses the most central theoretical and normative concern within feminist scholarship: namely, the acknowledgement of differences among women' (Davis 2008: 70). In so doing, intersectionality has been taken up by two different strands of feminist traditions: black feminist theory and feminist theory inspired by postmodern thinking. For the former strand, intersectionality is useful for the 'political project of theorizing the relationships between gender, class, and race' (Davis, 2008: 71). In the latter strand's 'search of alternatives to static conceptualisations of identity', intersectionality constitutes a helpmate in 'their project of deconstructing the binary oppositions and universalism inherent in the modernist paradigms of the western philosophy and science' (2008: 71).

Although intersectionality has become something of a feminist orthodoxy, there is disagreement over how to use it which is described in unsolved dilemmas. Four dilemmas are of specific interests. First, what characteristics or inequalities are important in the construction of identities (Verloo, 2006; Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2011; Yuval-Davis 2006)? Nira Yuval-Davis (2006: 199) states:

> categorical attributes are often used for the construction of inclusionary/exclusionary boundaries that differentiate between self and other, determining what is 'normal' and what is not, who is entitled to certain resources and who is not. In this way the interlinking grids of differential positioning in terms of class, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, ability, stage in the life cycle and other social divisions, tend to create, in specific historical situations, hierarchies of differential access to a variety of resources – economic, political and cultural.

Yuval-Davis (2006) moves beyond the understanding of gender and race (and class) as the only signifiers of difference and includes other characteristics, which she calls 'categorical attributes', such as ability, stage in the life cycle or the like, that are as important as the three mentioned above. To return to Ahooja-Patel's metaphor of the crossroads, we can see that the crossroad is multiple and can include many layers of oppression.

Second, to what extent is the use of categories helpful? Categorical attributions never adequately represent the lived world, a dilemma Leslie McCall (2005: 1773) refers to as the 'anticategorical complexity'. McCall (2005) argues that 'despite the emergence of intersectionality as a major paradigm of research in women's studies

and elsewhere, there is little discussion of how to study intersectionality, that is, of its methodology' (McCall 2005: 1771). It is not clear if we should use categories, such as gender, race, class or if we should reject categories altogether. Nor is it clear whether methods of social research, such as interviewing, are 'too simplistic to capture the complexity of lived experiences' (Nash, 2008: 5), or whether this capturing is possible in the first place, and whether it is always necessary. Jennifer Nash (2008) argues that the concept of intersectionality holds a major weakness as a methodology because a clear understanding of how to research these complex phenomena is missing. Categories are, however, useful tools for social research, as the complete deconstruction of categories makes social research rather difficult (Felski, 1997), not to say impossible (Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2011).

Third, there seems to be a major focus on the subject of the black woman as a prototype of intersectional research. According to Nash (2008), this focus lays itself open to two problems. Firstly, by focussing on black women's experiences as a prototype for intersectionality in the way that they are used 'to underscore problems within feminist and anti-racist theory, black women are treated as a unitary and monolithic entity' (Nash, 2008: 8), and secondly, by defining intersectionality as an analytic tool to understand black women's experiences only, 'intersectionality recycles black feminism without demonstrating what new tools it brings to black feminism to help it fashion a more complex theory of identity' (2008: 9). Nash asks the question, 'who is intersectional?' as there seems to be a confusion of whether the theory is a 'theory of marginalized subjectivity or a general theory of identity' (2008: 10). Does intersectionality only cover forms of subordination, or is it an understanding that (everyone's) identity is based on different attributes that make up a person, such as class, gender, race, sexuality, age, and so on?

This leads us to the fourth dilemma, the applicability of intersectionality for empirical research. How does one research something when there is no clear statement of what the theory is about? Nash (2008: 11) argues that 'intersectionality has yet to contend with whether its theory explains or describes the processes and mechanisms by which subjects mobilize (or choose not to mobilize) particular aspects of their identities in particular circumstances'. In short, Nash brings into light a specific confusion in order to open up a discussion of how researchers would be able to use the concept without recycling aspects of black feminism only. How do we account for it? But also, in turn, what can empirical research tell us about how we can further theorise (or dismiss) intersectionality?

In this chapter, I intend to use the concept of intersectionality with an understanding that it is a theory that covers different forms of identity formations within particular situations of exclusion which are, to a certain extent, due to categorical attributes such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, and so on. I therefore see these categories as analytical tools I can use in order to highlight different subject positions. More specifically, I discuss why some participants feel more 'out of place' (Puwar, 2004) than others and to what extent these feelings of exclusion might be related to intersecting categorical attributes. I argue that intersectionality becomes especially important in relation to space, forms of sociality, and social groups. These are further seen as intersecting between themselves, as spaces are not neutral, but have, to some extent, diverse expectations on behaviour and rules of communication attached to them. In order to understand how these differentiations impact on the 'intersectionality' of subject positions, I find it helpful to take Gail Lewis's (2000) understanding of 'foreground' and 'background' into consideration. Lewis (2000: 158) argues that for black women, different categorical

attributes are more important than others at certain situations in time. She states that black women perceive differences in subordination in connection with white women and black men: whereas race is more prevalent in the first, gender prevails in the latter, although in both situations, both attributes are intersecting.

With this in mind, I now turn to the experiences of three partners of international students: Brendan, Cecilia, and Ali.

## 'What's class got to do with it?' - Brendan

In the previous chapters I focus on the experiences of highly-skilled partners of international students concerning their ability to find suitable employment, their emotional work on creating an intimate diasporic space in the home, and their attempts to form new relations in Lancaster. In these discussions, I take it for granted that the partners of international students hold as much cultural and social capital as the international students themselves, following Barbara Strudler Wallerston's (1978) theory that 'since professional women are very likely to marry males who are also professional [...], dual-career couples are likely to become more prevalent in western industrial societies' (Wallerston, Foster and Berger, 1978: 10). This is not, however, always the case.

Brendan arrived in Lancaster from Dublin, Ireland approximately 2.5 years before our interview took place. At our meeting he was thirty years old and cohabiting with his partner. The couple lives in Skerton, an area close to the Lancaster City Centre that is predominantly inhabited by working class residents. Brendan and his partner share one room in a small house which is also inhabited by their landlady. He finished college and holds an A-Level certificate, but had mainly been working as a bartender, and part-time worker in different kinds of factories and constructions sites.

These occupations were mainly paid hourly and employment was precarious. Concerning his experiences in trying to find employment in Lancaster, Brendan says that:

> it is hard to get work in this town, full-time work [... but I found some] bar work [and] I did some agency work in factories. But it's a week here and a week there.

In chapter four I discuss the struggles of the highly-skilled partners of international students to find suitable employment. I also discover that some partners are restricted from deskilling as they would not be able to pay for childcare. Brendan does not have any children, which, theoretically, would mean that he is more flexible in time. His jobs are, however, irregular, and he often finds himself unemployed. This affects his perception of home, as he states that home for him is:

> the TV. [...] I can easily watch the TV for ten hours if I am not working, I can watch it, I watched the TV until half eight this morning.

For Brendan, life in Lancaster revolves around either working part-time or spending days in front of the TV. The practice of watching TV is also connected to his partner's busy schedule as a PhD student, which means that Brendan often spends his time on his own, which affects his overall experience of his residing in Lancaster:

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I feel like an outsider, if you know what I mean: I am not part of the University, so I am not a student, I am not a local, so I am kind of in the middle of nowhere.

There are two spaces where Brendan feels like 'an outsider' and 'out of place' – the university and Lancaster's local space. If we consider Gail Lewis's (2000) concept of the foreground and background, it becomes evident that Brendan's feelings of exclusion are connected to his subject positions, as discussed next.

In chapter six, I reveal how the majority of the participants try to meet new relations through the student's newly formed networks of peers and colleagues. Brendan, however, states that although he had been living in Lancaster for nearly three years at the time of the interview, he only twice visited the university grounds. In response to my question about whether he had met any of his partner's friends and would consider them as his new social network, he says:

no, not really, no. I don't drink in the university bars, you know like the Gregson. I don't go to the Gregson or the Britannia,[1] I am going to somewhat what you call the rougher bars, you know; you see a different side of Lancaster, a stranger side.

It can thus be said that Brendan does not often socialise with his partner's new circle of friends. He does not choose to participate in their outings because he feels out of place in their favourite bars. This relation to space, then, has to be analysed in

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[1]  The Gregson Centre is the local arts and community centre situated in the city centre of Lancaster where I worked. It is primarily patronised by postgraduate students and middle class customers. Whereas Brendan's partner socialised in the Gregson very regularly, he had been there only a few times. At the time of the interview, the Gregson and the Britannia were partly owned by the same person and the social make-up of the customers was very similar.

connection to class. Used to the 'rougher bars', he perceives the 'university bars' as alienating. This perception of the places relates to his partner's circle of friends, whom he perceives to be people who go to arts and community centres rather than sports bars; people who socialise in 'fancy bar restaurants – wine bars' (Brendan) rather than night clubs; people he thinks his partner has access to due to her involvement in higher education. They are, however, people he feels excluded from due to his subjectively perceived lower class background. We can speculate therefore that he feels like an outsider in his partner's network of friends because of his feeling of being out of place in the spaces they socialise in. This brings his class consciousness to the fore.

Instead of socialising with his partner and her network of (international) peers, when his ethnicity is in the background, Brendan socialises in the 'rougher bars' where he sees a 'stranger side' of Lancaster. Whilst he feels excluded from his partner's networks due to his class position, he experiences exclusion due to his Irish origins in the sports bars he visits:

well, sometimes there can be an anti-Irish sentiment from some of the English because of those, well, we had a war going on until recently, sometimes, that had been brought up, you know like, I might say, I might say something like, you might run into a British soldier or ex-soldier and they might say 'You're not one of those bombers?' and I'd say 'You're not one of those shooters of civilians?' you know, and, it's not, you know, it doesn't go down very well.

We briefly returned to this subject at a later stage of the interview:

*Brendan:* See, a lot of people wouldn't count Belfast as Ireland, well, I would, but, you see, you are not going to Ireland when you are going to Belfast, you are going to Northern Ireland.

*Me:* Does this ever come up in discussions when you are over here?

*Brendan:* Well, I try not to talk about it, you don't talk about it, you don't talk about religion or politics, especially not when you are drinking, because this is how fights start, so for people who are trying to ask, it's like 'Ah, you don't want to talk about it', you know that kind of way.

In this exchange, Brendan says that in what he calls the 'rougher bars', where his class position is in the background, he sometimes experiences an 'anti-Irishness', brought to the fore because of his Irish accent. Although his nationality is Irish, he is confronted with comments concerning the Northern Ireland conflict by customers who are (or had been) serving in the British army. He tries to avoid confrontation, but realises that although his class position is similar to the other customers, his different nationality is more obvious, and it is in these sports bars that he is constantly reminded that he is foreign.

We can therefore state that for Brendan the intersection of class and ethnicity causes exclusion depending on the spaces where he socialises. In the middle class bars where he can socialise with other foreign students and their families, he feels like he does not belong because of his own class. In the working class bars in Lancaster, he feels like he does not belong as an Irish man and is confronted with what he calls a certain 'anti-Irish sentiment'. Following Lewis (2000), his class background is to the fore when he is socialising with his partner and her (international) friends, and his Irishness is to the fore when he is socialising with his associates, who are of a similar

class background, in what he calls the 'rougher bars'. In order to avoid conflict in either kind of bars, he spends the majority of his time at home watching TV. This affects his overall perception of Lancaster, as he states:

> Lancaster is not home. I can't see it ever being home if you know what I mean [...] it's OK, but I wouldn't like to live here for the rest of my life, you know, I wouldn't like to buy a house here, have kids, settle down, I wouldn't like that [...] the weather is not nice, I don't know but, it rains as much in Ireland, you know, but it just feels wetter or something here, I don't know. And it's a very small place sometimes, too, Lancaster is, that's nice sometimes, but mostly I prefer bigger.

Interestingly, although the weather in Lancaster is similar to Ireland's, Brendan feels that it is 'wetter or something'. This is not an objective perception of the weather, but echoes his dislike of Lancaster. So he says his life in Lancaster is 'OK' for a while, but it is not 'home'.

A few months after the interview, I ran into Brendan in the city centre and he told me that he and his partner had split up.[2] Whilst his partner had started a new relationship with a fellow PhD student and was planning to stay in Lancaster even after finishing her thesis, he had decided to return to Ireland as soon as possible. Katie Walsh (2008) acknowledges that break-ups and divorces are quite common in couples migrating to Dubai, especially when one party struggles to find a space of his or her own. She calls these accompanying partners 'abandoned wives', as after the split up, these family expatriates often find themselves returning to their countries of departure

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[2] In chapter three, I discuss ethical concerns with using this material, but I am here able to refer to Brendan's accounts, because he consented to my using of this additional information.

without social and financial support. Because of the disparities in changes during the stage of temporary migration – the corporate expatriate is working longer hours whilst the family expatriate is not able to work and spends idle hours at home – couples end their relationships and the migrants who migrate as partners often becomes a repatriate. Brendan is a kind of 'abandoned partner'. Unable to find regular employment, he spends a lot of time at home watching TV. Whilst his partner is included in a circle of international PhD students and works mostly on campus, he feels excluded from her networks because of his class position and from local networks because of ethnicity. These disparities led them to split up, and Brendan was trying to leave Lancaster as soon as possible and return to Dublin.

Whilst Brendan feels out of place on campus or surrounded by students and their partners, the campus seemed to be the space where Cecilia feels most welcomed.

## 'Just a visitor' - Cecilia

In chapter five, I examine Cecilia's comment that her flat is 'not England, it's just like Mexico', something that I call 'intimate diasporic space'. Here I want to focus on Cecilia's experiences of living in Lancaster – outside the physical borders of her dwelling – and her diverse perceptions of belonging.

At the time of our interview, Cecilia had been living in Lancaster for about 2.5 years. She had followed her husband, who started a PhD course in Lancaster, from Mexico City. Before migrating to Britain, the couple had already been living in Germany for the duration of her husband's Masters Degree. Hence, they were already accustomed to living abroad, and she explains that, 'coming here was OK, because it was like the second time, so it was, like, easier'. The difficulty of migrating to Lancaster was, however, that only two weeks before their departure Cecilia found out

that she was pregnant with twins which, knowing that the duration of a PhD Degree is between three and four years, worried her at first. After giving birth, however, she saw the difference between being alone in Germany and in Lancaster with her children:

> it's easy here, because here I am always with them [the children] but [in Germany] it was more difficult because when he [her husband] used to go to the university I was at home all day, so it was like a lonely routine.

In chapter five I note that Cecilia considers home to be where her family is ('home for me is not furniture, it's the people [...] so home is just where my family is'). Compared to her construction of home in Germany, in the UK she realises that having children and living a family life stops her from living in a 'lonely routine'. Furthermore, like other participants in my study, she tries to establish new relations in Lancaster, through attendance at international societies on campus and toddler groups in the city centre. Concerning the first aspect, she states:

> we joined the Latin American society [...] and met some Mexican people [...] so, yeah, we have like four, five friends, but they are not very close friends [...] well, we see them about once a month or something like that and we talk about Mexican problems.

By joining the Latin American Society, Cecilia and her family brought their ethnicity to the fore and were able to partake in this society, which is aimed at South American students and families. There she met some Mexican people who became 'friends',

which also suggests that within the group of Latin Americans, her Mexican nationality comes to the fore.

Apart from participating in this society, Cecilia also joined the weekly International Women's Group. In this group, her foreign origin as well as her gender come to the fore, as the group is aimed at non-British female partners only. Being female and of non-British origin thus enables her to meet new people:

> well, I know some people from the International Women's Group and [when she went there last year] we were, like, ten or more people from different countries, so that's what I liked: to know about different cultures and countries. I love to know about other countries, so, yeah, that's what I liked.

Here, Cecilia states that she enjoys the time at the International Women's Group, as it allows her to start conversations with other, female, partners of international students (and staff) and 'know about different cultures and countries'. Both groups, the Latin American Society and the International Women's Group, focus on providing a space for temporary migrants to meet and Cecilia's own subject position as female, Mexican, temporary migrant allows her access to these groups.

Like other participants, Cecilia also tries to meet British people and participates in two toddler groups in the city centre. In both groups, her gender and her status as a mother come to the fore. Nevertheless, her experiences in these groups in relation to her experiences to the campus-based groups differ:

> I have noticed that in some groups they are not very, well, I am not welcomed, I mean, I think that they think that I cannot speak English, I think, and they

just don't say anything to me, some other people are very nice and friendly; I am going to one group on Monday and in this group because it is a very small group [and] it's just about singing and dancing, they are nice with me. I mean they are not my friends, but they are nice people. Well, I go to another group on Thursday and they are just, no, no, they don't want to talk to me. They don't even say 'Hello'.

Cecilia feels excluded from one of the toddler groups she joined in Lancaster. She thinks that this might be due to their perception that she might not speak English (maybe because she communicates with her children exclusively in Spanish). Another issue may be that she experiences diverse local social structures by joining different toddler groups. The Monday group is organised in the Friends' meeting house by a local Quaker community, whilst the Thursday group is run by the City Council in Ryelands.[3] Although it is not possible here to discuss the reasons for her feelings of exclusion, it has to be noted that she feels differences of being accepted due to her foreignness. Concerning her overall experiences in Lancaster, Cecilia states:

I have noticed that here, people are nicer, sorry,[4] than German people, the thing is, maybe it is because of the place, because here it is like a university city and [in Germany] we were in a small town [in the Black Forest] [...] but [...] the impression I have [is that] sometimes the people know that you are a foreign person and the first question after your name is 'When are you going

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[3] Ryelands is an area outside the city centre of Lancaster. It has traditionally been populated by English working class families and is far away from the universities. As I was not able to visit these toddler groups and Cecilia does not talk about them any further, I can only speculate here that maybe the group in Ryelands is less accustomed to foreign mothers than the group in the city centre or the international group on campus. Hence, it could open new perspectives for research concerning places within the city of Lancaster.

[4] This 'sorry' directed to me, as I am German.

back?' or something like this. 'OK, yeah, yeah, yeah, in what year?' Or: 'yeah, I am going back to Mexico, don't worry' [...] I mean, I don't think [they mean it] in a rude way. It was just like a normal question for them, I mean, and I understand, of course I understand, because you understand that you are not part of the culture, well, you are part, I mean, this is not your place, and that's the impression I always have.

This quote shows that she perceives British people to be nicer than German people, which she tries to explain by noting that in Germany she and her husband lived in a small town in the Black Forest, whereas now they reside in a university town which is more transitional. She draws attention to the place and its population and the effect place has on her feeling of being included or excluded. She also states that neither is her place, which suggests that she excludes herself from her surroundings.

In summary, we can assume that Cecilia experiences different situations due to intersections of gender, ethnicity and (to certain amount) class. She has access to the Latin American Society due to her Mexican origins. She has access to the International Women's Group due to her gender and non-British origins. She has access to the toddler groups due to her gender and life stage as mother. She does, however, feel different degrees of acceptance within these groups due to her ethnicity. Hence, whilst gender and her life stage as mother are in the background, in these groups she feels that ethnicity comes to the fore. Class might also be at play, especially when comparing the Quaker-run toddler group with the Council-run toddler group and their diverse social structures. These differences in perceived acceptance are also localised as Cecilia feels more welcomed on campus than in Lancaster's city centre; and more welcomed in Lancaster than in the small town in Germany where she

lived before. She also stresses that she feels like she belongs neither in British nor German culture, which she further highlights with this concluding metaphor of a child visiting a friend:

> one thing I want to add is that I always think that I am, like when you are a child and you go and you spend a night with your friends and you are in your friend's house, so you think 'Oh that is great!' and 'Oh, my friends has things that I don't have' and 'her mom is great because she cooks things I don't eat [normally]', but you know in your mind that this is not your home, that is not your house, that those things are not yours, so that's, erm, that's always the impression I have. I enjoy being here and I enjoy the things we don't have in Mexico, but I know that these things and this country is not mine and that I want to go back and enjoy my own things.

She identifies herself as a visitor and knows that she will depart and go back to her 'own place', which is Mexico. Although she enjoys being here in the UK and exploring different things, she knows that at some point she wants to be surrounded by things that are more familiar to her and to go back to a place where she hopes to be less out of place.

So far, we can thus see that diverse 'identity marker' work simultaneously, but they are not fixed. Instead, they operate on different levels at different times in a dynamic relationship, but never unconnected from each other. Hence, to return to Cecilia, her ethnicity might cause feelings of exclusion in some toddler groups and in that sense come to the fore, but her gender and life stage operate in the background, allowing her access to these groups in the first place. At the same time, she is not fully

out of place in these situations, which highlights a dynamic relationship between being in *and* out of place. I return to this in the concluding section, but first introduce Ali who gives an account of his feelings of fear of Islamophobia.

**'Fear of Islamophobia' - Ali**

Ali arrived in Lancaster from Malaysia with his wife and two young children and stays for the duration of his wife's Masters Degree (one year). He had been an international student in Lancaster between 1997 and 2000. He met his wife here, and they returned to Malaysia together, where they were both successful in their careers in banking. They bought a house and lived with their children close to his parents. Thus, he had already established a rather privileged life-style before returning to Lancaster.

As a non-student partner, Ali spends most of his time looking after his children (chapter four) and occasionally uses his wife's access to the university library in order to do some research for his own PhD Degree in Malaysia. Although he states that he would like to have more British friends,[5] as he had previously done when studying here, he made friends with fellow international Muslim students through the attendance in the Muslim Society (chapter six). In this regard, he points out that as a Muslim he met many other individuals, but mainly came closer to fellow Malaysians.[6] So far, his story is similar to most of the other partners of international students I interviewed in Lancaster.

At the end of our interview, I asked Ali if he had anything to add that he considered worth mentioning. This was an invitation I used to close all interviews. To

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[5] Ali does not specify whether he means white British students.
[6] Here, one could ask whether their commonality is based on a shared experience of being Malaysian, or whether it is due to the situation that even in Muslim circles, Asian Muslims are a minority. As he himself does not give an account, this question cannot be discussed here.

my surprise, his answer was very lengthy. I find it important to reproduce it in its entirety here:

OK, this one is quite, erm, I can say like, OK, for the purpose of the study, like last time during my, this is just my opinion, last time during my undergraduate, OK, I did not have felt any worries to study in European countries, but you know what happened like on September eleven, it's actually, it affects us, for me as a Muslim, especially now I have children, I am really worried about them and then before I came here, even I asked my friends 'Is it OK to study in the UK?' and then they say 'in Lancaster is OK', they said they do not know about another place, because I do not know whether it is true or not, there are some rumours, they do not like Muslims and they don't like people you know who wear the hijaab, like my wife does, so it is quite, I feel a bit, erm, you know, not as happy as last time. Last time we really enjoyed because I can say that the western countries, even though it is not Muslim countries, but we were happy live here, we are really happy here, I mean, we can do our, I can say this is from a religious point of view, I can say that I am more a religious person here than in my country, erm, I don't know it is quite difficult, let's say I can, if you don't understand you can ask me later, let's say for Muslims, let's say, you have to pray five times a day, like, I don't know, like, preferably in mosque, but let's say in Malaysia sometimes because they are all Muslims, sometimes we do not bother about the religion, but here you have, you have many communities, different religions and then you appreciate, I don't know and then sometimes you get stronger and then you get stronger in your small community, but it is sad for me to say that after the tragedy, even though, even

though like people say Islam is terrorist, which of course, I am a Muslim, so I don't believe in that, I can say all I have my opinion that all the religions, Christianity, Buddhism, any religion will be against terrorism, so we quite, at the first time we were quite 'OK, is it OK to study in the UK?', how are the people there and then and then I even communicated with my friends, sometimes the ones that studied here 'How is the Manchester airport? Are they very, you know? Are they very serious?', last time you know, you were like others, you were like others, of course, erm, I am not saying that, of course the governments take the action because of that, but, erm, the terrorists, the ones that do that maybe, erm, they are Muslim, but, they are Muslim, but it is not every Muslim like that, it is not every Muslim who do that, I, if you ask me whether they are right or wrong, I am definitely saying they are wrong, they cannot do that, you cannot kill people, so, because of that it is even, it scared us to come here, but then, but then after we came here it is OK, it is OK, and then when we live here it is no problem at all, like here there is no racism, no, so we are happy, but we still, let's say, we want to visit other countries, but we sometimes, we, last time we not even thought about that, OK, we just go, OK, this time, erm 'Is it a safe place?', we feel like 'Oh, is it safe for us?' because you know we are not doing anything without my kids, I am with my kids, so 'Is it safe for my kids?', so, you know, if we have kids, then we think about them more, so it is quite, you know, it's quite, a bit disappointing for us, I can see because maybe some extremists are doing that, and then because of that all of us are being troubled, so, erm, so, I am not, I am not really straight to the point, yet, what I have seen here is definitely fine, what I belief is not happening here, but because of all the let's say media and that, that makes me

let's say, making tough decision for us like 'It's OK, we just study in our countries', we just study and then, erm, last time maybe we went, erm, let's say I have been here in UK and then why don't we try and study in America? 'Oh no, no, no!' and we are afraid of that because, you know, we are, erm, even though it is actually I don't know, maybe it is true or not, I don't know, so that's, but for the moment, yeah, it's OK, here we go to any place, there's no, there's no, what we think is, erm, it is still OK, there is no discrimination and whatsoever here, so we are happy, but we are more precautious, yeah, yeah, we need to, let's say prepare what happens if there is and the last time, we just did not worry, did not worry anything, I hope you understand.

This response raises several points. The first is Ali's change in life circumstances. In comparison with his previous stay in Lancaster, Ali realises that he is not the young, single student anymore, but a father of two children. His feelings are therefore connected to concerns for his children's safety and well-being, which causes a greater degree of care and a decrease in adventure seeking. He states that previously he would have 'just go[ne]' to new places, but now he is concerned about his children's safety, which restricts his mobility in Europe and beyond, as the family would not 'just go' anymore. It further affects his migration decision as he thinks that he could not live in the U.S. ('America? "Oh no, no, no"'). His life-stage as father thus comes to the fore, but this position is intersecting with broader global changes.

Hence, second, his increased concern for safety is influenced by a change in global politics. Due to the events of 9/11 and subsequent events, Ali perceives a change in western attitude towards Muslim individuals and culture. Although he explains that he himself has never experienced any forms of racism towards himself

('here there is no racism'), he nevertheless stresses the point that race and ethnicity come into play due to the fact that 'there are rumours, they do not like Muslims and they don't like people [...] who wear the hijaab'. Gordon William Allport and Leo Joseph Postman (1947: xi) define 'rumours' as 'a specific (or topical) proposition for belief, passed along from person to person usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being present'.[7] Ali's perception of a change of attitude might result from conversations he had with other Malaysian and Muslim students, as he states that he called his friends prior his departure from Malaysia in order to find out whether it would be safe to come to Lancaster. His changed perception further originates from the 'media', and here I suggest he refers to U.S. American and British media and their imagining of Muslim people. Paul Baker (2010) discusses the change in British media coverage concerning the image of Muslim people post-9/11 and shows that this event increased the negative imagining of Muslims. For Ali, this image changes his feelings of safety as he now feels that he needs to add fear of Islamophobia to his decision to temporary migrate to Lancaster. Discussing similar effects for Albanians considering migrating to Italy, but being aware of the negative Italian media coverage, Nicola Mai (2005; King and Mai, 2009) also shows that the knowledge of 'bad press' causes potential migrants to consider more carefully whether to migrate to Italy.

Ali's fear of Islamophobia then (partially) leads to a third issue: his increased identification with the Islamic faith. He explains that in Malaysia he is less religiously active than he is in Lancaster: 'I can say that I am more a religious person here than in my country'. He argues that he feels a greater need to participate in regular praying because of the diversity of ethnicities and religions in Lancaster, and here, especially

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[7] On a detailed discussion on rumours, see, for example, Anjan Gosh's (2008) work.

on campus. Belonging to a certain group and 'small community' provides him with extra safety whilst he lives in a predominantly non-Islamic country, and it also allows him access to a network in which he could potentially meet new friends. Following Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut (1990), one could argue that Ali's increased identification with the Islamic faith could be seen as an example of what they call 'reactive ethnicity' – an ethnic identification which is delayed – occurring in opposition to stigmatisation. Hence, Ali is bringing his religious affiliation especially to the fore when he feels a fear of exclusion due to Islamophobia, which is otherwise not given in Malaysia and had not been felt during his previous stay in Lancaster prior to 9/11.

Ali's example could also offer us a possibility to add another layer to the concept of 'diasporic intimacy'. Boym (1998: 516) states that this intimacy is often displayed through a 'personal memory museum' on the living room shelf. In chapter five, I show that everyday practices, such as food preparation and consumption, are other ways to display 'diasporic intimacy'. Here, we could think about religion as being yet another way to show this intimacy. Religion is a very intimate practice, which does, however, not only occur in the private space, but which is sometimes shared, i.e., in the mosque or the church. Furthermore, it is diasporic, firstly, through the transnational dispersion of the religion itself, and, secondly, especially in our times, as a definer of identity. Ali's account that he is more religious in Lancaster than he is in Malaysia therefore also shows that by bringing religion to the fore, he identifies himself as a Muslim, in opposition to the hegemonic surroundings of Christian Britain.

Coming back to intersectionality, it becomes evident, that religious affiliation is a categorical attribute which is affected by space (in the UK or in Malaysia) which

here determines whether it comes to the fore or is at play in the background. In comparison to Brendan and Cecilia, Ali's report differs, as he talks about a fear of being excluded rather than the actual experience of exclusion. It is his fear of Islamophobia which affects his experience of being in the UK. Due to his own changed subject position as a father as well as global political changes and an anti-Muslim press, he has to consider more carefully whether certain spaces would be safe. In turn, he feels more religious in Lancaster than in Malaysia, which adds another space of safety – within the community of Muslim students and families. Finally, Ali's comment that 'last time, you know, you were like others' suggests that during his previous stay (prior to 9/11) he felt like any other international student, but now he fears being perceived as not only 'foreign', but also 'Muslim'. This leads us into the concluding discussion on familiar and stranger 'space invaders'.

**Conclusion: Familiar and Stranger 'Space Invaders'**

Above, I consider intersectionality as a good starting point for exploring why some subjects feel more out of place in certain situations than others. Here I focus on Nirmal Puwar (2004) and Sara Ahmed (2000) as I examine how some individuals can be stranger than other strangers in certain situations.

Nirmal Puwar (2004) argues that some bodies can be more 'out of place' in certain circumstances than others. She focuses mainly on women and ethnic minorities in elite positions of politics and academia and claims that the somatic norm of the white male body is still prevalent in places like Westminster and 'Oxbridge'. Although the appearance of female bodies or bodies of ethnic minorities has increased over the years, this increase does not change the somatic norm, and the appearance of bodies that are not male and white creates a situation of unease. Puwar (2004) calls

this phenomenon 'space invaders' and points out that these bodies 'invade' a space, rather than appear in it. Using Westminster as an example, she stresses that this situation can occur in different circumstances and is due to historical developments:

> there is a two-way relationship between spaces and bodies, which locates the coexistence of "different" bodies in specific spaces as "space invaders": first, over time specific bodies are associated with specific spaces (these could be institutional positions, organisations, neighbourhoods, cities, nations) and, secondly, spaces become marked as territories belonging to particular bodies (Puwar, 2004: 141).

Spaces are described as being not neutral but already marked as territories for certain bodies. Categorical attributes, which produce the assumption that a certain body is more fitting within its surroundings, include attributes such as gender, race, class, and so on, and more so their intersections. Using Bourdieu's concepts of capital, Puwar (2004) further argues that not every white male body totally fits into Westminster; the ideal is the white, male body with a cultural and social capital which preferably originates from Oxbridge. She also argues that some strangers are more 'familiar strangers' to the somatic norms (2004: 128) than others, suggesting that a white female body or a black male body with an Oxbridge education or a white male body without an Oxbridge education are more likely to be accepted than a black female body with a working class background. The intersection of different categorical attributes is therefore responsible for how certain bodies seem to be more or less 'out of place' than others.

Sara Ahmed (2000) also argues that there are two forms of strangers, but in contrast to Puwar who calls the two types 'familiar strangers' and 'unfamiliar strangers' (Puwar, 2004: 128), Ahmed (2000) calls them 'familiar strangers' and 'stranger strangers'. For Ahmed (2000: 21; italics in the original), the stranger comes to be recognised through its identification as a stranger:

> how do you recognise a stranger? To ask such a question, is to challenge the assumption that the stranger is the one we simply fail to recognise, that the stranger is simply *any-body* whom we do not know. It is to suggest that the stranger is *some-body* whom we have *already recognised* in the very moment in which they are "seen" or "faced" as a stranger. The figure of the stranger is far from simply being strange; it is a figure that is painfully familiar in that very strange(r)ness. [...] Strangers are not simply those who are not known in this dwelling, but those who are, in their very proximity, *already recognised as not belonging*, as being out of place.

As with Puwar, for Ahmed the stranger is someone who is not a stranger only due to lack of recognition, but the stranger is a subject whose strangeness has been recognised as such. Hence, intersections of certain categorical attributes such as gender, race or class affect the individual's position as a stranger. Ahmed further draws attention to discourses of 'stranger danger', where the stranger becomes a threat to familiarity, a body out of place in imagined communities such as neighbourhoods, nations, or states. This body is not only 'out of place' but it also potentially affects the space. Ahmed argues that this threat is especially perceived surrounding the figure of a child because "'the child" becomes a figure of vulnerability, the purified body that is

most endangered by the contaminating desires of strangers' (Ahmed, 2000: 34). According to Ahmed, a 'familiar stranger' is a stranger that is already recognised as a stranger by the surroundings, whereas the 'stranger stranger' is even more unfamiliar than the 'familiar stranger' as he is not yet recognised. Therefore, the 'stranger stranger' becomes the 'ultimate stranger' (2000: 35), as it is especially the unknownness of that strangerness that turns a body out of place into an even more stranger stranger than another stranger. By relating these theories to intersectionality, we might be able to conclude that not only do the differences in categorical attributes affect the individual's position as a stranger, but the subject's intersections to space are also significant.

Relating these thoughts to the three participants I discuss in this chapter, it is possible to state that Brendan and Cecilia are stranger strangers in certain situations than in others. Brendan feels more out of place whilst surrounded by his partner's university friends due to his class position and whilst surrounded by his local working class friends due to his Irish background. He therefore feels like a stranger due to different categorical attributes at different encounters. Whilst his foreignness is in the background when he is surrounded by other temporary migrants in the company of his wife's friends, his class is in the foreground. His class position is in the background whilst he is socialising in the pub with his associates, whilst his Irishness is on the fore. Not only do the diverse groups of people affect his feelings of being out of place, but so do the spaces he is occupying. In the more 'fancy wine bars', he feels like a 'space invader' due to his different cultural capital. In what he calls 'rougher bars', he becomes more aware of his Irishness. There, he is not only cast as a stranger stranger, but also potentially a 'stranger danger' as simply his appearance in these bars, could provoke trouble.

Accounts of different spaces in connection with different feelings of belonging are also present in Cecilia's accounts. She stresses the point that she feels most comfortable being surrounded by other internationals, less comfortable in the city centre of Lancaster, where she feels her difference, but still welcomed, and even less comfortable in the toddler group outside the city centre, where she states that she feels 'unwelcomed'. Perhaps she feels less aware of being 'a stranger' when surrounded by other 'strangers', whereas her feeling of being a 'stranger stranger' occurs when she is surrounded by British people.

Ali gives an account of fearing to be viewed as a 'stranger stranger' and emphasises his fear of Islamophobia, which arises from the aftermaths of 9/11. He is now more careful about not going to places where he could not feel safe as he fears that people could cast him as 'stranger danger' and act according to their beliefs. He states that in the past he felt like other others, but due to the events and the negative imaging of Muslims in the western press, he now fears that his ethnicity comes to the fore. He also brings his religious practices to the fore and states that he considers them more important now than he did during his stay in Lancaster before 9/11. What is important is that it is not he himself who is the 'stranger stranger', or even a 'stranger danger', but, to draw on Ahmed, his ethnicity and his belonging to the Islamic faith.

So far, I show that the notions of the foreground and the background are crucial in intersectional analyses of being in or out of place. At the same time, these stories also offer us insights on situations of being in *and* out of place. Hence, Brendan only sometimes experiences an anti-Irish sentiment. Most of the time he socialises in these bars without trouble, and he learned how to steer clear of these situations, by, for example, avoiding conversations about politics or religion. Cecilia might not feel most welcomed in one of the toddler groups, but she nevertheless

continues to participate in these events, which suggests that she feels somehow in place, maybe because her twins are surrounded by other children. Although Ali fears situations of being cast as 'stranger danger', he still feels in place in the university town Lancaster, as he highlights that 'here there is no racism'.

Puwar (2004) states that spaces are not neutral but shaped by historical developments. In different spaces, some bodies can be more out of place than others due to their diverse subject positions. This leads us to the question how these feelings of in- or exclusion might be determined by life in Lancaster per se. As I describe in chapter three, Lancaster has a relative short history of hosting universities and international student migration (only since the 1960s). The city is predominately white British and close-knit ethnic minority neighbourhoods and networks are largely non-existent. We might assume that these individuals' stories might have differed if they had temporarily migrated to less homogenous places than Lancaster. However, as this thesis focuses on the temporary migration experiences of partners of international students into Lancaster, which here functions as an exemplifying case for the growing number of small university towns that are affected by an increase in student migration, these stories are useful insights into these so-far largely under-explored temporary migrants.

To conclude, then, spaces are not neutral, but are in a dynamic relationship with the subject: shaped by and shaping our subject positions as we move through them. As a result, an interplay of foreground and background of our diverse categorical attributes operates which produces different feelings of being in or out of place. However, these feelings also occur in a dynamic relationship, allowing subjects to be both in *and* out of place at the same time and space.

In addition, this chapter shows that there is no such thing as *the* partner of an international student which takes us to the concluding chapter of this thesis.

# Conclusion

As the first study on partners of international students in the UK, this thesis contributes to the current literature on migration. The study focuses on temporary sojourns of partners of international students in Lancaster/UK, a small, peripheral university city, chosen, firstly, because of the gap in the literature as highlighted; secondly, because of the growing internationalisation of higher education; thirdly, for personal reasons; and fourthly, for pragmatic reasons (as discussed in chapter three).

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I describe my eleven participants as privileged, temporary, transnational migrants, who arrived in the UK with the intention to stay for a limited length of time (between one and four years) in order to accompany their studying partners. In chapter three, I highlight that they can further be described as 'highly skilled', with the majority holding at least one tertiary (or equivalent) qualification.[1] In chapter one, I include these temporary migrants in the literature on transnational families and support networks, and in chapter four, five, six and seven I draw on other theories in order to highlight the specificity of these partners of international students in Lancaster.

In this concluding chapter, I return to key concepts drawn on in this thesis and offer ideas for future research. First, I focus on network support and the 'transnational bubble', and compare the experiences of partners of international students in Lancaster with other temporary migrants introduced in previous literature, namely family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada. Second, I elaborate on 'cruel optimism' and the creation of an 'intimate diasporic space'. Third, I return to the notion of 'immobilised mobiles' and ask what my

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[1] In chapter seven, I introduce Brendan in order to show that not every partner of an international student is highly skilled. The majority of these individuals, however, is.

participants' experiences can tell us about privilege. Fourth, I introduce the current changes to international student migration and highlight the need to further explore the experiences of partners of international students in small, peripheral university cities.

## Migrating Partners and the Transnational Bubble

In chapter one, I write that literature on transnational families draws attention to migrants' need for support, such as 'financial, practical, personal (hands-on), accommodation, and emotional and moral support' (Baldassar, 2007a: 389). After migration and the loss of kin in geographical proximity, migrants negotiate new networks of support both globally and locally. In chapter six, I discuss how my participants receive support from geographically absent members of their transnational families and form new relations in the place of relocation that provide 'companionship and socializing' (Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara, 2008: 674). Regarding the latter, I discuss literature on network support, in chapter one, and state that Robert Putnam (2000) differentiates between 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital. Putnam argues that migrants either join existing close-knit ethnic homogenous communities (bonding) or integrate into the new society (bridging), the latter being the more favourable for the 'host' society.

These theorisations bare problems. Firstly, as Goulbourne, Reynolds, Solomos and Zontini (2010) as well as Nannested, Haase and Svendsen (2008) highlight, this 'either-or-approach' is too simplistic, and migrants could be able to, and usually do, negotiate both 'bonding' and 'bridging'. Secondly, it suggests that migrants have to settle into the new society, something that might not always be necessary, especially when considering temporary migration. Thirdly, Putnam takes for granted that close-knit ethnic homogenous communities exist in the new place of re-settlement, which

might not be the case in small, peripheral places. Fourthly, he assumes that migrants arrive and simply slot into these communities, which would provide them with resources and emotional support (Ryan, Sales, Tilki and Siara, 2008). This, in turn, assumes that migrant communities are not themselves varied, and at times divided, which complicates the relationship of individuals to their community leaders and resources.

In this section, I further examine the specificities of partners of international students in a small, peripheral university city in the UK by revisiting how they compare to other migrating partners – family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada. Subsequently, I return to my discussion of the 'transnational bubble' and show how for temporary migrants in a small peripheral university city 'bonding' or 'bridging' are not clear cut options.

In chapter one, I identify seven commonalities between family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada that can be drawn from the literature: (1) legal restriction on skilled employment, (2) being forced into the domestic sphere, (3) lack of support for child care, (4) language barriers, (5) feelings of isolation, (6) psychological problems, and (7) participation in unpaid voluntary labour. Here I discuss how my participants compare to these temporary migrants.

First, with regard to legal restrictions on skilled employment, my participants differ from family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada because at the time of my research, the UK granted a full work permit with the dependants' visa. Instead of being legally restricted, the partners of international students in my study face another difficulty, which is being included in the tight local labour market of the relatively small university city of Lancaster due to (1) limited job opportunities, (2) their need to be flexible in time, and (3) their inability to offer long-

term commitment. This lack of suitable vacancies might be related to the place of relocation, Lancaster, and, in the future, a wider study on the experiences of these migrants in different parts of the UK might help us to understand the kind of restraints they face.

Second, family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada are described as being 'forced' into the domestic sphere (Kim, 2006) as a result of legal restriction in seeking employment. This differs to my participants. As they are legally able to work, but cannot find a job because there are so few suitable vacancies, they are not legally forced into unemployment but must face a necessity to deal with their unemployment. In chapter four, I note that the majority of my informants deploy a form of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2006) to their situation by, on the one hand, anticipating a future career improvement through the betterment of their linguistic abilities in English and, on the other hand, investing in their family and couple relationships. I return to cruel optimism in the next section.

Third, all three groups of migrants have in common their role as primary child carers and they all feel they are lacking both familial and state support. As I show in chapter four, the participants in my study explain that this lack of support further affects their employability as their need for flexibility in working hours restricts them to accept semi-skilled, lower paid employment – for example in Carlos' case.

Fourth, in regard to language barriers, I must mention that I conducted interviews with a self-selecting sample and did not use an interpreter. The individuals who agreed to participate in this study have a high level of English; thus my participants do not raise language barriers as problems they face. This finding does not of course suggest that all partners of international students are fluent in English, but relates to the limitations that self-selecting sample strategies create. Further research is

needed to include individuals whose English is not adequate for a participation in interviews without an interpreter.

Fifth, all three groups of migrants report certain feelings of isolation in their place of relocation. Researchers on family expatriates refer to their participants' lives in the 'expat bubble' (Fechter, 2007b: 38), and studies of spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada reveal their informants' grievances regarding their lack of social contacts with U.S. Americans and Canadians. Similar complaints are voiced by my participants, who struggle to meet their British peers. In chapter six, I discuss this problem and examine their formations of relations within social networks of fellow temporary migrants. I show that these connections are characterised as 'acquaintances' rather than 'friends' and that my participants use forms of virtual communication to stay in touch with kin and, to a lesser extent, friendship networks outside the UK in order to counterbalance their lack of emotional support in Lancaster.

Sixth, studies on family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada raise concerns about these migrants' psychological and physical well-being. Katie Walsh (2009) reports the occurrence of 'situational depression' for family expatriates, and Renata Frank de Verthelyi (1995) cites depression and anxiety as problems for student spouses. The participants in my study do not mention suffering from depression or anxiety. I acknowledge, however, that talking about any kind of emotional distress is difficult in a one-off interview situation. Here, a full comparison between the previous studies is not possible, as Walsh (2009) used the method of longitudinal participant observation and de Verthelyi (1995) focussed especially on her participants' mental and physical well-being. Nevertheless, we could hypothesise that just because they did not mention it, should not suggest, that forms of

anxiety or mild depression might not have occurred during the respondents' sojourn in Lancaster. For example, Brendan comes to mind here. His descriptions of his experiences in Lancaster and his way of dealing with his exclusion by spending long hours in front of the TV may well be signs of a mild depression. Also, he and his partner parted, so maybe the time in Lancaster was characterised by certain forms of emotional and personal turmoil for him and his partner.

Seventh, my participants differ from family expatriates and the spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada because they do not engage in unpaid voluntary labour. An exception might be Anna, who volunteered in the local hospital in order to improve her knowledge of medical English. However, Anna was motivated by the hope that this would gain her a full-time post at the hospital. This contrasts with the voluntary work undertaken by family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada for whom voluntary work was a default position and a way to keep busy and avoid boredom. Apart from Anna though, all my participants did not engage in voluntary work. This could be dependent on internal factors, such as lack of interest, or on external factors, such as a lack of opportunities in the small, peripheral university city of Lancaster. This again highlights the role of the place of relocation itself, and further studies in different localities could help to shed light into this phenomenon.

So far, it can be noted that whilst some commonalities occur among the three groups of temporary migrants, the experiences of partners of international students in Lancaster differ slightly in regards to employment, domestic lives, language barriers, psychological and physical well-being, and participation in voluntary work.

In chapter one, I also discuss two major differences between family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada, which arise from the

literature: geographical movement and access to economic capital. Here, it is important to relate these aspects to the partners of international students in Lancaster.

First, differences occur in relation to geographical movement. Whilst studies on family expatriates largely focus on the movement of individuals from post-industrial to developing countries, studies on spouses of international students were undertaken in the U.S. and Canada. Surprisingly, the literature on family expatriates generally ignores the movement of skilled individuals into post-industrial countries.[2] As the partners of international students are highly skilled labour migrants with intentions to seek employment, they can be characterised as both accompanying partners and highly skilled labour migrants migrating into a post-industrial country. In this respect, the study here offers a possibility to think about the notion of 'expatriate' in its current meaning. We must ask whether we can still only refer to white, privileged migrants in developing countries as 'expatriates', or whether it might be time to de-racialise the term and to use it in its basic meaning – for someone who lives ex ('out of') patria ('their homeland').

Second, differences occur in regard to access to economic capital. As privileged migrants, all three groups had access to funds in order to make the decision to leave their country of origin and migrate to a new setting. This suggests a higher level of privilege compared to other students and their families in their countries of relocation who might not have had the means to study abroad. However, whilst family expatriates are largely provided for by their spouses' increased wage packages, student spouses in the U.S. and Canada report the need to have to 'tighten the budget' (de Verthelyi, 1995: 400). In this respect, my participants are more like spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada, as they also talk about financial

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[2] An exemption is Sawa Kuronati's (2007) work on Japanese 'expatriates' in the U.S.

problems. As temporary migrants who are unable to find skilled employment and deprived of state support, they largely rely on savings and scholarships that normally provide for only one person. Their lack of financial resources affects my participants' homemaking practices and their access to spatial mobility, both locally and globally, which I return to in the following two sections of this chapter.

In short, with regards to geographical movement and access to economic capital, the partners of international students in Lancaster have more similarities with their counterparts in the U.S. and Canada than to family expatriates in developing countries.

I conclude my comparison of the three groups of temporary migrants with a discussion of the metaphor of the 'bubble'. Anne-Meike Fechter (2007b: 38) states that the metaphorical 'bubble', or 'expat bubble', incorporates 'features such as boundedness, seclusion from the outside, a certain glamour as well as an artificial atmosphere inside'. Drawing on her metaphor, I suggest that it can be modified in order to include different groups of migrants and propose the phrase 'transnational bubble'. I define this 'transnational bubble' as flexible and transparent. The bubble's transparency allows migrants to observe, and analyse, their surrounding society. They are, in this respect, what Nowicka (2005) describes as 'experts' and 'tourists'. At the same time, and due to the temporary nature of their sojourn, they are able to pick and choose the elements of British society that they want to engage with, and to ignore other elements that they do not want to engage with.

The partners of international students in Lancaster construct their own 'transnational bubbles'. Most of them reside in on-campus accommodations which are characterised by a greater level of ethnic diversity than the rest of Lancaster. The postgraduate college, where the majority of my participants live, can especially be

described as a multicultural oasis in this otherwise largely white British city.[3] This is due to the high number of international postgraduate students at Lancaster University, who in the year 2007/2008 made up approximately fifty-two percent of all postgraduate students at Lancaster (chapter three). The majority of my participants state that their social networks in Lancaster mainly consist of fellow temporary migrants because they feel that they lack opportunities to meet British subjects. They are, however, not completely removed from British society. Hence, they are able to see through the transparent walls of their bubbles and analyse their surroundings. Anna for example, talks about her analysis of British individuals' shopping baskets (chapter five), and Daniel notes his perceptions of British undergraduate culture (chapter six).

Although the transnational bubbles constructed by my informants have certain similarities to theories on family expatriates, there are also differences. For example, due to their restricted financial resources, the 'bubbles' my participants live in do not seem to hold the glamour associated with the lives of wealthier expatriates in other studies. In addition, although life in the transnational bubble seems to be the experience of the majority of the participants of my study, it is by no means the case for all. Brendan's experience shows that he feels excluded from the university world of his partner and is not able to create his own bubble. Instead, he struggles with his position between the international community of postgraduate students and their families, and local inhabitants. In chapter seven, I argue that Brendan's desire to repatriate after the couple's split-up can be compared to Katie Walsh's (2008) 'abandoned wives'. In relation to the metaphor of the 'transnational bubble' it also highlights another characteristic of a bubble: its instability. As a soap bubble can

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[3] In chapter three, I demonstrate that whereas the Census 2001 shows that Lancaster as a whole is ninety-eight percent white British, if we focus on the University Ward only, the figures show a distribution of ninety-two percent white British and eight percent different ethnicities.

easily burst, the artificial life of a temporary migrant can also suddenly end, either due to the end of the sojourn, or, for migrating partners, the end of the couple's relationship.

In summary, the participants in my study have certain commonalities with other temporary migrants – family expatriates, and the spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada – but differ slightly in their experiences in regards to employment, domestic lives, language barriers, psychological and physical well-being, participation in voluntary work, and mobility. These differences highlight my participants' specific experiences as temporary migrants in the UK, who are residing in the relatively small university city Lancaster.

Let me return to theories on 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital. The participants in my study live temporary lives in the small, peripheral city of Lancaster. They do not aim to settle permanently into the new society, because the end of their sojourn is constantly envisioned. Having moved to Lancaster, which is not a global or globalising city, but a small, peripheral, ethnic white British city, they do not have access to a close-knit ethnic minority community, because these communities do not exist. Hence, these temporary migrants did not arrive in Lancaster and just slot into close-knit ethnic communities that provided support to them. Being in proximity to other international temporary migrants provides them, not with a pre-existing close-knit ethnic community, but with a network of temporary migrants with whom they are able to share certain commonalities: their status as temporary migrants and partners of international students, and their life in a 'transnational bubble'. Thus, we can assume that neither 'bonding' nor 'bridging' – in Putnam's terms – is a necessity, or even an option, for temporary migrants in peripheral places. These findings complicate theories on 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital, and more research is needed to

further explore the range of activities and socialities that temporary migrants engage in which might constitute different kinds of social capital.

In the next sections, I again focus on my participants' experiences with employment, domestication, and mobility. I therefore return to a discussion of, first, 'cruel optimism' and the creation of an 'intimate diasporic space', and, second, the notion of 'immobilised mobiles' and privilege.

## Cruel Optimism and the Intimate Diasporic Space

In chapter four, I show that my participants struggle to gain skilled employment in the local labour market of Lancaster. Instead of developing mental and physical health problems, as suggested by earlier research on spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada (de Verthelyi, 1995; 1996; Kim 2006; 2010), my participants seem to adopt a positive attitude to their state of unemployment. I draw on Lauren Berlant's (2006) notion of 'cruel optimism' in order to allow my respondents some forms of agency in deciding how to deal with their difficulties to gain skilled employment. Focussing on U.S. American literature, Berlant defines 'cruel optimism' as 'a relation of attachment to comprised conditions of possibility' (2006: 21). I state that 'cruel optimism' can be seen as a way to adapt to one's situation and translate one's failure into a positive feature, as the current situation might hold benefits for the future. Individuals also get attached to the changed condition and view it positively, forgetting the origin of the state of being. In chapter four, I highlight that my participants predict a better future when they increase their knowledge of English, as Cecilia and Anna explain, and enjoy investing in their family and couple relationships, as Anna and Ali explain. At the same time, my participants also get attached to this

changed situation as child care and domestic labour become their highest priorities, that is, their 'new jobs'.

In chapter five, I draw on Avtar Brah's (1996) notion of 'diasporic space' and argue that for the temporary migrants in my study, the physical entity of the dwelling turns into an 'intimate diasporic space' through the practices associated with a creation of diasporic intimacy. This diasporic intimacy is found in the emphasis on the stability of the family or couple relationship and is reproduced through the investment in emotional domestic labour, for example, for food preparation and consumption. Hence, the participants invest time and energy to turn necessary domestic practices into joyful adventures. These, in turn, remind them of their non-British identities and distinguish them from their British peers. The majority of these practices are carried out in the dwelling, which is then imagined to be a place which is detached or uprooted from its 'home' grounds, which is a space that is not Britain. For example, Cecilia thinks of her house as Mexico, or at least a place where she can re-create a bit of Mexico here, in Lancaster, UK. However, British culture still enters the dwelling; the domestic space is thus never fully non-British nor fully British, but rather it is characterised by an intersection of different cultures, practices, and languages, where intimations of 'home abroad' mix with British language, food and (popular) culture (i.e., TV and radio). In that respect, the home becomes an 'intimate diasporic space' where here and there meet.

Both practices, cruel optimism and the creation of an intimate diasporic space, are interlinked. My participants' take on applying cruel optimism is a form of dealing with their unemployment through investing in the family which in turn produces an intimate diasporic space. The need to apply a form of cruel optimism and create an intimate diasporic space was triggered by their lack of purposeful activity. In this

respect, the effort they put into the domestic sphere is their positive attitude whilst they are dealing with unemployment. Future research would be needed to explore the experiences of *employed* temporary migrants in order to investigate whether the creation of an intimate diasporic space is seen to be important only for migrants who at that stage of migration have a lot of time on their hands.

In addition, both practices require 'emotional labour'. In regard to cruel optimism, the partners of international students apply emotional labour, which, following Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983: 7), is characterised as requiring one to 'induce or supress feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others'. Drawing on Hochschild's concept, I suggest that temporary migrants apply emotional *domestic* labour in the creation of an intimate diasporic space. In doing so, they creatively turn the necessary tasks of domestic labour, such as food preparation and consumption, into exciting events that facilitate the stability of their diasporic intimacy. Some partners of international students try to combine the task of shopping with local travel and visits to entertainment outlets. They highlight their work on creating meals which are 'cooked from scratch' and are meant to taste like food from the place of departure. They arrange for mealtime routines to be familiar and similar to mealtimes and dishes in their previous homes. The time spent at the dinner table is seen to be important for stabilising the diasporic intimacy on a daily basis, but it is also perceived to stand in opposition to British society. As my research offers only a first insight into this phenomenon, future research is needed in order to explore whether the importance of the dinner table is indeed a cultural matter, or whether class, life stage, and circumstances might be equally important to address. Although, some research focuses on the dinner table in relation to class (Shove, Watson, Hand and Ingram, 2007) or race (Innes, 2006), these

studies focus on one aspect only, and an intersectional analysis, which takes different categorical attributes into consideration, is still absent.

To return to the study here, we can assume that the effort put into the domestic sphere is not only an effect of unemployment; it is also connected to a lack of geographically close friends and acquaintances. I show in chapter six that the majority of my participants state that they have not formed many intimate friendship relations in Lancaster. They do not spend a lot of their time socialising, and have little distraction from their efforts in the domestic sphere. Instead of leaving the dwelling to socialise with peers also residing in Lancaster, they stay inside the dwelling and communicate with geographically distant, emotionally close kin and friendship networks via forms of virtual communication. Avtar Brah (1996: 181; italics in the original) states that 'the concept of *diasporic space* (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of "staying put"'. She mainly refers to the connections between migrants and the local inhabitants of the place of their relocation. In relation to the notion of the *intimate* diasporic space, we could refer to how partners of international students in Lancaster invite their geographically distant relatives and friends, who stayed put in their other homes, into their Lancastrian homes through the use of virtual communication. Therefore, the dwelling place is the locality in which the communication takes place, which further enhances its diasporic characteristics. In the future, it will be interesting to explore the role that social networking sites, such as Facebook, DIASPORA or renren, have on migrants' formations and stabilisations of friendships through the use of virtual communication. These forms of communication are not covered in this thesis, because the interviews were conducted in 2007/2008, a time when virtual social networks were only just emerging.

In summary, the creation of an intimate diasporic space is not a spontaneously emerging phenomenon, but an effect of a variety of external factors that include unemployment, the appliance of cruel optimism, limited geographically close social networks, and less purposeful activities. In short, the partners of international students have a lot of time on their hands and by investing in the creation of diasporic intimacy and an intimate diasporic space they find ways to fill that time.

My participants' varying experiences in the domestic sphere highlight their specificity as migrating partners who live temporary lives in a small, peripheral university town. In the next section, I explore how their mobility patterns also show this.

## Immobilised Mobiles and Privilege

In chapter one, I discuss how temporary migrants – family expatriates and spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada – lack spatial mobility. The family expatriates are supposed to employ drivers or rely on their husbands' company cars, limitations that restrict their spatial agency. Spouses of international students in the U.S. and Canada are theoretically able to move through space themselves, but they are restricted by their finances. The participants in my study also emphasise their lack in spatial mobility caused by two factors: (1) they have restricted access to modes of transportation in the small city of Lancaster, and (2) they desire to stay in close proximity to their studying partner and children.

Noel Cass, Elizabeth Shove and John Urry (2003) argue that access to modes of transportation has been recognised as a major cause for social in- or exclusion (see also Jirón, 2011). They state that 'social inclusion is significantly a matter of overcoming constraints of space at particular moments of time so as to gain access to

the informal networks of work, leisure, friendship and family' (Cass, Shove and Urry, 2003: 548). Beverley Skeggs (2004) shows that access to mobility is determined by class. She states that 'mobility and control over mobility (both one's own and the mobility of others) both reflect and reinforce power' (Skeggs, 2004: 49). In turn, (lack of) access to mobility itself determines class. Cass et al. identify four dimensions of access to mobility: (1) 'financial', characterised by financial means to partake in mobility (such as the ability to own a car or buy tickets for public transportation); (2) 'physical', characterised by physical ability or limitations (such as physical limitations or unsafe environments); (3) 'organisational', characterised by one's ability to access services and facilities based on their organisation (such as costs of and proximity to modes of transportation and the frequency, reliability and punctuality of public transportation); and (4) 'temporal', characterised by the ability to access modes of transportation at the most convenient times (such as the timetables of public transportation). Drawing on their four dimensions, I now discuss my participants' access to mobility.

Regarding financial status, my informants have to tighten their budgets because they are unemployed and have to rely on savings accounts and their partner's scholarship. These restrictions affect their access to modes of transportation, both locally and globally. Locally, they seldom own a car and must rely on public transportation only. Due to high costs of public transportation, they limit their spatial mobility to necessary travel. Anna's example, as discussed in chapter four, shows that the high costs of bus and train tickets also affect their ability to commute to distant employment opportunities. Globally, their limited financial resources negatively affect their ability to visit distant friends and family members on a regular basis. My informants report that although they would like to physically travel to be with their

families for holidays and family celebrations, they cannot afford this corporeal travel. Instead, they rely on virtual communication, especially e-mail and Skype, which is free of charge, as Internet access is incorporated in their rental agreements.

With regard to the second dimension, physical limitations, my participants did not report any limitations in access to transportation. They did not talk about physical disabilities or limitations caused by safety issues. Ali's account of his fear of Islamophobia in the UK, as discussed in chapter seven, does, however, highlight potential self-imposed limitations to mobility for racially minoritised migrants. Further research on perceptions of safety and travel for migrants is needed in order to explore their restrictions to mobility.

Regarding the third dimension, organisational aspects of public transportation, my informants report limitations when considering local or global travel. Locally, they speak of restrictions in their ability to rely on local public transportation when considering commuting as a way out of unemployment. It is widely reported that in more rural or peripheral settings, public transportation is less frequent than in global or globalising cities (Cass, Shove and Urry, 2003; Maat and Timmermans, 2009; Noack, 2011). As a relatively small, peripheral university city, Lancaster is no exception. In addition, Lancaster does not have its own airport, which affects my participants' access to mobility on a global scale. If they want to consider international travel, they have to rely on (1) busses to the train station, (2) train travel to Blackpool, Manchester or Liverpool airports, and (3) air travel to an airport near their places of departure. My participants state that due to the high costs of public transportation to and from the airports, they feel restricted in their decision of international travel. In chapter six, for example, I quote Heike who explains that when adding up the costs for

these modes of transportation, even travel with cheap airline flights in Europe is unaffordable when travelling as a family of four.

With regard to the fourth dimension, temporal or public transportation at convenient times, my participants speak about limitations in accessing local transportation, especially for those who live in on-campus accommodations. Laura, for example, emphasises that a bus service from the university in the early mornings does not exist, which limits her consideration of commuting to Manchester as a way out of unemployment (chapter four).

Considering these four partially intersecting dimensions of access to transportation, I can state that the partners of international students face external factors that limit their mobility, such as lack of access to transport and restricted funds. They further restrict themselves from partaking in spatial mobility because they want to be in physical proximity to their studying partners and children. In turn, this desire for physical proximity limits their spatial mobility, especially when considering internal migration (chapter four).

These restrictions of physical mobility turn these temporary migrants into *immobilised mobiles*; that is, they are mobile in a global sense of temporary relocating to another country, but in the new place of residence, they are rendered immobile by external factors like access to modes of transportation and by internal, private factors like the choice to remain in close proximity to their partners and children.

What does this tell us about privilege? Beverley Skeggs (2004) writes that access to mobility is a major component to privilege (see also Bisell and Fuller, 2011; Cass, Shove and Urry, 2005; Pellegrino, 2011). In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I claim that the temporary migrants in my study can be categorised as privileged migrants, because they had the privilege to be able to decide to live

temporary lives in another country. I state that their ability to migrate, and in most cases leave permanent employment, suggests access to economic capital. Their migration is voluntary and they are able to return to their places of departure. They are highly skilled labour migrants and in this regard Portes and Rumbaut (1990: 10) would define them as 'privileged migrants' because they are individuals who possess 'above average levels of education and occupational skills in comparison with their homeland population'. Regarding these forms of cultural capital, I discuss in chapter three that my participants not only possess high educational and occupational skills, but are also fluent in English, thus possess high 'language capital' (Kelly and Lusis, 2006). Constructing their life in a 'transnational bubble' and being able to observe the new setting further allows my participants to gain new knowledge about their new surrounding, and thus develop their transferable skills, such as increased cultural awareness or better linguistic abilities in English (i.e., Anna acquiring medical English). In chapter four, I discuss that another indication for their privilege is their ability to choose not to work. In this respect, and in their position as migrants who were able to decide to migrate, my participants are indeed privileged. They are privileged compared to non-migrants in their countries of departure and compared to involuntary migrants and refugees, who might not have the opportunity to return and who often find themselves in difficult economic situations in the country of relocation.

However, returning to the arguments of Cass et al. (2005) that access to mobility is a major component to social inclusion or exclusion, my participants are not as privileged as it might seem. Because Lancaster is a small, peripheral city, my participants face the challenge of being excluded from the local labour market, which restricts their access to economic capital. Additionally, my participants experience difficulties in accessing modes of transportation, which restricts their mobility. Thus,

they might be less privileged compared to highly skilled temporary migrants in global or globalising cities, or to migrants with access to sufficient funds, who might be able to freely move between city spaces. This study shows that privilege could be seen as relative because although the partners of international students are relatively privileged in their decision of global mobility, they are rendered immobilised in the new setting; the small, peripheral university city Lancaster.

In the concluding section of this thesis, I focus on current changes in the higher education sector which potentially affect the overseas experiences of partners of international students, and discuss whether the image of *the* partner of an international student, as outlined in chapter three, is still correct.

## Partners of International Students in a Changing Higher Education System

When I started my research, the European university sector was engaged in predicting future changes in European higher education due to the Bologna process. The primary aim of the Bologna Process was to increase the intake of international students enrolled at higher education institutions throughout Europe. In chapter two, I show that the UK has traditionally played a major role in accepting international students for study at British universities because of English being a more or less universal language, and also because of Britain's history of colonialism. Therefore, international students not only chose global or globalising cities, but also small, peripheral places, which were, however, less researched. In chapter two, I also consider the growing amount of postgraduate courses at European universities being offered in English regardless of whether English is the dominant language of the country. Throughout this thesis, I analyse the findings in light of this predicted increase of international

students enrolling at institutions of higher education in the UK. Here, I find it important to briefly engage with the current political changes.

In March 2011, the current Conservative-Liberal coalition UK government announced changes in visa regulations for international overseas (TIER 4) students.[4] These changes, which might cause an annual twenty-five percent decrease in international students entering the UK, are commonly referred to as 'a curb on international student migration'.[5] Changes include rules concerning new accreditation processes of private colleges that can sponsor international students by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education[6], increased English language entree requirements, tighter rules on students working part-time whilst studying, maximum time limits for the length of the course (three to five years), and restrictions on remaining in the UK after graduation (UKCISA, 2011). The changes also affect students entering the UK accompanied by their spouses and/or children. Under the new regulations only 'dependants of students sponsored by [higher education institutions] on post-graduate courses lasting [twelve] months or longer, and of government-sponsored students on courses lasting longer than [six] months' (Home Office, 2011) are able to acquire a visa with a work permit. These restrictions affect international students who might decide to enrol at UK higher education institutions. As they might be able to find the same course offered in English in another European country, it will be interesting to observe how this growth in intra-European competition might change Britain's cutting-edge status. Future research might thus

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[4] Student Visas – Statement of Intent and Transitional Measures; Home Office – UK Border Agency: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/news/sop4.pdf
[last accessed 19 August 2011].
[5] *Guardian* (28/06/2010):
http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jun/28/immigration-cap-overseas-students-quota
[last accessed 19 August 2011].
[6] The Quality Assurance Agency:
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/
[last accessed 01 December 2012]

focus on Britain's role in the changes of the Bologna Process as a role-model in the past, an active member in the present, and a possible loser in the future.

Regardless of what may happen in the future, international students and their partners and/or children will still enter the UK and enrol at universities in both large and peripheral university cities. On the one hand, these restrictions still enable partners of postgraduate students to gain a visa, and on the other hand, these changes do not apply for European students and their accompanying partners and children. This means that research on this group of temporary migrants is still important.

When conducting studies on international students and their families, researchers should be careful not to reproduce a certain stereotyped image of a partner of international students as commonly held by researchers on partners/spouses of migrants (chapter one) as well as university professionals (chapter three). This image portrays a partner of an international student as female, unemployed, non-English speaking, and based on campus, residing on its grounds for term-time only.

In this thesis, I highlight that this image is out-dated. Firstly, I show that four out of my eleven participants are male. Hence, the image of *the female partner* is incorrect. Although, the majority of partners of international students might be heterosexual women, with a rise in diversity of the student body comes a rise of diversity in social structure of partners of international students. So far, statistical data on gender and sexuality is missing, but we can assume from the findings here that male and/or non-heterosexual individuals are, and will be, members of this group of temporary migrants. More research is needed to focus on their experiences of being migrating partners. Secondly, I note that the majority of the participants intend to find suitable employment and that most of them are highly-skilled migrants themselves. Although the participants in my study face difficulties to find suitable employment,

their intentions alone question the image of *the unemployed partner*. In the future, support provisions will need to be revised in order to respond to the growing number of highly skilled labour migrants entering the UK and Europe as partners of international students. Thirdly, I discuss that my participants do not raise the issue of language barriers. Although that does not suggest that every partner of an international student is fluent in English, it questions the generalised image of *the non-English speaking partner*. This, in turn, suggests that offering language classes for partners of international students that focus predominantly on very low English entree levels might need to be revised, and other forms of support will need to be considered. Fourthly, I show that not every participant in my study lives on campus or is strongly attached to it. Brendan, for example, has no incentive whatsoever to even visit campus grounds. Furthermore, their financial situation restricts the majority of my participants in their access to mobility. Hence, they do not spend every holiday in their places of departure as they can simply not afford to travel. The image of *the partner residing on campus for term-time only* has therefore also become obsolete.

In light of the findings voiced in this thesis, we can thus conclude that there is no such thing as *the partner* of an international student. These individuals are all different in regard to gender, class background, race/ethnicity, nationality, age, life-stage, access to resources, and so on. In addition, the place of temporary resettlement determines their experiences, as these migrants' temporary sojourns might take a different shape regarding whether they moved to a global city or a small, peripheral place. Research focusing exclusively on the latter remains scarce, and migrants on a temporary sojourn in the periphery will need to be given more attention, in order to provide these individuals with adequate support, thus ensuring the welfare of, and a

more productive and enjoyable stay for, both the international student and his or her partner.

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