

THE ASSIMILATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY

by

Sandra A. Ingram

A thesis

presented to the University of Manitoba

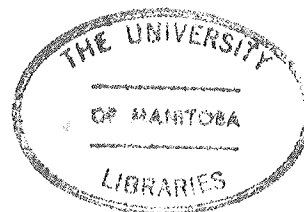
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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of foreign students entering Canadian post-secondary institutions. However, there has been a general neglect on the part of researchers to address the process of adjustment of these individuals. In the available research conducted, it has been argued that foreign students are "outsiders" or marginal to the host society. The purpose of this study was to examine the adjustment of a sample of foreign students at one Canadian university, namely the University of Manitoba.

The model of assimilation put forth by Milton Gordon (1964) was used to examine the adjustment of foreign students. Assimilation, as defined by Gordon, consists of a series of modifications which an in-coming group makes upon arrival to the host society. Cultural assimilation refers to changes in the cultural orientations of a group towards the culture of the host society, and structural assimilation refers to changes in social relationships. According to this model, between-group variations in the assimilation process can occur. Therefore, not all in-coming groups will necessarily achieve the same level of assimilation.

From this perspective, it is argued that the unique cultural and social orientations, which foreign students bring with them from their own societies, influences their level of interaction with members of the host society. As a result, students who come from more culturally divergent countries may be expected to have a less intense level of

interaction with Canadians than students who come from countries which have greater cultural congruence with Canadian society.

Thirty-eight foreign students, representing a variety of countries, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview technique. Information was gathered on the cultural backgrounds of these students, the modifications they have made since arriving in Canada, and their interactions with others, including fellow nationals and members of Canadian society.

This study suggests that foreign students are not necessarily outsiders or marginal to the host society. Although many students did not become culturally assimilated into Canadian society, it appears as if substantial changes towards structural assimilation had occurred. In other words, from the students' perspectives, it seems as if a considerable amount of interaction had taken place with members of Canadian society, resulting in substantial structural assimilation. Although some between-group variation was noted in the degree of structural assimilation, this does not seem to have detracted from the generally positive attitude that foreign students appeared to have towards Canada and their experiences in this country.

Implications focus on recommendations for further research and educational practice. Suggestions for research include the need for a continued examination into the unique social and cultural backgrounds of foreign students. Educational recommendations include the promotion of increased interactions between Canadian and foreign students and specialized programs to help ease the problem of cultural adjustment.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

At present, Canadian universities host a large, diversified and increasing number of foreign students. This sizeable population is now estimated at 35,500, a figure which has more than doubled in the last decade (Berry, 1983). Furthermore, this population is representative of virtually every country in the world. In addition to receiving students from the more traditional sources such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, a growing number of students from the countries of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean are coming to Canada in order to study at the post-secondary level.

Foreign students are individuals temporarily in Canada, enrolled in educational institutions for the purpose of pursuing a course of studies. Their presence in Canada is on a provisional basis only: upon completion of their programmes, foreign students are expected to leave the country. Students with Landed Immigrant Status are not foreign students. A person with Landed Immigrant Status is eligible for the same benefits, with the exception of voting privileges, that all Canadians receive. They are not subject to the same regulations and restrictions that apply to foreign students (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 1981).

Such a growing population, with a unique social status in Canada, requires special attention from educational and sociological perspectives. Canadian post-secondary institutions, Canadian society in general, the individual students involved and the home countries from which they come, are all affected by the adjustment of foreign students to the Canadian educational system. There are academic, psychological and social needs of these individuals which must be understood by social scientists and taken into consideration by those who are responsible for assisting these students to adapt to new institutional surroundings.

Specifically, it is the socio-cultural adjustment process encountered by these students which will be addressed in this study. This process involves coping with a changed set of social and/or cultural orientations in order to effectively function within a new environment. If the adjustment process for foreign students results in a failure to cope with such changes, there may be devastating consequences for all groups and individuals involved. Therefore, an understanding of the socio-cultural adjustment process faced by these students will possibly prove beneficial in achieving a more accurate and applicable strategy for foreign student assistance in Canada.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Foreign students, immediately upon entering the host society, are exposed to new and, for most students, different societal values, roles, rights and responsibilities. These individuals are required to compare such new and different factors with those of their own societies and decide how best to cope with them. Depending upon the individual, the

length of the sojourn and the cultural differences and similarities, students will either adapt or not adapt to the host society (Lee, 1981).

While there is insufficient research on the adaptation of foreign students to Canadian society to make any generalizations, research on foreign students in the United States indicates that many students either do not adapt, or return home without having attained their educational goals. If they do complete their academic programmes, many students do not enter into any meaningful participation in American society (Lee, 1981).

Some researchers have conducted studies which conclude that the dominant pattern of adjustment for many foreign students in the United States is one of isolation. For instance, Carey and Mariam (1980), refer to the existence of several small, clique communities within the foreign student population which have a limited amount of interaction with the society at large. Similarly, Hendricks and Skinner (1977:124) assert that "both the legal and social status of the foreign student is that of an outsider." According to these researchers, an outsider's status emanates largely from the fact that foreign students are unable to fully practice the cultural traditions of their own societies, yet equally denied the privilege of full participation in American society. Hendricks and Skinner further suggest that because of their unfamiliarity in a new social environment, foreign students often become selective as to which aspects of American society they will adopt and which aspects they will reject. Consequently, "the individual foreign student tends to operate within a limited social field, which primarily includes people who play instrumental roles in the student's strategy for

coping...most foreign students' close friends are fellow nationals or foreign students from other countries" (Hendricks and Skinner, 1977:34).

Other studies have seemingly delved further into the socio-cultural adjustment of foreign students by identifying the process as being a form of assimilation or acculturation. For example, Pruitt, in the 'Adaptation of Foreign Students on American Campuses' (1978:144), was concerned with the degree of assimilation experienced by these students. She defines assimilation as "interacting freely with people from the host country and accepting their culture."

In contrast, Berry (1983) hypothesized that foreign students undergo a process of acculturation while in a host society. He defines acculturation as "modifications which occur due to first-hand contact with another culture, resulting in both socio-cultural and behavioral changes" (Berry 1983:1). Berry considers assimilation to be a type or mode of acculturation in which one relinquishes cultural identity and moves into the larger society. Similarly, Hendricks and Skinner (1975:10) refer to the "incomplete acculturation of many, if not most foreign students." Although they fail to provide a definition of the term, these researchers assert that "the degree of acculturation varies from that of an indistinguishable Anglo-Saxon Canadian to the visibly 'foreign' turbaned Indian" (Hendricks and Skinner, 1975:10).

Still other researchers have utilized both terms, assimilation and acculturation, interchangeably in describing the adjustment process, without providing operational definitions for either. For instance, Carey and Mariam (1980:130), assert that "the foreign-born student must

assimilate new and different values, attitudes and roles that are often contradictory. In this regard, the sociological process of acculturating foreign students into American society through educational institutions is identical to the minoritization process of Afro-Americans and other racial and cultural minority groups."

The tendency by researchers to view foreign students collectively in terms of their socio-cultural adjustment to the host society, places a limitation on achieving a thorough understanding of the social and cultural dynamics involved. The unique socio-cultural orientations which foreign students bring with them from their own societies must be viewed as influential in predicting their abilities to cope with the host society. Although some studies have sought to assess the impact of regions of the world and country of origin on students' adjustment, they have generally failed to supply concrete definitions of the phenomenon. For instance, Spaulding and Flack (1976) concluded that students from Western developed nations tend to be better assimilated than those from non-Western and developing nations. Similarly, Pruitt (1978) concluded that French-speaking Africans do not assimilate as readily as English-speaking Africans. Yet without a more detailed and universally applicable definition of the term 'assimilation', the conclusions reached from such multi-national and multi-regional studies are at best tentative.

Although the processes of assimilation and acculturation may be distinct enough to warrant the use of separate terms, they both encompass the notion of change. When a group undergoes either process, a transition takes place from one social or cultural system to another. The net result is that the values, role expectations and behavior

patterns which were acceptable in the former system, are either inadequate or unacceptable in the new system. The task becomes one of adapting to new social and cultural patterns in order to function effectively within the new environment.

As a result, socio-cultural change provides the theoretical basis for understanding the distinction between assimilation and acculturation. The phrase 'socio-cultural' actually encompasses two distinct concepts which must be defined. The term social pertains to relations between persons. Similarly, social structure may be defined as:

the set of crystallized social relationships which the members of a society have with each other. These relationships place members in groups, large or small, permanent or temporary, formally organized or unorganized and which relate them to the major institutional activities of the society, such as economic and occupational life, religion, marriage and the family, education and government (Gordon, 1964:30-31).

In other words, social structure refers to social relationships in a society which are patterned and repetitious in nature, rather than occasional and capricious.

Culture, in contrast, may be defined as "the social heritage of man or the ways of acting and doing things which are passed down from one generation to the next" (Gordon, 1964:32). Culture is therefore the way of life of a society, consisting of prescribed ways of behaving or norms of conduct, beliefs, values and skills.

These two concepts, social structure and culture, are key factors in comprehending the distinction between assimilation and acculturation. Assimilation, as it is sociologically defined, consists of a series of changes, including cultural, social structural and others, which a group

may undergo upon arrival to a new society (Gordon, 1964:70). Cultural patterns are usually the first to undergo such change. In this stage, the in-coming group adopts many traits, including the cultural values, beliefs and norms of conduct of the host society. This stage is typically known as cultural assimilation, or more specifically as acculturation.

The next major stage in the assimilation process involves the entrance of the group into both formal and informal relationships with the host society. In other words, once a group has successfully completed its immersion into the societal network of the host society, it is said to have become structurally assimilated.

Although there are other stages in the assimilation process, including marital and civic assimilation, structural assimilation is considered to be the hallmark of the process (Gordon, 1964:81). Large-scale entrance into the informal relationships of the host society is regarded to be both a difficult and complex sociological accomplishment.

Gordon uses the example of the assimilation of minority groups into American society to demonstrate this proposition. For many minority groups who have arrived in the United States in recent years, the process of cultural and structural assimilation has proceeded with little difficulty. Such groups as the German and Scandinavian Protestants for example, have become easily absorbed into the predominantly Anglo-Saxon socio-cultural traditions of American society. However, for other minorities, such as Blacks, Puerto-Ricans, Jews and Catholics, the assimilation process has been more problematic. Although

these groups have largely adopted American cultural values and behaviors, they have encountered structural segregation. Such groups have been historically barred from the dominant organizations and institutions of American society, and have achieved progress only in recent years.

This notion of between-group variation in the assimilation process is central to Gordon's analysis of minority groups in American society. The fact that some groups have been more easily and successfully assimilated than others leads to the suggestion that there may have been certain socio-cultural factors which affected this process. It is likely that there existed similarities between German, Scandinavian and other northern European socio-cultural systems which facilitated the assimilation of these groups into American society, whereas the diversity of other groups, especially in terms of their religious and racial differences, appears to have contributed to their lack of assimilation into mainstream American society.

The major purpose of this brief theoretical overview has been to highlight two major aspects of the assimilation/acculturation process. The first aspect to be emphasized was the notion of socio-cultural change, or the modifications in social and/or cultural orientations of an in-coming group towards those of the host society. Therefore, in order for cultural assimilation or acculturation to occur, a group's values, beliefs and norms of conduct must be modified to those of the host society. Similarly, once a group has changed its social structural patterns to those of the host society, structural assimilation is said to have taken place. Full entrance into the groups and institutions of

the host society, signifies that the hallmark of the assimilation process has been achieved.

The second major aspect of assimilation/acculturation to be stressed was the notion of between-group variations in the process. Gordon's analysis of minority groups in American society demonstrates that not all groups achieve an equal level of assimilation. For some groups, the assimilation process may be relatively uncomplicated, perhaps because of certain socio-cultural factors they have in common with the host society. Not only are these groups successful in absorbing the cultural values and norms of the host society, but they are also freely admitted into formal and informal relationships with its members. For other groups, the assimilation process may be less successful, terminating at the cultural assimilation stage. The inability of such groups to achieve structural assimilation may be indirectly due to their diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Fundamental differences in social and cultural patterns may prevent both their absorption and acceptance into the host society on a structural level.

It should be clear from this discussion that any attempt to assess the assimilation of various groups into the host society must include both an analysis of the extent to which these groups have undergone social and cultural change, as well as an examination of variations between such groups with respect to changes made.

THE PROBLEM

With this theoretical perspective in mind, we can examine the literature concerning foreign student adjustment with increased knowledge of the social and cultural orientations these individuals bring with them to the host society. For example, it has been argued by researchers thus far, that foreign students may be engaged in a process of assimilation, acculturation or both. Many researchers suggest that the result of such processes has led to the lack of integration of foreign students into the host society and the adoption of the role of outsiders.

Previous studies have been criticized, both in terms of their failure to provide universally applicable definitions of assimilation and acculturation, and in terms of their inability to examine student's distinctive socio-cultural backgrounds as a factor in the process. If Gordon's model of assimilation were to be adopted, complete with its notion of socio-cultural change and between-group variation, a more inclusive and defensible line of reasoning may be established.

In other words, the extent to which assimilation has been achieved by foreign students could be determined by discovering the degree to which these individuals have modified their socio-cultural patterns to those of the host society. More specifically, students' cultural backgrounds could be explored in order to assess the extent to which values, beliefs and norms of conduct have been modified to those of the host society. Similarly, students' social structural patterns could be analyzed in an attempt to discover the degree to which they have entered into formal and informal relationships with members of the host society.

It will be recalled from Gordon's analysis of minority groups in American society that those groups who possess certain socio-cultural features in common with the host society appear to assimilate more fully than groups who are more diverse in this respect. Since the foreign student population is representative of students from a variety of socio-cultural systems, assessment of between-group variations in assimilation may be possible. Therefore, by determining the extent to which various groups of students have modified their socio-cultural patterns, conclusions may be drawn regarding which groups, if any, have become more fully assimilated than others. It may be further possible to attribute these variations in assimilation patterns to socio-cultural congruence or incongruence with the host society.

The intention of the present study was to investigate these issues as they pertain to a specific population of foreign students at the University of Manitoba. The aim was to achieve a more thorough understanding of the assimilation patterns of these individuals through a description of their experiences in Canadian society. Therefore, the technique of semi-structured interviewing was utilized as a means of gaining such information from students. Since it was the researcher's ultimate aim to determine possible between-group variations in the assimilation patterns of foreign students, it was necessary to select participants from more than one socio-cultural system in the world. As a result, students in the present study were representative of two major and contrastingly different socio-cultural systems, including the countries of Africa and those of the industrialized West.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study has significance from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Theoretically, it has questioned the tendency by researchers to view the assimilation patterns of all groups of foreign students equally, without consideration of their distinctive socio-cultural backgrounds. It is believed that before conclusions can be drawn regarding the 'incomplete assimilation' of foreign students, examinations should be conducted on both the social and cultural orientations students bring with them from their own societies.

Secondly, the current study has addressed the lack of clarification and consensus in the foreign student literature regarding the terms 'assimilation' and 'acculturation'. Unless more universally applicable definitions are utilized for each of these terms, they will continue to be used in a haphazard manner by researchers. This study had endeavoured to use more sociologically applicable definitions for these terms in an attempt to accurately classify the processes in which foreign students are believed to be engaged.

The present study also has theoretical significance in that it has chosen a semi-structured interview approach to the analysis of foreign student adjustment. Most studies have used questionnaires in an effort to gain information on the adjustment of foreign students. These questionnaires usually consist of items describing potential adjustment problems that the students are to rank in order of importance. Few studies have been conducted in which individual students provide accounts of their experiences since arriving in the host society. The researcher believed that in order to obtain the necessary amount of

information on foreign students' socio-cultural backgrounds and modifications, an interview approach would be equally appropriate. Perhaps this technique may even be more advantageous in that the data gathered from interviews can be recorded in detail, thereby enabling others to understand the experiences of those under study. Hence, the present study, in choosing the technique of semi-structured interviews to gain information, has departed from the more commonly used survey procedures.

There are practical reasons for this study in addition to theoretical justifications. The importance of this study ranges from the micro-level, pertaining to individual foreign students to the macro-level, in which wide ranging, societal ramifications can be derived. From the foreign student perspective, it may be said that the socio-cultural adjustment process can vary tremendously, depending upon the individual. For some students, it may be a relatively uncomplicated process, resulting in positive interaction patterns with members of the host society. For others, the existence of socio-cultural differences may provide barriers to the establishment of effective communication with members of the host society. If such problems exist whereby some students are more assimilated than others, it is essential that these problems be acknowledged and acted upon by trained personnel. Methods to detect and resolve adjustment problems, may result in a more harmonious and successful stay for students in the host society.

Secondly, from an educational perspective, it is apparent that an institution of higher learning has the responsibility of transmitting knowledge to its entire student population, to the maximum degree of

efficiency. If a segment of the population is experiencing difficulties due to the socio-cultural adjustment process then educational deficits may occur. Since students' relationships with other students and professors are important elements in the learning process, the institution should attempt to facilitate such communication wherever possible. Facilities should be provided which promote the integration of foreign students into both the university setting and the host society. Such activities may range from personal counselling to the organization of combined foreign and local student gatherings designed to foster successful academic and social relationships.

From a broader societal perspective, the adjustment of foreign students has implications for both the host society and the countries from which students come. The students' experiences in the host society will be shared with fellow students and societal members upon re-entry into their own countries. If negative, these experiences may have a correspondingly negative impact on others, such that the resulting perceptions of the host society and its educational system could be affected. The impact of unsuccessful foreign student adjustments may be equally felt in the host society causing substantial decreases in recruitment and enrollment. Therefore, a more thorough understanding of the socio-cultural adjustment problems foreign students have encountered could prove to be advantageous in future international relations.

Chapter II

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the previous chapter was to highlight the major theoretical issues surrounding the socio-cultural adjustment of foreign students and to clarify some issues which require further investigation. The goals of the present study were stated, as was the theoretical and practical significance of the project. The present chapter will be devoted to describing the necessary procedures used to achieve these goals. It will therefore focus on sampling techniques, research design, and the limitations of the study.

THE SAMPLE

The sample for the present study was comprised of 38 foreign students in attendance at the University of Manitoba. Due to the limitations in being able to locate a sizeable number of students to participate in a study of this nature, the researcher required formal assistance. The International Centre for Students located on campus was able to comply with the researcher's request. This office, functioning largely as a clearinghouse for foreign student assistance, contains an active list of all foreign students presently enrolled at the University.

The researcher asked the Director of the Centre to select 150 students from the list. These students were to be representative of a limited number of socio-cultural systems in the world. Such limitations in selection would hopefully enable the researcher to make comparisons regarding any between-group variations in assimilation to Canadian society. Therefore, the regions of the world were restricted to the countries of Africa and those of the industrialized West.

Each of the 150 students was sent a letter outlining the major objectives of the study (see Appendix A), and requesting their participation. Forty-six students responded and were willing to participate in the study. However, for various reasons, 6 students could not be located and 2 chose to withdraw before being interviewed. Thus, 38 foreign students took part and were representative of the following countries: Australia (3); Botswana (2); England (2); France (4); West Germany (5); Ireland (1); Kenya (6); Malawi (1); New Zealand (1); Nigeria (3); Tanzania (3); the United States (6); and Zambia (1). Within this sample of students, there were 27 males and 11 females.

Students were contacted by telephone before the interviews commenced and appointments were set up at their earliest convenience. The interviews were conducted in the researcher's office on campus using a tape recorder. The duration of the interviews ranged from twenty minutes to one hour. Each student was asked a series of questions concerning his/her socio-cultural background, necessary modifications since arrival to Canada, and interaction patterns with others, including fellow nationals and members of Canadian society (see Appendix C).

RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research strategy employed by this study used semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to focus the interview, yet permit the interviewee to define the situation. Although the interviewer approaches the interviewee with a certain set of questions to be answered, the nature of the interview is flexible, allowing for variation in questions and responses. Through a guided conversation, the interviewer can uncover a range of feelings and perceptions on a given topic. Likewise, the interviewee can speak freely and in his own terms about a series of concerns the researcher may bring to the interaction (Lofland, 1971).

Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher can gain a degree of subjective understanding. That is, the researcher strives to develop relationships with subjects based on trust and empathy.

The data which emerge from semi-structured interviews are usually in the form of descriptions and dialogue. Research reports often contain quotations to illustrate and substantiate the propositions of the study (Patten, 1982). Moreover, the development of theory often takes place after the data have been collected in an attempt to explain what has been observed (Bogdan and Bicklen, 1982).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were two major limitations to the present study. The first limitation is in relation to the relatively small sample size involved. The accounts and experiences of 38 students may not necessarily be comparable with other foreign students at the University of Manitoba. Similarly, the researcher's findings on the assimilation of these individuals will not constitute an accurate representation of the total population of foreign students in Canada. Hence, the small number of students involved in this study imposes restrictions on drawing conclusions relating to the assimilation of foreign students into Canadian society.

The second major limitation concerns the interview itself as a means of gaining information. Since the interviewer is usually the only individual involved in collecting data from subjects, there is always the possibility of his/her subjective involvement in the interaction. In other words, either consciously or unconsciously, the interviewer may verbally prompt the subjects into providing the desired information. Similarly, the subject may feel obliged to say what the interviewer wants to hear for many reasons, including time pressures and social desirability. The use of a tape recorder may have the opposite effect of intimidating the subjects or inhibiting their responses. Furthermore, in the analysis of interview transcripts, the researcher may impose his/her interpretations on subjects' statements, thereby biasing their accounts (Katzner, Cook and Crouch, 1982:102) . Therefore, when considered collectively, there are many aspects of the interview which may reduce the credibility of information gained from it.

Clearly then, it may be said that there are obvious research limitations involved. Nonetheless, the present study is exploratory in nature, and designed to investigate the impact of socio-cultural factors on the adjustment of foreign students to the host society. Through a semi-structured interview approach, concentrating on individual interpretations, it was hoped that a more thorough understanding could be gained of the socio-cultural adjustment these students encounter.

Chapter III

RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings of the study. Emphasis will be placed on presenting the discernible trends and processes regarding the proposed assimilation of foreign students into Canadian society. Since cultural assimilation is considered to be first in a series of processes leading to the complete assimilation of an in-coming group into the host society, this phenomenon will be examined initially. An analysis of structural assimilation experienced by these students will then follow, helping to provide an insight into the extent to which both cultural and social modifications have been made. Excerpts from the interviews conducted with foreign students are used to illustrate and substantiate the findings.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

Cultural assimilation involves modifications in the way of life of an in-coming group towards that of the host society. The way of life of a specific group refers to prescribed ways of behaving, beliefs, values and skills which have been transmitted from one generation to the next by socialization. When cultural assimilation takes place, these prescribed behaviours become absorbed into those of the host society. The term 'acculturation' is often used to describe this particular form of assimilation (Gordon, 1964).

Two types of cultural patterns are affected when a group undergoes cultural assimilation. These cultural patterns may be referred to as extrinsic and intrinsic traits. Extrinsic traits tend to reflect the adjustment of a group to its local environment and hence are often viewed as cultural by-products or expressions. Such traits are readily discerned and may include "manner, dress, patterns of emotional expression and minor oddities in pronunciation and inflection of language" (Gordon, 1964:79). Intrinsic traits, in contrast, are considered to be more closely attached to the core of the cultural heritage of a group and to derive directly from that heritage. Such traits are less discernible than extrinsic traits and may include "religious beliefs and practices, attitudes and value systems, folk recreational patterns and sense of a common past" (Gordon, 1964:79).

Cultural assimilation is said to have taken place once both extrinsic and intrinsic traits have been modified to those of the host society. In other words, for a particular group to be considered culturally assimilated, not only must it modify overt patterns of behavior, such as emotional expression and language pronunciation, but it must also change more covert behaviors, including its attitudes and value systems.

These basic aspects of the cultural assimilation process were used to help indicate the extent to which foreign students have become assimilated into Canadian society. For example, through asking questions pertaining to students' cultural backgrounds, the researcher was able to extract information on both extrinsic and intrinsic cultural traits. In addition, by asking these students the degree to which they have made

adjustments since arrival, the researcher was further able to detect what changes, if any, have occurred in the extrinsic and intrinsic traits identified. The examination of the cultural assimilation of foreign students into Canadian society begins with a presentation of extrinsic traits.

Extrinsic Traits

Extrinsic traits, as mentioned above, are those patterns which express the cultural heritage of a group and may be directly observed. Language, as an example of a cultural expression, is capable of transforming arbitrary sounds into ideas, desires, meanings, experiences and traditions which can be communicated from one generation to another. Since it is a verbal system of communication, language is an easily recognizable aspect of culture.

When the students were asked questions concerning the differences they had noticed between Canadian society and their own societies, variations in language use were prevalent in their comments. More specifically, minor oddities in pronunciation and inflection of English were identified by all of the major groups of students, regardless of their country of origin. In other words, linguistic variation was reported as commonly by the American and British students as it was by the French, West German and African students. One American student provided a typical description of the types of linguistic differences students from the United States in general, had detected:

We use different words to refer to things in the United States. I notice that people here use the term 'shopping buggies' instead of 'shopping carts'. We pronounce things differently too. Instead of saying process or progress, Americans say process or progress.

These minor differences in pronunciation and inflection of English appear to have caused a few misunderstandings in communication for some students. An Australian student spoke for many others when he conveyed the feeling of embarrassment which often accompanies such misunderstandings. He described a situation he encountered while playing baseball with some Canadians:

I suddenly noticed that people around me were killing themselves laughing at what I had said and I couldn't understand why. They were telling me that I had caught a 'fly pop' and I said I thought that was like a 'pizza pop'.

The African students, in particular, reported having experienced a great number of incidences of linguistic misunderstanding since arriving in Canada. One Kenyan described a typical language problem faced by African students in general:

I've had problems being understood. Although I speak English fluently, the accent is different. It was frustrating at first, because I knew I was speaking perfect English, but people kept saying 'pardon me?'

Similarly, a Nigerian student identified the extent to which these misunderstandings could occur:

Even in the classroom, I have found myself misunderstood, especially when the teacher and most of the students are Canadian. I often have to repeat my sentences over and over until someone understands what I've said and can say it outloud for everyone else to hear.

Although students spoke of having made concerted efforts to modify their speech patterns to those of Canadian society, few cases of successful linguistic change were reported. In other words, despite the fact that many students were attempting to modify their speech peculiarities, most still admitted to having occasional difficulties communicating with Canadians. The only possible exceptions were the American

and British students, who identified having no present difficulties in communicating in English as it is spoken in Canadian society. In fact, one American student admitted to having become 'Canadianized' in her use of expressions:

When I go to a Canadian McDonald's restaurant, the cashier says 'is that for here or to take out?' In the U.S. they ask 'is that to eat in or to go?' The other day, I surprised myself by giving the Canadian reply 'to take out' instead of 'to go'.

Therefore, it may be said that variations in language use were commonly cited by foreign students when comparing Canadian society with their own societies. Such variations included different word usages, word pronunciations and accent of the English language.

Custom provides a further example of a readily observable form of social behavior. Custom, as it has been defined, refers to a rule or standard of behavior defined by the shared expectations of two or more people regarding what behavior is to be considered socially acceptable. When these standards of behavior have persisted for a long period of time in a society, they become traditional and receive some degree of formal recognition (Theodorsen, 1969:101). Therefore, similar to language, custom is a social product which may be directly observed and interpreted.

In the present study, foreign students identified several custom-related differences when comparing Canadian society with their own societies. These custom-related differences, however, were limited to three of the major groups of students, including the African, French and West German students. A customary difference commonly cited by African

students was the variation in greeting patterns detected between Canadian society and their own societies. One Tanzanian student spoke for many Africans when he described what he perceived as an absence of friendly interaction between strangers in Canada:

Back home, if you are on a bus, it is ordinary to greet the person sitting next to you, even if you don't know that person. Or when you make a phone call, you first greet the person who answers the telephone, before saying 'Can I speak to ...?'

A student from Zambia provided another typical description of such variations in custom as reported by African students:

People back home say hello to each other even if they don't know each other. It is quite different from here. When you are on a bus here, everyone sits and nobody talks, or in an elevator, everyone looks up and no one talks.

The French students also identified differences in custom between Canadian society and their own society. They tended to focus, however, on variations in patterns of emotional expression or gestures that they had noticed since being in Canada. A gesture may be defined as "any physical movement, posture or facial expression that communicates a culturally standardized meaning, such as raising an eyebrow or waving goodbye" (Theodorsen, 1969:173).

When people meet here, even good friends, there are no explicit signs of affection. In France, there is always kissing when you meet people you know, especially friends.

I notice that when people talk here, there is virtually no movement of the hands or arms. They usually remain folded or at peoples' sides. In France, it is very common to wave your hands around when you are engaged in a conversation with someone. People tend to stare at me here when I do that...

The West German students also remarked on variations in customary practices between societies. They tended to emphasize the presence of

formality in Canadian patterns of socializing as opposed to the relative absence of such formality in West German society:

Here, you have to make an appointment to go for lunch or dinner at a friend's house. You can not go without calling first. Whereas in Germany, things are much less structured and spontaneous. You just drop in when you feel like it.

In terms of attempts to modify the various custom-related behaviors identified by foreign students, little indication was given to the researcher that such changes were underway. In other words, the African, French and West German students, who commented on having different customary practices in comparison with those found in Canadian society, did not convey the impression that they were engaged in a process of modifying these practices. When asked what kinds of adjustments they found necessary to make upon arrival to Canada, the overwhelming majority did not mention adjustments concerning custom. The only noteworthy exception was one African student, who after repeated failures at greeting strangers in Canada, eventually decided to abandon the practice:

One change I've made is that in Canada, I've learned not to greet strangers. I don't bother anymore because sometimes people would get suspicious and wonder why I was greeting them.

Therefore, it may be said that with respect to extrinsic traits, there is little evidence to suggest that the foreign students who were interviewed were involved in a process of modifying their former patterns to those of Canadian society. At least in considering the linguistic and customary differences identified, there was no indication that these overt cultural behaviors had become absorbed into those predominant in Canadian society. In order to assess the full impact to

which students' cultural backgrounds have been affected, it is necessary to examine the extent to which intrinsic traits have been modified.

Intrinsic Traits

Intrinsic traits, as mentioned earlier, are considered to be vital ingredients of the cultural heritage of a group and are less discernible in comparison to extrinsic traits. Intrinsic aspects of culture refer to the assumptions and premises underlying behavior and thought which are seldom verbalized or recognized. Values provide a concrete example of an intrinsic cultural trait. They are accepted not merely as overt statements to which each group member assents, but as the individual commitment of each member, who has internalized them in the process of socialization. Values are "abstract, generalized principles of behavior which the members of a group feel a strong, emotionally toned, positive commitment and which provide a standard for judging specific acts and goals" (Theodorsen, 1969:455).

In the present study, several of the major groups of students interviewed, outlined differences in value systems between Canadian society and their own societies, including the American, French, West German and African students. Beginning with the American students, it was noteworthy that their discussion of value-related differences focused mainly on the issue of patriotism and what they described as the relative absence of it in Canada:

There are differences in how people feel about their countries. Americans have a strong sense of identity about being American. I don't get that impression of Canadians. I've met a lot who say that they are Scottish or French, but I don't get the feeling that they have a central bond about being Canadian.

These values were echoed by many American students who remarked similarly:

I'm proud of being American. While I have a strong patriotic feeling...an American identity, a lot of Canadians don't seem to have that about Canada.

A few American students attributed the lack of patriotism in Canada to its tolerance for ethnic diversity and governmental policies designed to encourage multiculturalism:

Its much more ethnically diverse here than where I'm from in the U.S. (Arizona). But it is to Canada's disadvantage to emphasize these differences because it tends to split people up, rather than draw them together.

Still other American students chose to criticize Manitoba's French language policy as being too divisive and an obstacle to national unity:

A common language is a unifying factor in a country. When you start splintering too much, you get errors in communication. When cultural differences are emphasized, animosity and insult build up...I'm willing to bet there are more Polish people in Manitoba than French.

Students from France and West Germany also identified what could be classified as value differences between Canadian society and their own. For these students, the apparent lack of political involvement and support on the part of Canadian citizens was a major source for comment:

There is less political involvement here at the grass roots level than in France. People are more passive here when it comes to politics and they don't get as involved as they do at home.

In Germany, there is more awareness of environmental concerns, the peace movement and world events in general. Here, there is an 'I don't care' attitude by the public and especially by university students. The German public and university students are more politically involved and concerned with the affairs of their country.

Although the African students also reported on contrasting attitudinal and value systems between Canadian society and their own societies, the nature of these value differences were noticeably different from those identified by the American, French and West German students. The value differences highlighted by the African students were more representative of variations in the basic structures of societies in general. For example, one Tanzanian student, in describing differences between the societies, touched upon the greater importance attached to cooperation and sharing in African society, as compared to Canadian society:

Back home, because of rural life, society is much closer. There is more community behavior and everything is done by the group. Whereas here, the responsibility is on the individual and it is up to him to make it on his own.

The cooperative nature of African society appears to have placed a corresponding emphasis on the extended family, as reported on by a student from Botswana:

When you grow up at home, you look after your parents and you keep in close contact even once you're married. I'm used to looking after myself, my wife, my parents, my brothers and my sisters. Here, people seem to be concerned with just their immediate family.

There also seems to be fundamental differences between Canadian society and African society with regard to certain aspects of the marital institution, namely the tenacity of the marital bond itself, as explained by a Tanzanian student:

Not so many people get divorced back home as they do here. It's not easy for people to separate for good. If I fight with my wife, an agreement is made by the elders. The old people will fine us and we will get back together.

In addition to the emphasis on the endurance of the institutions of marriage and the extended family in African society, there appears also to be an equally important value attached to the fulfillment of needs related to survival, as described by a student from Kenya:

In this part of the world, it seems as if peoples' priorities are to acquire as much wealth and as many material things as possible. In Africa, our priorities are different...our lives are less complex and our concerns are more basic.

For the African students, then, it appears as if the value differences detected between Canadian society and their own societies are more directly related to fundamental contrasts in ways of life and the nature of societies in general, than for the other groups of students interviewed.

Nonetheless, in considering the value differences cited by the African students together with those of the other major groups of foreign students, there is an important similarity. No clear indication was given by any of these groups of students that a modification towards Canadian value systems was underway. The American students, for example, did not convey the impression that they were abandoning their sense of patriotism towards the United States in favor of a Canadian identity. In fact, some American students commented on having experienced a resurgence in their patriotic feelings towards the United States since they have been living in Canada:

My sense of home has broadened to the whole U.S. since I've been here. Even though I'm from Texas, I find that when I'm travelling and I cross the border...say from New Brunswick to Maine...I feel at home and proud to be in America.

Similarly, the French and West German students did not admit to having become less interested or concerned with the political affairs of their countries. With respect to the Africans, any modifications in their value systems and attitudes were not revealed to the researcher. For some African students, the possibility of modifying these attitudes was a disturbing consideration:

In Botswana, when you say family, you refer to many people, including you aunts, uncles and cousins. I could never change my view of the family to that which Canadians have. If I did, I think at some stage I would feel guilty because I would know that I have to take care of these people...still..in some way.

Concepts of work and leisure provide another example of an intrinsic cultural trait which, similar to attitudes and value systems, are not directly observable and are internalized during the socialization process. Concepts of work refer to the culturally standardized attitudes which members of a group have towards disciplined and persistent activities devoted to achieving a goal. Concepts of leisure refer to the culturally accepted attitudes toward the substitution of a preferred activity which provides diversion and pleasure. "Such leisure activities satisfy strongly internalized values and sentiments in a situation free of the everyday pressures of social obligation." (Theodorsen, 1969:229).

Variations in culturally standardized concepts of work and leisure were identified by three of the major groups of students in the present study, including the French, West Germans and Africans. These variations were concentrated around two major themes, namely the amount of time devoted to work and leisure as well as the specific activities involved. The French and West German students, for example, reported a

greater amount of time devoted to leisure in their countries as opposed to Canada:

People work harder at their jobs here than they do in France and they also have less free time. In France, the work day is shorter and the hours are more flexible. Vacations are longer too...5 weeks instead of 3.

I've noticed that people here really have their days structured, especially their work days. In Germany, I'm used to a less rigid timetable. At night, meal times are long and leisurely. We take hours sometimes to eat supper...just talking over the day's events. Here it is 'eat and run'.

The seemingly greater amount of time devoted to leisure in Europe appears to give rise to different recreational pursuits:

In Germany, for example, there is more art, history and painting. People spend time appreciating these things, whereas in Canada, there is much less exposure to them. Canadians seem to spend their free time watching TV.

Although the African students also identified different work and leisure patterns, they perceived there to be a greater amount of time devoted to leisure in Canada as compared with their own countries:

There is a lot of leisure time here. It seems as if there are always people in the parks, stores and shopping malls with time on their hands...It is a kind of lifestyle which is not known to many people in the developing world.

Some Canadian leisure activities were considered to be both unusual and surprising to many African students:

One difference I've noticed is that Canadians, especially university students, seem to spend a lot more free time in the pubs and discos than we do in Botswana...also we are not used to seeing strippers in the pubs...we don't dislike it, but it's odd.

The French, West German and African students who commented on these various differences in concepts of work and leisure, gave no apparent indication to the researcher that they had adopted Canadian patterns.

As far as the researcher could decipher from the interviews with these students, neither the amount of time devoted to Canadian patterns of work and leisure, or the specific activities involved, were deemed preferable to the patterns in their own societies. In fact, several of the African students described some of the predominant Canadian activities as 'too permissive'. Still other students expressed a clear dissatisfaction with the leisure framework of Canadian society:

I wouldn't be happy in Canada if I stayed permanently and got a job because I would only get 3 weeks vacation. Besides there's more free time and things to do with it in France.

Therefore, it may be said that with respect to intrinsic traits, there is virtually no evidence to suggest that the foreign students who were interviewed were engaged in a process of changing their former cultural patterns to those predominant in Canadian society. At least in considering the differences identified in value systems and the concepts of work and leisure, there was no indication that these covert behaviors were being replaced by Canadian attitudes and values. However, in order to determine the full extent to which foreign students have become assimilated into Canadian society, it is necessary to examine the social structural patterns of these individuals. Only after analyzing the structural changes that these students have undergone, is it possible to make conclusive statements regarding the assimilation of foreign students into Canadian society.

STRUCTURAL ASSIMILATION

Structural assimilation involves modifications in the set of crystallized relationships of a group towards those of the host society. These crystallized relationships connect members of a society to its major institutional activities, such as economic and occupational life, religion, marriage and the family, education and government (Gordon, 1964:30-31). More specifically, in the structural assimilation process, the in-coming group becomes involved in both secondary and primary relationships with members of the host society.

Secondary relationships are those which are largely impersonal, formal and specialized. "The mutual rights and duties of the individuals involved in the relationship are clearly defined and other aspects of their lives are considered irrelevant. Examples of such relationships include those connected with one's job, church or school" (Theodorsen, 1969:372). Primary relationships, in comparison, are those which are "personal, informal and characterized by emotional involvement. The whole personality of the individual is revealed in such relationships as opposed to just a segment of it. Examples include the family, the child's play group and the adult social clique" (Gordon, 1964:31).

Structural assimilation is said to have occurred once an in-coming group has entered into both secondary and primary relationships with members of the host society. Since primary relationships are representative of greater personal involvement, entrance into these relationships is considered to be a more complex achievement. As mentioned in Gordon's Assimilation in American Life (1964), many groups do not

succeed in attaining this level of absorption into the host society, because of the requirement of greater attitude acceptance involved. As a result of these complexities, structural assimilation is considered to be the hallmark of the assimilation process itself. "Once structural assimilation has occurred, either simultaneously or subsequently to acculturation, all of the other types of assimilation will naturally follow" (Gordon, 1964:81).

This approach to the analysis of structural assimilation was utilized in the assessment of the assimilation patterns of foreign students into Canadian society. During the course of the interviews, students were asked questions concerning the extent to which they have interacted with members of Canadian society. The number of responses enabled the researcher to separate the interactions into those pertaining to secondary and primary relationships. The examination of these responses will begin with a presentation of students' secondary relationships.

Secondary Relationships

Secondary relationships, as mentioned above, are those relationships that are impersonal, without emotional involvement and specialized. The persons involved are simply regarded as performing a function, and thus are replaceable by any other person who can perform the role competently or who fulfills certain requirements. The interrelated system of social roles connected with the educational institution provides an illustration of secondary relationships. Within the formal educational environment, emphasis is placed on the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. In order for effective training to be accomplished, these

relationships must be characterized by specificity and the roles of individuals must be clearly defined. It appeared to be common for foreign students to establish relationships with others within the educational institution. In fact, all of the major groups of students identified having formed friendly relationships within the university setting. Their comments tended to focus mainly on the relationship between professor and student:

Relationships with professors are more friendly and informal here than in Australia. They are much more approachable and you can tell them your problems.

Many students viewed the relationship between professor and student in Canadian society to be one based on cooperation and mutual effort, in contrast to their own societies:

Contact with professors is good here. There is mutual effort, whereas in West Germany, professors are more solitary and tend to have a superior attitude. It is much easier to get help and information from them here.

The African students expressed similarly the notion of professor-student interdependence in Canada, especially at the graduate level:

It is a more relaxed attitude between professor and student here. Professors are more approachable and work with you on an almost equal basis. You can tell them your problems, joke with them and that impresses me. That way, you are able to get more out of them. For example, here I can work with my professor and see him everyday if I want...he's interested in my progress.

In addition to the establishment of beneficial relationships with professors, students also appeared to have formed successful academic relationships with fellow students. One student from France provided a typical description of such relationships as perceived by foreign students in general:

I get along well with the people in my department and have made some close working relationships with Canadian and foreign students alike...Most of the time though, people forget that I'm a foreigner, they think I'm one of them...Canadian.

Many students, especially the Africans, commented on the interest which Canadian students displayed in wanting to learn more about other countries:

I had a warm welcome in my department from Canadian graduate students. Each of us knows what the other is working on, so that if one of us comes across information that would help another, we share it...Canadian students have been very helpful to me and they are always asking me questions, wanting to know more about my country.

The social roles connected with the institution of religion provide another example of secondary relationships. The persons involved in these roles are primarily concerned with the development, teaching and perpetuation of religious insight and knowledge. Therefore, relationships between individuals are functional, clearly defined and specialized.

The formation of secondary relationships connected with the institution of religion was identified by a portion of the foreign student sample interviewed. African students, for the most part, commented on associations they had established within the church setting in Canadian society. Nigerian students in particular, remarked on relationships they had formed in the Christian community since arrival:

Most of the associations I've made have been with Christians. Christianity gives me a frame of reference...I attend my own church in Winnipeg, visit other churches and socialize with people from different churches during coffee fellowship.

Similarly, other African students were impressed by the extent to which members of the Canadian Christian community would go to offer help to fellow Christians:

Most people I've met have been through Church. Christians here want to make sure you feel at home and give you help, like offering you rides. For instance, although I live in Fort Richmond, if I want to go to church in East Kildonan, they will come all the way out and pick me up.

Therefore, it may be said that foreign students appear to have successfully entered into secondary relationships with Canadians, at least in the educational and church-related spheres. All of the major groups of students interviewed admitted to having established beneficial associations with Canadians on a formal and segmented basis. Hence it is possible to suggest that these individuals may have succeeded in becoming structurally assimilated into Canadian society on a secondary level. In order to assess the full extent to which they have become structurally assimilated, it is now necessary to examine their entrance patterns into personal and informal relations with members of Canadian society.

Primary Relationships

Primary relationships, as mentioned earlier, refer to those relations which are based on frequent and direct contact and are characterized by deep personal and emotional involvement. A primary relationship is not limited to the performance of one specific activity, but involves a variety of common interests and activities. Examples include the marital and familial relationships as well as the adult social clique. The social clique may be defined as "a relatively small, informal,

involuntary group (two persons or more) based on mutual interest and often friendship. The relationships among members of a clique are usually intimate and cooperative" (Theodorsen, 1969:53).

Although only two foreign students admitted to having entered into marital relations with members of Canadian society, several others identified having formed relationships within the Canadian social clique. The establishment of these primary relations was viewed as a desirable and successful accomplishment by many of the groups of students interviewed. The American, Australian, British, French, West German and New Zealand students expressed having had minimal difficulties in entering into friendships with Canadians outside the university environment. The Americans, in particular, expressed having few problems in forming Canadian friendships:

I've had no problems making friendships with Canadians. I never made a point of associating with other Americans...people can't tell I'm from a different culture.

Since I've arrived, I have surrounded myself with many people, including Canadian and other foreign students. I didn't go seeking out other Americans. There aren't that many differences between the societies, so it was easy.

Similar successful patterns of interactions with Canadians were reported by the Australian, British and New Zealand students:

I don't really associate much with New Zealanders. I've made more Canadian friends...my boyfriend is Canadian.

The French and West German students similarly reported relative ease in establishing Canadian friendships:

Having Canadian friends gives you an idea of what Canadian society is like. I wanted to do that, rather than get a watered-down German version of Canadian society. So I made a lot of Canadian friends and tried to integrate. People don't know I'm a foreigner and I don't feel like one.

The African students, in contrast to the other groups, expressed more interest in cultivating friendships with students from their own countries. One student from Kenya attributed the stress of being in a new and unfamiliar environment as a possible source for this attitude:

When you first come to a new society, it is very difficult to reach out to members of that society. Human beings feel comfortable when they have a base group to operate from. When you are alone, you feel insecure. But when you feel you have got your people, then psychologically, you feel secure. From your own group, you can then radiate outwards and make more friends.

Similarly, another African student remarked

When I first came, there were a lot of us Kenyans who knew each other from the research station back home. We helped each other and gave encouragement, so I didn't feel too lonely...it would have been worse if I was alone.

Some African students expressed a certain amount of hesitance in knowing the appropriate social norms involved in establishing Canadian friendships:

I have both types of friends, Canadian and Kenyan. But I haven't really figured out how to socialize with my Canadian friends. With my Kenyan friends, although I didn't know them before I came, they are from my country and I know how to greet them. I shake their hands, talk Swahili to them...and that makes me feel really good.

Taking into account the various social and cultural differences African students detected between Canadian society and their own societies, these students were asked how comfortable they felt in Canada. Although many responded by saying that they did not feel out of place, others said that they felt like strangers, yet came to Canada fully expecting to feel this way:

I am a stranger but I recognize that, so nothing worries me. Once you know what limitations you are working under, you appreciate them. Every foreign student should accept the fact that this is an alien place and you are here to study.

Similarly, another student commented:

I never had an impression of being part of Canadian society so it really doesn't bother me that much if I'm excluded from Canadian activities, because I believe I came here for one thing..to get an education and go home.

A sense of detachment from Canadian society became further evident as some African students described their general lack of interaction with Canadians:

Outside the learning environment, socially, the contacts I've had with Canadians have been few, really...the only contacts I've had have been for invitations for Christmas dinner. It's very rare that I've had a Canadian friend. I tend to associate more with Malawis.

Still other students stated a preference for restricting their friendships to fellow Africans and those from their own countries:

I associate more with Kenyans because I'm more comfortable with them. I know what to expect from them...someone from a different culture, you don't know what to expect.

Although a lack of informal interaction with Canadians and a desire to maintain friendships with fellow nationals, characterized the attitudes of most African students, there were occasional exceptions. A few students expressed the importance of individual initiative in attempting to cross social and cultural boundaries:

People tend to shunt strangers. This is natural of any society because others will label individuals who do not shunt them as deviants. We do the same thing in Zambia when expatriots come...it's not that you don't want to meet them, it's just a natural hesitancy. What a stranger needs to do is get closer and break through the society...instill confidence in the people. Then they will gain confidence in you and they will consider you one of them.

Making friends in a new country depends much on the person. If you want people to be friendly, you have to be friendly to them.



Therefore, with respect to the entrance of foreign students into primary relationships with members of Canadian society, it appears as if some between-group variations have occurred. More specifically, in relation to their entrance into Canadian social cliques, it seems as if some groups have been more successful than others. While the American, Australian, British, French, West German and New Zealand students reported having both an interest and desire in establishing friendships with Canadians, the African students did not. The latter group expressed a greater interest in maintaining relationships with fellow nationals and a hesitance in knowing the appropriate social means in which to establish personal relationships with Canadians. Furthermore, some of these students identified themselves as being detached from Canadian society and stated a preference for remaining detached. Hence, from the perspectives of foreign students' comments, it appears as if differential structural assimilation has taken place on a primary level. Although most students have become involved in informal relationships with Canadians, others have not, possibly indicating the operation of distinct socio-cultural factors.

In summary then, it may be said that although the sample of foreign students in the present study do not appear to have become culturally assimilated into Canadian society, they seem to have made substantial progress toward structural assimilation. Despite the fact that these individuals have not modified their cultural patterns to those predominant in Canadian society, they have expressed both an interest and success in establishing relationships with Canadians, especially on a secondary level. On a primary level, some between-group variation has

occured, with some groups of students reporting more success than others in forming personal relationships with Canadians. However, such variation does not appear to detract from the general consensus among foreign students that their experiences in Canada seem to have been both positive and rewarding.

Chapter IV

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to relate the findings of the present study back to the existing literature concerning foreign students. Emphasis is placed on discussing these results as they pertain to previous studies regarding the assimilation of foreign students, and more specifically to Gordon's model of assimilation put forth in Chapter One. Implications focus on recommendations for further research and educational practice.

DISCUSSION

In recent years, the number of foreign students entering Canadian post-secondary institutions has risen dramatically. In 1974-75, there were less than 20,000 foreign students in Canada. However, by 1982-83, the number had risen to 35,500, indicating an increase of 79 per cent in less than a decade (Berry, 1983:3). In addition to a recent increase in size, the foreign student population in Canada has become equally diversified. The Canadian Bureau for International Education has noted that "there are students in Canada from nearly every country in the world" (C.B.I.E., 1981:10). Canada, at present, attracts students from 174 countries and from all the major areas of the globe, including Africa, Asia, Australasia, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East and the United States (C.B.I.E., 1981).

When these students come to Canada, they bring with them a desire for an education to provide them with the professional, social and personal skills required for a meaningful role in their societies. While pursuing this goal, they must also become involved in the daily life of Canadian society. However, communication in this context requires a number of crucial components, some of which may be beyond the capacity of individual students themselves to comprehend. In other words, there are cultural and social patterns implicit within Canadian society which some students may regard as different from the socio-cultural patterns of their own societies. A certain amount of familiarity and accommodation may be necessary before effective communication can be established.

The present study addresses two major areas of concern which have emerged in the literature regarding foreign student adjustment to the host society. The first area to be questioned was the tendency by researchers to view foreign students collectively in terms of their socio-cultural adjustment patterns. For example, some researchers who have conducted studies on the social status of foreign students have asserted that "foreign students are marginal members of our society. They are a nonentity, often a minority, racially and culturally...their status in Canada restricts them from participating, either economically or socially in the affairs of the country" (Groberman, 1980:157-158). However, these researchers often make no attempt to acknowledge the existence of distinct subgroups within the foreign student population, whose patterns of interaction with the host society may vary. Rather, the assumption is made that all students, regardless of their socio-cultural backgrounds, are nonentities.

Accordingly, this marginal status is said to result in "the tendency for foreign students to withdraw into their own small communities and associate with their own compatriots" (Carey and Mariam, 1980:129). This pattern of isolation is often viewed as arising from the students' attempts to balance the complex values of the host society with the prevailing cultural orientations of their own societies. "Unfortunately, the accomodation of new values and belief systems is usually made at the expense of the student from abroad...detachment from active participation and withdrawl into compatriot communities serves as an effective solution to such conflicts (real or perceived) of values and beliefs" (Carey and Mariam, 1980:130).

This study suggests that, before the social status of foreign students be classified as that of 'marginal', thorough assessments should be made of distinct socio-cultural groups within the foreign student population. In other words, the phenomenon of foreign student isolation may not be as widespread as researchers suggest. Cultural factors can have a substantial impact on the degree of interaction which foreign students have with the host society. Therefore, what some researchers refer to as a marginal foreign student population may in actual fact describe only a few distinct sub-groups, whose socio-cultural orientations differ substantially enough from those of the host society to effect their level of participation within it.

The second major area of concern to be addressed in the present study was the lack of consensus and clarification in the foreign student literature regarding the meaning of the terms 'assimilation' and 'acculturation'. Many researchers have used these terms to describe the

processes in which foreign students are believed to be involved upon arrival to the host society. However, there has been a general failure to supply operational and universally applicable definitions for these terms, resulting in a lack of knowledge and understanding of exactly what these processes entail. When definitions are provided, there is a tendency to equate social and cultural factors with each other, disregarding the fact that they are two distinct concepts, deserving of equally distinct consideration. For example, in Pruitt's 'Adaptation of Foreign Students on American Campuses', assimilation is defined as "interacting freely with people from the host society and accepting their culture" (Pruitt, 1978:145). Similarly, in Berry's 'Psychological Adjustment of Foreign Students in Canada' (1983), the term acculturation is used to define "those modifications which occur due to first-hand contact with another culture, resulting in both socio-cultural and behavioral changes" (Berry, 1983:1).

Furthermore, the terms 'assimilation' and 'acculturation' have often been used inconsistently and interchangeably in the literature to refer to the processes in which foreign students are believed to be involved: "effective assimilation into a new cultural setting requires that the foreign student, to some degree, become acculturated into a complex set of new and often times different set of values, attitudes and beliefs of the host society" (Lee, 1981:10).

The present study has suggested that a more universally applicable, sociological definition be utilized in the discussion of the assimilation patterns of foreign students. The definition of assimilation, put forth by Gordon in Assimilation in American Life (1964), was found to

alleviate many of the problems associated with studies conducted on the adjustment of foreign students. Firstly, by systematically breaking down the concept of assimilation into its constituent variables and suggesting the relationship between such variables, Gordon eliminates much of the confusion regarding the meaning of the term 'assimilation'. He defines the term as a series of changes in the cultural and social patterns of an in-coming group towards those of the host society, thereby clarifying the distinction between culture and social structure. This distinction is essential in order to fully understand the process of assimilation and the various stages it encompasses. Gordon also alleviates much of the uncertainty concerning the difference between acculturation and assimilation by defining the former term as a particular type of assimilation, involving the absorption of cultural traits into the host society. Finally, Gordon acknowledges the fact that not all groups achieve an equal level of assimilation and that between-group variations can occur, often due to differences between the socio-cultural backgrounds of in-coming groups. Those groups which share certain cultural characteristics in common with the host society may assimilate more fully than groups who are more diverse in this respect.

Since the foreign student population is made up of a number of distinctive socio-cultural sub-groups, Gordon's model was viewed as appropriate for the measurement of their assimilation patterns. It was anticipated by the researcher that if information could be collected concerning the degree to which foreign students have modified their cultural and social orientations since arriving in the host society, then assimilation patterns could be determined. Furthermore, if

specific sub-groups of foreign students could be examined, then it may be possible to detect between-group variations in assimilation which may have occurred.

The University of Manitoba campus provided an opportune environment in which to analyze the dynamics of the assimilation process. As a large, western Canadian university with an international reputation, it has a substantial enrollment of foreign students. At the time of the present study, there were 1853 foreign students registered, approximately 8 per cent of the total University of Manitoba population (University of Manitoba International Centre for Students, 1984).

Since it was the intention of the present study to draw comparisons based on between-group variations in assimilation into Canadian society, it was necessary to limit the number of socio-cultural systems to be represented. As a result, letters were sent out to only two major groups of students, those from the countries of Africa, and those from the countries of the industrialized West. Students were then contacted by telephone and interviews were arranged. The total number of participants in the study was 38.

Through a semi-structured interview approach, the researcher sought to gain information on the socio-cultural backgrounds of foreign students. Therefore, questions were asked concerning the degree to which students' societies differ from Canadian society, and any modifications deemed necessary to make upon arrival to Canada. Similarly, students were asked questions regarding their interaction patterns with others, including fellow nationals and members of Canadian society.

The information gained from these interviews has enabled the researcher to challenge three commonly held viewpoints in the existing literature concerning foreign students. Firstly, in contrast to the results obtained by other researchers, the data from the present study suggest that the social status of the foreign student is not necessarily that of an 'outsider' in relation to the host society. From the perspectives of students' comments, it appears as if a considerable amount of interaction has taken place with members of Canadian society, resulting in a generally positive attitude on the part of students. Dissatisfaction with the framework of Canadian society or rejection by Canadians themselves does not seem to have occurred on a large scale, necessitating the development of a pattern of isolation among the foreign student sample interviewed. Therefore, although the term 'marginal' may accurately describe the economic and legal status of foreign students, the present study does not lend support to the use of this term to describe the social status of these students. Foreign students may be forbidden to accept employment and required to obey certain legal restrictions, however, as this study indicates, they are not prevented from effectively participating in the social network of the host society.

Another commonly shared viewpoint among researchers is that foreign students face contradictions in value systems between the host society and their own societies resulting in real or perceived conflicts (Carey and Mariam, 1980). These researchers assert that in order to function effectively within the host society, students must resolve such differences and "become acculturated into the values and attitudes of the host society" (Lee, 1981:10). The results of the present study indicate that

although foreign students detected the existence of value differences between Canadian society and their own societies, these differences do not appear to have culminated in value struggles or conflicts. Students seemed content to acknowledge Canadian values without making attempts to reconcile them with the value orientations of their own societies. Furthermore, these value contrasts do not appear to have detracted from the pursuit of academic goals or the establishment of positive interactions with members of Canadian society. Therefore, the assumption that foreign students must resolve value contradictions, and become assimilated into the values predominant in the host society in order to function effectively, is not supported by the findings of the present study.

Finally, researchers tend to conclude that foreign students are forced to operate within a limited social field due to constraints imposed upon them by the host society. In other words, the formation of small, clique communities is often viewed as a response to the marginal status of foreign students. The results of this study suggest that the formation of such communities may not necessarily be due to the position of foreign students in relation to the larger society, but may be a consciously preferred choice on the part of individuals. Foreign students who expressed a desire to associate with fellow nationals, cited a variety of reasons for this tendency, including greater understanding, encouragement and the presence of cultural similarities. However, these students did not convey the impression that such associations were forced upon them or that they were a response to their placement with respect to the larger Canadian society. Rather, these relationships appeared to be based on personal fulfillment and individual initiative. Therefore, the results of this study contradict the assump-

tion by researchers that operation within a limited social field is a condition externally imposed upon foreign students by the members of the host society.

It will be recalled from Gordon's analysis of the assimilation of minority groups into American society, that modifications in cultural patterns are expected to be the first in a series of changes resulting in the complete assimilation of an in-coming group into the host society. More specifically, extrinsic as well as intrinsic traits of the group are expected to become absorbed into the cultural traits predominant in the host society. As a consequence, in order for a group to be considered culturally assimilated, not only must it have modified overt cultural behaviors, such as language pronunciation and manner, but it must also have changed more covert aspects, such as attitudes and values to those found in the host society.

From the comments made by foreign students in the present study, there is no direct evidence to suggest that these individuals have become culturally assimilated into Canadian society. While the students who were interviewed identified a variety of cultural differences between Canadian society and their own societies, they appeared content to acknowledge these differences without giving serious consideration to their modification.

However, in examining the extrinsic and intrinsic traits identified, it is important to call attention to students' desire to modify one aspect of their cultural background, namely their English language pronunciation. Students' reasons for wanting to modify their speech peculiar-

iarities ranged from a desire to avoid being conspicuous to a need for creating improved understanding. The fact that students indicated both a desire and willingness to change their linguistic patterns may be related to the placement of extrinsic traits in general, with respect to the cultural heritage of a group. It will be recalled from Gordon's analysis of assimilation that such traits lie external to the core of the cultural heritage in comparison to intrinsic traits and, as a result, may be more susceptible to change. Furthermore, since language is an easily recognizable aspect of culture, it is understandable that students might seek to change their speech peculiarities for such reasons as a desire for increased social acceptability. Nonetheless, in terms of the successful assimilation of cultural traits, linguistic or otherwise, there is little evidence to suggest that such modifications have taken place on the part of the foreign students interviewed.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy for example, that the American students, in identifying societal differences, focused on only two types of differences; those related to language and those related to values. The fact that they did not comment on other categories of differences, leads to the suggestion that perhaps there are relatively few cultural differences between American and Canadian societies. Similarly, the students from Australia, Britain and New Zealand focused their attention mainly on linguistic variations between Canadian society and their own societies, indicating the possibility that minimal differences in culture exist.

In contrast, the French, West German and African students identified more numerous and additional categories of differences between socie-

ties, including differences related to custom and concepts of work and leisure. The African students in particular, when comparing societal differences, alluded to the existence of a society fundamentally different from Canadian society. These students described their societies as being based on a rural livelihood, in which cooperation and mutual effort are viewed as vital ingredients in the survival of the society as a whole. Important values include the endurance of the extended family and the marital institution, as well as the fulfillment of needs related to survival. These cultural traits contrast strongly with those found in modern Canadian society. Based primarily on an urbanized, industrial existence, with an emphasis on individualism, competition and the nuclear family, Canada appears far removed from the type of society described by the African students.

Such diversity in terms of culture may be predictive of the extent to which the overall assimilation of African students into Canadian society occurs. As Gordon states in his analysis of the assimilation of minority groups into American society, "it is the norms and values of the society which, for the most part, determine the nature of the social groupings and social relationships which its members create" (Gordon, 1964:33). Accordingly, the lack of complete assimilation of many ethnic and racial groups in the United States may be partially attributed to the diverse cultural backgrounds which these groups bring with them. Therefore, if the cultural norms and values of a group such as the Africans are fundamentally different from those of the host society, then the occurrence of incomplete assimilation of these individuals should not be regarded as an unusual sociological phenomenon.

Therefore, it is important to consider these various cultural differences emphasized by the foreign students interviewed for two major reasons. Firstly, they may be useful in predicting further patterns of assimilation which may develop, and secondly, they may provide the initial source for identifying such patterns.

It will be recalled from Gordon's Analysis of Assimilation in American Life (1964) that structural assimilation was defined as the large-scale entrance of an in-coming group into the social network of the host society. More specifically, entrance into both secondary as well as primary relationships was considered necessary before structural assimilation could be regarded as complete. Once the in-coming group has fully entered into primary or informal relations with members of the host society, the hallmark of the assimilation process is said to have been achieved.

The findings from the present study indicate that structural assimilation appears to have largely taken place among the foreign students interviewed. From the accounts of these individuals, it is evident that they have made successful attempts to become incorporated into Canadian society. More specifically, in the area of secondary relations, students identified having established beneficial associations with Canadians, primarily within the educational and religious environments. They appeared to be both positive and satisfied with the specialized contacts they had formed with members of Canadian society.

However, as Gordon is careful to specify, "not only is the assimilation process mainly a matter of degree, but obviously each of the stages

or subprocesses distinguished above may take place in various degrees" (Gordon, 1964:71). Such variations in the degree of assimilation, specifically within the structural phase, become apparent upon closer examination of the various groups of foreign students interviewed. It appears as if structural assimilation has taken place only to a degree, when students' relationships at the primary level are analyzed. For example, the American, Australian, British, French, West German and New Zealand students reported relative ease and success in establishing both formal and informal relationships with Canadians. The African students, in contrast, stated a preference for maintaining personal relationships with fellow nationals. They also indicated that they did not know the appropriate means of initiating informal communications with Canadians. The net result for African students appears to be a general lack of integration into Canadian society on a primary level. Gordon refers to this specialized state as structural separation, or "a situation in which primary contacts between various ethnic groups are held to a minimum, even though secondary contacts abound" (Gordon, 1964:81).

The structural separation of African students on a primary level, in comparison to the assimilation of the other groups, lends support to Gordon's proposition that cultural factors may indeed be predictive of further patterns of assimilation. The African students' distinctive cultural backgrounds must be viewed as influential in attempting to understand their apparent lack of integration into the informal social network of Canadian society. Students themselves acknowledged the fact that there appear to be cultural norms and practices unique to any given society, which require some degree of familiarity before one can be expected to participate fully in its informal social network.

It is noteworthy, that the other major groups of students detected more subtle cultural differences between Canadian society and their own societies, and hence seem to have become more easily absorbed into the primary sphere of relations. These subtle differences may be indicative of the existence of a common Western culture which includes Australia, Britain, France, West Germany, New Zealand and the United States. As a result of their common cultural heritage derived from European life, these students may have come equipped with the necessary 'cultural baggage' required for the establishment of primary relations within Canadian society. In contrast, the African students, who do not share the same Western cultural heritage, may be expected to be at a disadvantage in terms of becoming absorbed into the Canadian informal social network. Furthermore, the students from the Western industrialized countries were white in physical appearance, in contrast to the students from the African countries who were black. Therefore, the presence of racial differences may have provided a further barrier to the establishment of informal relationships between Canadian and African students.

Despite the support that the present study lends to Gordon's analysis, especially with the respect to the importance of cultural factors and the possible variations in the degree of assimilation, there are certain differences which must be addressed. For example, it will be recalled that Gordon defined assimilation as a succession of modifications in the cultural and social patterns of a group towards those of the host society. Cultural assimilation was said to be the first type of assimilation to occur, followed later by structural assimilation.

The results of the present study indicate that such a successive process of assimilation, beginning with cultural modifications, may not necessarily occur. In contrast to Gordon's analysis, it was found that while the cultural patterns of foreign students were not being modified to those of Canadian society, substantial progress was being made towards structural assimilation of these individuals. Many students, who although not engaged in a process of changing their former attitudinal and value systems, were establishing beneficial relationships with Canadians on both secondary and primary levels. Hence, the findings from this study suggest a possible reversal in the trend towards assimilation, at least as it pertains to foreign students.

Although the findings from this study may not entirely conform with Gordon's analysis, they do substantiate some of his major propositions regarding the assimilation of in-coming groups into the host society. Firstly, regardless of whether these groups are minorities in American society, or foreign students in Canada, their distinctive cultural backgrounds must be acknowledged and taken into account as an influential factor in determining their eventual level of assimilation. The data gathered from the major groups of foreign students indicate that the extent to which cultural traits differ from those of the host society is an important indicator of the degree to which the assimilation of such groups takes place. Finally, between-group variations in assimilation must be viewed as a consequence of the entrance of various groups into the host society. The present study has found evidence to support Gordon's assertion that not all groups achieve an equal level of assimilation. Some groups, who share certain cultural characteristics in

common with the host society, may be expected to assimilate more easily and successfully than other groups who are more diverse in this respect.

IMPLICATIONS

The present study has implications for continued research on the socio-cultural adjustment of various groups to the host society. It has been demonstrated that the experience of living in a foreign culture requires a certain amount of accommodation, even for those individuals who come from societies which are similar to the host society. It has also been shown that the greater the degree of cultural incongruence between the individual's society and the host society, the more complex the adjustment problems are likely to be.

Through the process of socialization, the individual in any society acquires those skills necessary for participation in a particular socio-cultural system. When a change in residence takes place from one socio-cultural system to another, those skills which enabled participation in the former system are, to varying degrees, inadequate in the new cultural system. The individual is faced with the task of adjusting to cultural values, role expectations and behavior patterns for which he/she was not socialized. Individuals may face a similar situation when their own culture undergoes extensive and rapid change or when they move to a new subculture within their own society.

The socio-cultural adjustment process must therefore be expected to vary according to specific groups under study. Immigrants, refugees, native peoples, ethnic groups and sojourners may all undergo socio-

cultural change, yet the process may vary, depending upon the unique social and cultural orientations which these groups bring with them (Berry, 1983). In addition, they may seek differing degrees of penetration into the host society, ranging from the long-term commitment of immigrants, to the short-term commitment of sojourners. Consequently, the socio-cultural adjustment process is not likely to follow the same pattern for all groups. The specific group conditions under which socio-cultural change takes place must be examined carefully in order to comprehend the developments which are likely to arise.

This study has also addressed the significance of the socio-cultural adjustment process as it pertains to foreign students. Previous research has tended to focus on the adjustment of foreign students with respect to specific variables, such as English language ability, age, sex, marital status, length of stay and economic security. However, there has been a general neglect in the research literature to concentrate on a systematic analysis of the social and cultural factors which affect foreign students or a clarification of the processes in which they are believed to be involved. The results of this study indicate that such analysis and clarification is an important aspect of foreign student adjustment to be addressed. Between-group variations in the patterns of assimilation of these individuals into the host society have been detected, suggesting the need for a more thorough understanding of the socio-cultural backgrounds of foreign students.

Semi-structured interviews have proven to be an effective means in which to acquire a more thorough understanding of the foreign student experience. Most studies concerning the adjustment of foreign students

have emphasized the use of self-administered questionnaires to obtain information. When information is sought concerning the cultural and social backgrounds of various subgroups within the foreign student population, this technique may be less effective for several reasons. Firstly, questionnaires are usually designed for the purpose of obtaining specific responses from individuals which can later be statistically analyzed. If the researcher's aim is to acquire indepth knowledge of students' societies, the cultural similarities and differences they have perceived upon arrival to the host society, and their interaction patterns with others, interviews allow for the retrieval of more information. Secondly, the use of techniques such as semi-structured interviews allow for the acquisition of more data simply due to the presence of the researcher. He or she is available to extract additional amounts of information from subjects which would otherwise be impossible in the use of a self-administered questionnaire, where the researcher is absent during the answering of questions. Finally, through interview techniques, the adjustment experiences of foreign students can be documented and described in detail, thereby enabling others to understand the context of their unique position within the host society. It is therefore recommended that the semi-structured interview approach continue to be used, either alone or in conjunction with other methods to obtain greater insight into the foreign student experience.

Since the present study was exploratory in nature, and designed largely to determine the impact of socio-cultural factors on foreign student adjustment, there are aspects of its design which could be further developed in future studies. For example, it would be of value

to interview greater numbers of foreign students from other societies in the world, to determine the existence of any additional between-group variations in assimilation patterns. In addition, the involvement of foreign students from other universities throughout Canada could provide a broader perspective of the foreign student adjustment process. Wherever possible, the technique of participant observation could be used in combination with semi-structured interviews as a means of obtaining a more detailed insight into these processes. It is the task of future research to concentrate on expanding these aspects of the design in order to achieve greater understanding of the issues pertaining to foreign student adjustment.

The present study also has implications for education. It has been demonstrated that some foreign students, especially those from the more culturally diverse societies, have encountered problems with English language communication and fundamental contrasts in culture between Canadian society and their own societies. These factors may not only have a substantial impact on the interaction of such students in the host society, but may also affect their academic performance. Cultural differences may be particularly acute in the classroom, where the ability to understand and communicate in English is often implicitly assumed on the part of both professors and students alike. Therefore, those students who are not proficient in the English language may experience educational deficits, particularly in the transmission of specific knowledge content.

The development of specialized programs could help to ease the problem of cultural adjustment which many foreign students experience.

Priority should be placed on lengthening the orientation sessions which students attend upon arrival at Canadian universities. Often foreign students arrive in Canada approximately one week before classes begin, with very little idea of the organization of Canadian institutions of higher education, let alone an understanding of the cultural adjustment problems they will face.

More specifically, a course could be offered to foreign students dealing with cross-cultural change and adaptation. Such a course would help students understand the cultural forces which influence behavior and provide an insight into the impact of the culture concept on individuals' lives. Foreign students should be made aware that culture can and does impose barriers on communication between people, often leading to misunderstandings. If culture can be regarded as a classification procedure used by people to order their experience, then students can be made to realize that acquisition of the tools necessary to translate and understand that classification scheme may help reduce the possibility of such misunderstandings (Morgan, 1975).

Some evaluation is needed in determining the degree to which counseling services are effective for foreign students. Although most Canadian universities have a number of qualified counselors to deal with the problems of students in general, the unique problems associated with foreign students require more specialized training in the problems of cross-cultural adjustment.

In many cases, the foreign student adviser is the only person designated outside the academic staff who is available to foreign students.

However, being a foreign student adviser demands several roles, including legal adviser, financial adviser, academic adviser, friend and psychiatrist. One individual alone may be insufficient in attempting to deal with persons from diverse cultures. Furthermore, it should be recognized that although the foreign student adviser may be sensitive to cross-cultural conflicts, nevertheless he/she operates within his/her own cultural frame of reference, most often drawn from the Canadian socio-cultural system.

If education is viewed as a continuous process, encompassing informal as well as formal learning, then it is possible to make further recommendations regarding the presence of foreign students in Canada. Social scientists have demonstrated that insight into other cultures is promoted best through interpersonal interaction and open communication (Penn and Durham, 1978). As a result, the success of international education programs, is in part, dependent upon the amount and quality of cross-cultural contact between Canadian and foreign students. Therefore, institutions should develop academic programs and extra-curricular activities which will encourage and assist Canadian students and foreign students to gain from each others' presence. In addition, provisions should be made by the educational institutions admitting foreign students to enable them to take courses about the culture, history and geography of Canada, thereby increasing their knowledge of the country in which they are living.

The presence of foreign students must also be viewed as an opportunity for Canadians to broaden their outlook and to enlarge their understanding of themselves and others. The knowledge these students bring

with them of other countries, other cultures, and other ways of doing things must be recognized as a valuable educational resource to the Canadian population. Moreover, when foreign students return to their own countries, they carry with them knowledge of Canada, which will play a role in the promotion of a more informed understanding of this country abroad. Many of these students will emerge as future leaders of government, industry, technology, education and science in their countries. Therefore, if they are able to depart from this country with an increased knowledge and understanding of it, a contribution will have been made to the development of Canada's international reputation.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

Dear Student:

May 18/1984

I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, presently working towards my Master's Degree. For my thesis, I am examining the social and cultural adjustment of foreign students in a Canadian university, the University of Manitoba. The objective of this project is to determine the adjustment of foreign students to the university environment and Canadian society. As a part of my study, I plan to interview selected students on their feelings, attitudes and opinions.

Would you be willing to be interviewed for this study? The interview will take approximately one hour and consist of about twenty questions. Your participation is completely voluntary and if you choose not to take part, there will be no academic repercussions. Also you may withdraw from the study at any time. Those who participate will receive a summary report.

If you are willing to participate or you are interested in the study, please enclose your name, address, and telephone number and return this information in the self-addressed envelope provided. I will then contact you to make an appointment for an interview.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Sandra Ingram
Graduate Student
University of
Manitoba
(Ph. 489-7006)

Please Return This Portion

Name (Please Print): _____
First Name Last Name

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

APPENDIX B
STUDENT CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned agree to participate in a research project which concerns the social and cultural adjustment of foreign students at the University of Manitoba.

I understand that my involvement in this study will be completely voluntary and if I choose to withdraw, I may do so at any time. It is also understood that there will be no institutional repercussions if I choose not to participate.

As a participant in the study, I will be subject to interviews which will focus on the following issues:

- 1) the degree to which I perceive my society to be similar/
different to Canadian society
- 2) the extent to which I have had to make social or cultural
adjustments since arriving in Canada.
- 3) the degree to which I interact with others, including
fellow nationals and members of Canadian society

Name: _____

APPENDIX C

GUIDELINE FOR QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE STUDY

The following set of questions were asked in an attempt to gain information on foreign students' cultural backgrounds and their interaction patterns with members of Canadian society.

- 1) Do you consider there to be differences between your society and Canadian society (e.g. cultural, social, economic, religious or political differences)?
- 2) Could you elaborate on these differences and explain how substantial or minimal you regard them to be?
- 3) With these societal differences in mind, what kind of changes if any, did you feel necessary to make upon arrival to Canada (e.g. economic, cultural, religious changes)?
- 4) Is English your native language?
- 5) If not, did you speak English as a second or third language before you arrived in Canada?
- 6) Do you ever have difficulty expressing yourself in English or being understood?
- 7) Do you now consider yourself to be fluent in the English language?
- 8) Are you economically independent or are you receiving funding for study from other sources (e.g. national government, University of Manitoba)?
- 9) Do you consider the funding you receive to be substantial enough to meet your needs while in Canada?
- 10) Would you consider your financial situation to be roughly comparable with that of the average Canadian student?
- 11) Would you say that you have made many Canadian friends or relatively few since you have been in Canada?
- 12) Do you associate more easily and more frequently with fellow nationals or citizens from your own country than you do with Canadians?
- 13) What is your general impression of Canadian society?

14) Many researchers have concluded that foreign students are 'marginal' to the host society. Have you ever felt as if you were marginal in Canada, or to use another term, as if you were a stranger?

15) If you were allowed to remain in Canada after your period of study, do you feel that you would be relatively content functioning in this society? If not, why?