

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND THE ADJUSTMENT OF THE SOJOURNER

MICHAEL BREIN

AND

KENNETH H. DAVID<sup>1</sup>

*University of Hawaii*

*Peace Corps Training Center, University of Hawaii*

Intercultural adjustment is described, in general, by means of a W-curve function or culture shock. However, very little apparent integration exists among the various approaches for explaining or understanding the sojourner's adjustment. Social patterns of behavior and personality traits have not been very successful in explaining intercultural adjustment, while social interaction and background and situational factors have been of somewhat greater value. These divergent approaches can be more meaningfully understood in relation to adjustment to the degree that they facilitate or impede intercultural communication. Thus, intercultural communication appears to be both an integrating and crucial factor for understanding the adjustment of the sojourner.

The purpose of this article is to discuss social psychological factors related to the adjustment problems of the sojourner. Books and articles by Cleveland, Mangone, and Adams (1960), Ekroth (1968), Gardner (1962), Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), Hall (1959), Hall and Whyte (1963), Jacobson (1963), Kelman (1965), and Major<sup>2</sup> have discussed various aspects of sojourning and adjustment.

The term *sojourner* refers to many types of travelers including students, trainees, technical assistants, tourists, businessmen, military personnel, missionaries, foreign service officers, professors, and others. The sojourn research has primarily considered the foreign national who has sojourned in the United States, although there appears to be an increasing interest in the American who has traveled to other countries (e.g., Major, 1965, see Footnote 2; Smith, Fawcett, Ezekial, & Roth, 1963). Moreover, among those studies that have dealt with the American sojourner, there has been a disproportionate emphasis on the study of students and educational advisors. According to Patterson (1969) and the United States Bureau of the Census (1969), pleasure and personal reasons were indicated by approximately 78% of all United States passport recipients in 1967 and 1968 as the two main

purposes for their travel. Yet, these individuals have been relatively neglected by the sojourn research. Another emphasis of this kind of research has been on the study of the traveler during the period of his stay in the foreign or *host* culture. There have been relatively few studies of the adjustment of the returnee to his home country, the permanence of the effects of the sojourn, the effects of the sojourner on his hosts, and the effects of the returnee on his own country.

Because of the increased opportunities for international travel, more and more persons from many countries are interacting with one another. With such increased frequencies of intercultural interaction, the sojourner is faced with a number and variety of adjustment difficulties which can be traced to both the obvious and more subtle differences between cultures. The major purpose of this article, therefore, is to discuss the social psychological aspects of the adjustment of the sojourner and to provide an integration of the research concerned with this topic.

Adjustment problems can have serious consequences for the sojourner. Thomson and English (1964), for example, reported that adjustment problems constituted over 60% of all prematurely returning Peace Corps Volunteers prior to 1963. The problems of adjustment are also seen to range widely in extent, focusing on the sojourner's relationship to himself, to others, to the environment, and to his activities within the host culture. Smith (1955), for example, discussed the adjustment difficulties that foreign students

<sup>1</sup> Requests for reprints should be sent to Kenneth H. David, P. O. Box 856, Peace Corps Training Center, University of Hawaii, Hilo, Hawaii 96720.

<sup>2</sup> Major, R. T., Jr. A review of the research on international exchange. Unpublished manuscript, Putney, Vermont: The Experiment in International Living, 1965.

have in the United States in relation to communication, learning the ways of academic life in the United States, maintaining self-esteem, gaining acceptance and making friends, and balancing group memberships and loyalties. And Dicken (1969), Fisher, Epstein, and Harris (1967), Mischel (1965), and Smith et al. (1963) concerned themselves with the adjustment of Peace Corps Volunteers in relation to their jobs, their physical well-being, and their in-country locations.

A major problem in understanding the topic of the adjustment of the sojourner is that the approaches of various investigators have been so divergent that it is difficult to either interrelate their findings or to develop any consistencies among the factors deemed relevant to intercultural adjustment. Moreover, even when investigators apparently study the same or similar factors, the results usually fail to show any consistent patterns. Several of the more common approaches to describing and explaining the sojourner's adjustment include the following: curves of adjustment, culture shock, personality typologies and traits, background and situational factors, and social interaction. These approaches have varied in their usefulness in explaining the process of intercultural adjustment and are discussed in detail in later sections of this paper.

An assumption is made by the authors that the sojourner's successful adjustment to an intercultural experience is highly dependent on his achievement of effective interpersonal relations with his hosts. A necessary prerequisite to establishing such effective social relationships, however, is the development of understanding between the host and visitor. To this end, the effective exchange of information, that is, communication, on both verbal and nonverbal levels of behavior, is considered by the authors as being crucial to the development of such understanding. One mode of integrating the seemingly rather divergent approaches to understanding the adjustment process, therefore, is to interpret adjustment within the broad framework of intercultural communication as outlined above. In this manner, a variety of factors may be seen to influence the adjustment process insofar as they affect the process of information exchange or communication.

## U AND W CURVES OR ADJUSTMENT FUNCTIONS

The sojourn literature indicates that the adjustment of the traveler seems to follow a predictable temporal pattern. That is, there seems to be a curvilinear relationship between adjustment and time sequence of the sojourn. Lysgaard (1955), in a study of Scandinavian Fulbright Grantees studying in the United States, first described this curvilinear function and referred to it as the U-curve phenomenon. And Sewell and Davidsen (1956) reported a U-curve function of academic personal adjustment for Scandinavian students visiting the United States. Initially, researchers reported only a U curve, because the studies were limited to the sojourner's adjustment within the host culture; however, a more recent development suggests that a W-curve function may be a more comprehensive description of the adjustment process. The W curve is essentially an extension of the single-U curve to a double-U curve (UU curve), that is, a W curve. The W curve of adjustment has been described by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963, 1966). It encompasses both the sojourner's adaptation to a foreign culture and his readjustment to his home culture. Thus, the W-curve function represents the adjustment of the sojourner along a temporal dimension. In a very general manner, the sojourner tends to undergo a decline in adjustment shortly after entering a foreign culture, which is followed by a recovery stage with a resultant increase in adjustment; then, on returning home, the sojourner undergoes another decrease in adjustment followed by a second stage of recovery. The degree and duration of the adjustment decline for an individual sojourner would depend on a number of variables, which are discussed in the later sections of this article. Thus, the W curve may be descriptive of the change in adjustment of a larger number of sojourners, although there may be a great deal of variability among individual curves of adjustment. In some instances a sojourner may never quite fully recover from his initial difficulties, whereas others may experience little more than a mild annoyance with no appreciable decrease in adjustment. Also, some sojourners may encounter few adjustment difficulties upon returning home, while others may undergo a rather severe reentry crisis.

During the initial phase of the W-curve phenomenon, which may last for several months, depending on the length of the sojourn, the sojourner shows a relatively satisfactory adjustment to the host country. The visitor is mainly a spectator, absorbing the sights, forming impressions, and expressing enthusiasm. His interactions with the host nationals are quite limited and uninvolved. Tourists or short-term sojourners are usually characterized as rarely advancing from this superficial level of interaction with host nationals, perhaps because their purposes are related to recreation, relaxation, and sightseeing, which may preclude any serious involvements with the hosts. A decrease in the sojourner's adjustment, that is, a downward slope in the W curve, begins after this initial spectator phase. The sojourner has been in the host country for a period of time and encounters gradually increasing demands to adjust to a new and often strange environment. The sojourner's previously limited involvements with the hosts no longer suffice to satisfy his needs to cope with his intercultural experience. He attempts to unravel the complexities of the culture, and to accomplish this he develops the need to establish more enduring social relationships with the hosts. He soon learns that his elementary knowledge of the host language is no longer adequate enough to cope with the increasing complexities of social communication. This is a time when the sojourner's involvement with the host culture becomes critical; he is at the point where he is in most need of satisfactory relationships with others, yet, he lacks the social tools or means to bring these about. This is the low point of the sojourn where the characteristic symptoms of culture shock occur, as described by Oberg (1960) and others. After this, a gradual recovery in the sojourner's adjustment occurs (an upward trend of the W curve), where he begins to become aware of the more subtle cues of the host culture and begins to develop a fluency in the language. He develops a strategy for working through various intercultural difficulties. When the sojourner returns to his home culture he may undergo what has been termed a "reentry crisis," which is analogous to the first drop in the W curve. His decline in adjustment, however, seems to be somewhat less in intensity

than during his initial culture shock reaction to the host culture.

The sojourn literature indicates that the W curve may show cultural variation. For example, Pool (1965) reported that among foreign students to the United States, those coming from countries that are relatively more similar to the United States, that is, other Western nations, differ in their adjustment patterns from those students from countries less similar to the United States, that is, Asian or non-Western nations. Sewell and Davidsen (1956) reported that language facility, social interaction with Americans, previous contact with other cultures, and personality characteristics may influence the rate that a sojourner to the United States passes through the various phases of the W curve.

#### CULTURE SHOCK

Rather than describing adjustment strictly in terms of curve functions per se, other researchers have portrayed adjustment in verbal terms as a series of sequential stages. Although differing with respect to numbers and kinds of stages, culture shock, role shock, language shock, culture fatigue, and reentry crisis all bear in common a close resemblance to one or more aspects of the U and W phenomena.

Hall (1959) defined culture shock as "a removal or distortion of many of the familiar cues one encounters at home and the substitution for them of other cues which are strange [p. 156]." Oberg (1960) is generally credited for having introduced the term in one of his earlier articles. He conceived of culture shock as an "occupational disease" of people who suddenly find themselves located in a culture very different from their own. Oberg stated that culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing one's cues to social interaction. The cues include the many ways in which one orients himself to daily life: when to shake hands, when and how much to tip, when to accept invitations, when to take statements seriously, etc. The cues, which may be customs, gestures, facial expressions, or words, are primarily unconscious and are as much a part of one's culture as the language.

Oberg described several stages of culture shock: (a) Stage 1 is a period of incubation,

during which time the sojourner may feel highly elated. He may be living in a good hotel where conditions are comfortable, the sights are intriguing, the hosts are courteous, and his expectations for the future are positive. During this period he may find a house, maids, schools for his children, etc. (b) Stage 2 is a period of crisis resulting from the genuine difficulties that the sojourner may begin to encounter in a different culture. The activities of daily living that had been previously taken for granted become insurmountable problems. He may associate with other sojourners and criticize the host country and its people. Thus, foreign nationals may be described in derogatory terms as a result of the sojourner's attempt to rationalize his adjustment problems. (c) Stage 3 is a period of recovery in which the sojourner begins to understand some of the cues of the host culture. He regains his sense of humor, and he may even imagine himself an authority on the host culture. (d) Stage 4 is the complete or nearly complete period of recovery in which the sojourner accepts the host culture. Although he may not be overly enthusiastic about the country, he is at least able to enjoy his experiences. (e) Stage 5 is a period that occurs when the sojourner returns home. It is a culture shock in reverse, but one that seems to be less serious than the original shock. Aside from the "disease" model that Oberg used to describe culture shock, Hall and Oberg appear to be in basic agreement. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) equated culture shock to the cognitive dissonance that results from the discrepancy between the sojourner's expectations of the host culture and his observations of that culture. Also, cognitive dissonance may occur as the result of the sojourner's participation in role behaviors that are at variance with his own values. Smalley (1963) proposed four stages of culture shock: (a) A stage of fascination in which there are various barriers preventing social interaction with host nationals. (b) A stage of hostility which occurs as the permanency of the residence develops. There is more social interaction within the host country, but the sojourner emphasizes the superiority of his own culture. (c) A stage of improved adjustment, with an expression of humor and lessening of tensions. (d) A stage of biculturalism, in which the sojourner develops an under-

standing of the host culture and acts in accordance with its norms. These stages appear to be similar to those proposed by Oberg.

The crises of Peace Corps Volunteers have been described by Pearson (1964). During the first crisis the volunteer is compelled to explain that he is "none of these things." He believes that he must explain his purpose to his hosts and dispel their misconceptions. The second crisis is one of acceptance of the situation; the romance and adventure are gone; the volunteer becomes bored, lacks intellectual stimulation, and his work becomes tedious. He begins to read more and discovers a "society of solitude." The third crisis is one of self-awareness and few frustrations. There is a feeling of identity and an awareness of the "different life."

According to Foster (1965), few first-time longer-term sojourners recover from the culture-shock experience in less than 6 months, and it is not uncommon for it to last for a year, although a resilient sojourner may recover within 3 months. Foster suggested that one culture-shock experience will not immunize one against future shocks, although future experiences may be less severe, and the readjustment stages somewhat shortened.

Smalley (1963) considered language to be the primary determinant of culture shock, because of the importance of language as a medium of communication. He added that the study of language per se may result in an acute shock for some people. Smalley appears to disagree with Hall over the relative importance of different types of communication, with Smalley emphasizing verbal communication, and Hall stressing the nonverbal aspects.

In an article about overseas American technical assistants, Byrnes (1966) described "role shock" as being somewhat distinct from culture shock. Unlike culture shock, role shock was reported to be more severe, to increase over time, to frequently reach its peak at the midpoint of the expected length of the sojourn, and to rarely result in complete recovery. Role shock for technical assistants was believed to result from ambiguity in their professional roles, unsuccessful relationships with their host-country counterparts, and problems with communication and participation in the host-country hierarchy.

Guthrie (1966) suggested that the term "culture fatigue" may be a more appropriate description of the reactions of Peace Corps Volunteers to the Philippines. The hospitality and deference of the Filipino, in conjunction with the fairly common use of English and the awareness of certain Western values, may result in the American sojourner believing that the Philippine culture is very similar to that of his own. However, in spite of these apparent similarities as well as the adoption of some Spanish and American customs by the Filipinos, there remain many elements that are unique to that country. The apparent cultural similarities may result in the sojourner experiencing confusion and annoyance, and when these frustrations endure over a period of time they may be termed "culture fatigue." Szanton (1966), too, discussed culture fatigue among Peace Corps Volunteers in the Philippines. He considered culture fatigue to be the exhaustion that results from the endless number of minute adjustments required for long-term living in a foreign culture.

On returning to his home country, the sojourner may undergo what has been termed a re-entry crisis. The crisis of the returning Peace Corps Volunteer has been described by Pearson (1964) and Stolley (1965). The volunteer, having lived for 2 years in a developing country, may find difficult his readjustment to the relative affluence of the United States and the seemingly superficial values espoused by the mass media. Moreover, he may have difficulties in adjusting to a change in roles. As a volunteer he may have assumed many responsibilities, but, after a while at home, may find himself in a relatively ambiguous situation with minimal responsibilities and resultant feelings of disillusionment and aimlessness. The returning volunteer is confronted with many behaviors that prior to his departure from the United States were primarily unconscious, unnoticed, unquestioned, and taken for granted. But on returning home and becoming aware of these previously accepted behaviors, these may no longer seem meaningful. The apparent values as reflected in the heavy traffic, ubiquitous television, rushing about, etc., may be very difficult for the returnee to reconcile with the values that he acquired while in the host country, for instance, values of social concern

which he acquired as a result of teaching, preventing illnesses, or increasing food production.

#### SOCIAL PATTERNS, PERSONALITY, AND ADJUSTMENT

Various investigators have attempted to construct sets of characteristics and distinct social patterns that could be used to distinguish between groups of sojourners. There may be a limited number of alternatives that a sojourner may choose from to cope with a foreign environment, and each alternative would include a characteristic *modus operandi*. Once the different social response patterns have been determined, a fairly accurate description of the social behavior of any sojourner, after he adopts one of the characteristic patterns, is possible. For example, Shelton (1964) observed a characteristic pattern of social interaction, which he termed the "Miss Ophelia Syndrome," among a group of investigators conducting field research in Africa. The syndrome consisted of an avoidance of physical contact with the Africans and avoidance of accepting Kola (nuts), food, or wine from them. The usual reason, or rationalization as Shelton perceived it, was that the investigators were acting in a scientific manner of detachment which was appropriate for conducting their research. However, the Africans, as well as other host nationals, are likely to have interpreted the aloofness of the researchers in a manner that may have jeopardized the probability of the researchers' success. The villagers may have believed, for example, that the "Miss Ophelias" considered themselves to be superior to the Africans.

Sewell and Davidsen (1956) described four kinds of sojourners and the characteristic patterns of adjustment that they adopt: (a) Detached Observers, (b) Promoters, (c) Enthusiastic Participants, and (d) Settlers. Sewell and Davidsen added that these patterns of adjustment are related to the sojourner's perceptions of roles and their expectations with respect to returning home.

The Detached Observers were described as having very little involvement or need for involvement with the host country. Their motives for the sojourn are usually technical and clearly defined, and they form friendships with fellow sojourners rather than with host nationals. They do not show severe adjustment

problems, either during the sojourn or on returning home.

The Promoters were described as showing low to moderate involvement in the host country. They are committed to their home culture, but become reluctant participants in the foreign culture as a result of their role perceptions; that is, they believe that they are expected to participate in the host culture. However, they undergo some adjustment problems as a consequence of the discrepancies between their home and host-country commitments. They are described as continuously praising their home countries.

The Enthusiastic Participants were described as detaching themselves from their home country and actively participating in the host culture. They are aware of the temporary nature of the sojourn and apparently try to capitalize on their sojourn experiences. Their motives for the sojourn are not exclusively related to their technical goals. They have relatively few adjustment difficulties in the host country; however, their expectations of the return to the home culture are not clearly defined, which may lead to reentry crises.

The Settlers were described as showing little attachment to their home country. They adapt slowly, but, in time, show a genuine and thorough adaptation to the host country.

In India, Useem (1966) classified wives of Americans according to four patterns of behaviors, namely, (a) Copers, (b) Cautious, (c) Supporters, and (d) Fumblers. The Copers, in general, have an affirmative, enthusiastic view of life. They emphasize self-direction, initiate action, and have a high degree of self-esteem, although early in their stay in India they have as many problems as the other American wives. If they are not able to solve their problems through action, they put pressure on their husbands to leave the host country.

The Cautious are neither enthusiastic nor indifferent. They weigh alternatives carefully, and slowly work through their problems. If they are not able to cope with their problems, they look for a more congenial environment.

The Supporters are responsive to direction from others. They are supportive of others, although they do not take active leadership. If placed in highly structured situations, they

will have adjustment problems until they learn the cultural patterns; if they are in unstructured situations, they will become disorganized by their environment.

The Fumblers are noncoping, incautious, and nonsupportive. They are neither self-directed nor responsive to direction from others. They are a burden to their husbands and to the local community, are chronic complainers, and blame others for their problems. If they are ultimately unable to cope with their problems, their husbands may be asked to resign.

Useem emphasized that these patterns of behavior would not provide an effective basis for the selection of personnel for overseas assignment, since, with the exception of a few Fumblers, for whom fumbling was a life pattern, these behavior patterns were not consistent over periods of time. An older woman who had been a Cautious type during her lifetime in the United States, for instance, might change into a Coper in India. Also a woman could be a Coper during one assignment, but could become a Cautious type during the next assignment, and all could become Fumblers when placed under a great deal of stress. Because Useem found little evidence that patterns of social behavior were long enduring, he found them to be of little value in predicting behavior.

Smith (1956) reported that sojourners from similar cultures tend to develop common patterns of behavior in the host culture. He observed that such common behavioral patterns are especially characteristic of sojourners from certain developing countries when they travel to the United States, because they often perceive a loss of status during their sojourns. For example, foreign scholars who perceive a general superiority of American science and technology may feel a loss of status when studying in the United States (Beals & Humphrey, 1957; Lambert & Bressler, 1956; Scott, 1956). Lambert and Bressler (1955) described the sensitive areas of the foreign student in the United States and the adjustment problems that may result. Smith (1956) reported that Indian students were often appalled by Americans, because of the latter's apparent ignorance and disapproval of the Indian culture, for instance, the caste system and poverty. The Indian students tended to react in a hostile manner and to retaliate

against the Americans by referring to major American problems, for instance, the racial problem. In contrast to the Indian students, Japanese students appeared to react to criticism of their home country by employing "enryo," that is, withdrawal from Americans. Whether a student reacted in a defensive manner, either counterattacking as the Indians or withdrawing as the Japanese, seemed to be related to the sojourner's attitudes. Those sojourners who reacted defensively to criticism of their own countries had negative attitudes toward both the United States and their own countries. The relationship between attitude and defensiveness may be a function of the sojourner's negative attitudes toward his home country; that is, in order to maintain his self-esteem he has to deny his negative attitudes and employ a defense mechanism. Thus, the sojourner's negative attitude toward the host country may be a function of his negative attitude toward his own country and of his defensiveness, rather than of his actual sojourning experience.

Bennett, Passin, and McKnight (1958) described the adjustment patterns of Japanese students in the United States, based upon data derived from interviews and a battery of tests. The adjustment patterns of the students were described in relation to three personality types, namely, the Adjuster, the Constrictor, and the Idealist. The Adjuster is able to adapt to both the Japanese and American cultures and is able to assimilate attitudes from both cultures. The Constrictor is conservative in his attitudes, and his behavior is congruent with orthodox Japanese culture. The Idealist is liberal in his attitudes and is open to cultural change. In another study of Japanese sojourners, Nash and Shaw (1963) described three personality types of Japanese immigrants to Cuba, which he termed the Autonomous, Traditional, and Transitional.

Perlmutter (1954) investigated the relationship between the American sojourner's adjustment and xenophilia, that is, the preference for things and persons foreign. Sojourners were administered a scale consisting of sentences that compared foreign and domestic objects. The Xenophiles were defined as those sojourners who chose the foreign in preference to the domestic object, for instance, "Most European

girls make better wives than American girls." In spite of the Xenophile's preference for things foreign, he tends to isolate himself in American enclaves while living in the host country. Perlmutter suggested that the Xenophile tends to fantasize about "a better world abroad," regardless of where he may live. It appears likely that the Xenophile is a dissatisfied person who is trying to maintain his self-esteem by holding his environment responsible for his feelings of dissatisfaction. Pool (1965) has presented a more extensive examination of the significance of xenophilia in understanding the sojourner.

Lundstedt (1963) stressed the importance of personality factors in sojourn research. He maintained that a closed mind and ethnocentrism may limit the attainment of effective overseas adjustment, and that the more effective coping mechanisms in adjustment consist of rational attitudes, universalistic tendencies, open-mindedness, and flexibility. A similar viewpoint was taken by Gardner (1962). He suggested that the "universal communicator" will have the least difficulty in adjusting to another country. The universal communicator was described as having a well-integrated personality, a central organization of an extraverted type, a value system that includes the "values of all," a socialization of cultural universals, and a high degree of sensitivity toward others.

The descriptions of the potentially good adjuster, portrayed by Lundstedt and Gardner, appear to be commonly accepted in the literature on sojourning. However, the description is based primarily upon face validity rather than empirical data. In spite of its appeal to common sense, the description may be oversimplified and possibly incorrect. For example, Bronfenbrenner, Harding, and Gallwey (1958) found evidence that general interpersonal sensitivity is associated with passivity and withdrawal; hence, extending their findings to intercultural interactions, the sojourner who has a high degree of sensitivity may be at a disadvantage in adjusting to a foreign culture. Also, Byrnes (1966) described a number of studies about overseas American technicians, and reported that the evidence did not support an "overseas type," that is, the successful overseas technicians did not show any consis-

tent personality patterns that would distinguish them from unsuccessful technicians. Additionally, in a study by Smith (1966) dealing with Peace Corps Volunteers, scores on authoritarianism showed no relationships with either factor loadings on a general competence pattern or with administrative evaluations of the volunteers in the host country.

The conceptualization of the adjustment of the sojourner in terms of typical behavior or social patterns, and personality typologies, characterizations, traits, and constellations is interesting, entertaining, and somewhat anecdotal. However, it becomes apparent, perhaps because of the diversity of these approaches, that little common ground exists for making lucid or even intelligible comparisons or distinctions between them; the particular patterns, typologies, and traits appear to be as varied as the investigators themselves. Also, some authors seem to describe and emphasize particular behaviors, patterns, or modes of adjusting while ignoring the antecedent, background, personality, or social determinants. Other researchers, however, emphasize the personality or background factors but neglect the behavioral consequents. And others apparently fail to distinguish between antecedents and consequents in relation to the patterns, typologies, and traits with the result being a lack of clarity. Most of the investigators have used an impressionistic approach in establishing the social patterns and personality typologies of sojourners without empirically cross-validating whether their impressions are consistent with other sources of data. Thus, the proposed patterns and personality traits seem to be vague descriptions neither clearly defined nor conceptualized in any comprehensive manner. Although it seems unlikely, these descriptions may have some future value in understanding intercultural adjustment, but at the present time they are little more than hypotheses based on limited data and general impressions.

#### BACKGROUND AND SITUATIONAL FACTORS

A somewhat greater degree of success in predicting intercultural adjustment has been based on background and situational factors. Smith et al. (1963) reported that the religious affiliation of Peace Corps Volunteers was

related to adjustment, that is, morale. However, age, type of undergraduate school, and previous teaching experience showed no relationship to morale. Another investigation of Peace Corps Volunteers found that paternal absence during childhood differentiated significantly between successful and unsuccessful volunteers (Suddenfeld, 1967). The proportion of volunteers from fatherless homes was significantly greater among unsuccessful volunteers.

Smith et al. also reported that morale was higher for Peace Corps Volunteers living in or near the major cities than those living in more rural areas within the host country. However, morale was not related to age of African school, subject matter taught, teaching level, or working alone. In another study, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), using a 13-item self-satisfaction questionnaire to measure adjustment, found that American grantees in Europe were better adjusted than those who stayed in the Near or Middle East.

#### SOCIAL INTERACTION AND ADJUSTMENT

The degree of social interaction or contact between the host national and the sojourner has been found to be related to the latter's adjustment. For example, Sewell and Davidsen (1961) reported a significant relationship between the social interaction of Scandinavian students with Americans and their satisfaction with their sojourns. And Morris (1960) found that the volume, range, and depth of social interactions of foreign students in the United States were significantly related to their satisfaction with their sojourns.

A psychiatric study of American housewives in Columbia indicated that a lack of social interaction may result in adjustment problems (León, 1963). The women patients manifested the typical neurotic symptoms of anxiety, insomnia, heavy drinking, etc., and León suggested that a woman sojourner may have greater difficulties than a man in adjusting to a foreign country because the woman has less opportunity to interact with others. The professional man can derive satisfaction from his work and engage in social interaction in conjunction with his job, whereas the housewife may have few avenues of social contact open to her. Also Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) reported that American grantees who had high



adjustment scores tended to maintain contact with host institutions, consult on professional matters with colleagues and students in the host country, and help these hosts to apply for grants in the United States.

The earlier sections of this article described the relationship between adjustment and several variables, that is, patterns of behavior, personality, background, and situational factors. In the sections that follow, some of these variables are seen to be related to adjustment insofar as they either facilitate or inhibit social interaction.

Sewell and Davidsen (1956) determined the degree of social interaction that Scandinavian students had with aspects of American culture. The measure of social contact consisted of the students' self-reports of social interaction with respect to American homes, churches, commercial recreation areas, campus activities, and travel within the United States. Background factors found to be related to social interaction included high socioeconomic status in the student's home country, urban background, previous contact with Americans, and a liberal arts as opposed to a physical science college background.

Major (see Footnote 2) stated that the sojourner's geographical background is an important factor influencing social interaction. He found that European in contrast to Asian students, while sojourning in the United States, had more social interactions with Americans. Similarly, American students in Europe reported more social interactions with host nationals than did Americans in Asia.

Sewell and Davidsen reported other factors that influenced the amount of social interaction of foreign students in the United States. Those students interacted with Americans most frequently whose purposes for coming to the United States were social or cultural rather than professional. Also, those students who had relatively less frequent and less severe frustrating intercultural experiences tended to engage more in social interactions with the hosts. In another study, Goldsen, Suchman, and Williams (1956) investigated the social interaction of Americans on a foreign campus, and found that those students who participated most in the campus life revealed a general pattern of friendliness, and were less critical

of specific issues and practices of the United States. However, the degree of social interaction was not related to the social, political, or economic interests and attitudes of the students. Kelman (1962) suggested that intercultural interaction may be increased by the sojourner's participation in an ongoing enterprise, maintaining the self-esteem of the host, and by introducing common goals as the result of combining his effort with the hosts on a particular task. Finally, the results of several studies (e.g., Morris, 1960; Selltitz, Christ, Havel, & Cook, 1963) have indicated a positive relationship between one's fluency in the host language and the extent of social interaction with the hosts.

The studies cited in the previous sections indicate that social interaction is a relevant variable in understanding the adjustment of the sojourner. More specifically, it seems that various background and situational factors influence the sojourner's social interaction with his hosts, which in turn influence his adjustment. However, the term social interaction has not been clearly specified by the majority of investigators with the result that the concept remains somewhat vague and elusive. For example, does social interaction refer to talking to host nationals? To the number of people the sojourner talks to? To the amount or type of talking? Does it refer to the situation in which he is merely present with others without actual conversation going on? Does it refer to the number of hosts that the sojourner meets, knows, or is close friends with? Thus, there are many ways in which a sojourner can interact with his hosts, and it would seem necessary to specify more clearly what is meant by social interaction in order to be able to relate dimensions of social interaction to the sojourner's adjustment.

#### INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The study of the adjustment of the sojourner should not emphasize the social interaction or contact experience per se, but rather the dimensions of interpersonal processes that occur during these encounters. What is most important, then, is not the mere occurrence of the contact or interaction, but instead, what actually *happens* during the encounter.

The authors believe that the effective interpersonal functioning of the sojourner, that is, his adjustment, is dependent on the development of understanding between himself and his host. The degree that they are able to engender an effective flow or exchange of information will determine the extent that mutual understanding can develop. Thus the sojourner's adjustment is seen to be a function of effective intercultural communication which occurs between sojourner and host (see Ells<sup>3</sup> for an annotated bibliography of articles and books related to intercultural communication).

Many investigators have suggested that differences between cultures may impede effective intercultural communication. Gardner (1962), for example, maintained that because the culture of the United States is extremely different from the cultures of developing countries, the American is rarely able to "perform this psychological feat of putting one's self in the other's shoes with any degree of efficiency [p. 245]." Gardner, using a sociological approach, discussed these differences between cultures and their implications for intercultural communication. He related his ideas to Max Weber's model in which a society moves from a "traditional authority" to a "rational-legal authority." A technologically advanced country would be located at the rational-legal phase, whereas a developing country would be located at the traditional phase. Social interaction between individuals from countries whose social systems are in different phases could result in numerous misunderstandings, with consequent difficulties in social personal adjustment for the sojourner. A somewhat similar sociological approach taken by Riesman, Glazer, and Denny (1955) contends that countries move from "tradition-directed" stages to "inner-directed" stages, and culminate in "other-directed" stages. Zeleznik (1957) related the theory of Riesman et al. to the adjustment of the sojourner.

An interesting comparison between traditional and technologically advanced cultures has been proposed in terms of role differentiation by Foa and Chemers (1967). They suggest

that the family is the nuclear system for establishing the various roles within a given society. The differentiation of roles within other systems, such as those pertaining to education or business, is secondary and rooted in the differentiation of family functions. A traditional culture has relatively few secondary systems in comparison with a more technologically advanced culture, which has many. Furthermore, a traditional culture makes many role distinctions within the family, but few distinctions between the family and secondary systems. Conversely, a technologically advanced culture makes relatively fewer role distinctions within the family, but many distinctions between the family and secondary social systems. Thus, for example, in a traditional culture, status in a particular social system may be determined primarily by one's role within the family, whereas, in a technologically advanced culture, status may vary from one social system to another depending on one's role in the particular system. In order to communicate effectively in an intercultural setting, therefore, it would seem particularly important for the sojourner to carefully differentiate among the roles of the host culture. For example, an American, to be able to communicate optimally in the Middle East, must learn to differentiate more within the family and less between the family and other systems. On the other hand, a Middle Easterner sojourning in the United States would have to learn the opposite, namely, to place less emphasis upon the role differentiation within the family, but more emphasis between the family and other social systems.

The difficulty of "putting one's self into the other person's shoes" is aptly described by an Oriental story related by Adams (1962):

Once upon a time there was a great flood, and involved in the flood were two creatures, a monkey and a fish. Now the monkey, being agile and experienced, was lucky enough to scramble up a tree and escape the raging waters. As he looked down from his safe perch, he saw the poor fish struggling against the swift current. With the very best of intentions, he reached down and lifted the fish from the water. The result was inevitable [p. 179].

The sojourner, especially if he is an educational or technical adviser, may act much like the monkey in the story, and with the most laudable of intentions may make equally

<sup>3</sup> Ells, S. A bibliography on cross-cultural communications. Unpublished manuscript, Putney, Vermont: Experiment in International Living, School for International Training, 1968.

disastrous decisions. The subtle and yet very important differences between cultures may not be understood, with the result that what may be perceived by the sojourner as the "most laudable of intentions," may be perceived by the host-country nationals as an insult instead. An awareness of differences between cultures would seem, then, to be crucial for effective intercultural communication. But developing such awareness is very difficult, primarily because of the subtleties of these differences. As Kluckhohn (1949) stated when he compared a culture to a map, "If a map is accurate and you can read it, you won't get lost; if you know a culture, you will know your way around in the life of a society [p. 28]." In a recent study of the Sinasina culture in New Guinea, Turner (1968) stressed that a sojourner should understand the "cultural theme" of the host culture in order to establish adequate intercultural communication.

Schuetz (1944) described the role of a stranger in a group, in which the stranger must modify his frame of reference in order to become more aware of the implicit structure and rules of the group. The stranger cannot rely upon vague notions about the norms and structure of the group if he is to become accepted. Likewise, the sojourner in his role as a stranger to a foreign culture needs to become aware of its implicit rules. This is no doubt a more difficult task for him than were he adjusting to a new group within his own culture.

Hall (1959) and Hall and Whyte (1963) discussed the process of intercultural communication and stated that periods of time spent in another culture may bring to awareness aspects of the sojourner's home culture of which he was previously unaware. A sojourner becomes aware of the many subtle cues that he has been employing within his own country, because the cues are no longer effective for communication within the host culture. An awareness of what were formerly unconscious cues for communication might be an important contribution to effective communication within the host culture, because the awareness of a cue may enable a sojourner to modify his patterns of communication so that they are congruent with the cues of the people of the host country. Therefore, if a sojourner can

consciously direct his behavior, the likelihood of his becoming better adjusted would be increased. In terms of the downward slopes and low points of the W curve, adjustment would be evidenced by a reduction in the slope and a reduction in the severity of concomitant culture-shock symptoms.

Intercultural communication can be conceived in terms of verbal communication, non-verbal communication, and complex interrelations between the two. The most obvious mode of communication is through the use of language, and its importance to understanding adjustment has been indicated by a number of studies.

Deutsch and Won (1963), for example, reported that language facility of trainees of the Agency for International Development was a factor influencing the degree of their social satisfaction or adjustment. And in a study of Scandinavian students in the United States, Sewell and Davidsen (1956) reported, also, that fluency in the host language was a necessary condition for a satisfactory adjustment. However, Major (see Footnote 2) reported that the English fluency of foreign students in the United States had little bearing on either their social or academic adjustment. Major suggested that the foreign student's confidence in his use of the host language had a greater influence on his adjustment than actual facility in the host language. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1966) suggested that confidence in the use of language, regardless of ability, may be a function of a more general confidence in one's ability to interact with others. Within certain cultural contexts the sojourner who has confidence in his ability to speak may be encouraged by foreign nationals whenever he uses the host language. However, Gullahorn and Gullahorn noted that not all countries are equally encouraging of the foreigner who attempts to speak in the host language. For example, whereas a sojourner to the United States will be likely to find his attempts to speak English generally encouraged, in France the sojourner may find his hosts relatively intolerant of misuse of the French language. The sojourner who has strong tendencies toward verbal interaction may find such rebuffs considerably frustrating. Other aspects of language have

been covered by Bennett et al. (1958), Feldman (1968), and Watson and Lippitt (1955).

Nonlinguistic as opposed to linguistic aspects of culture have been emphasized by Glenn (1967), Loubert,<sup>4</sup> and Wight, Hammons, and Bing<sup>5</sup> in explaining the barriers to communication that often exist between sojourner and host. And Hall (1959) proposed a theory of culture in which verbal communication is only one of many possible modes of communication. He formulated a "map of culture" which can be represented by a 10×10 matrix of cells. While the axes of the matrix consist of "primary message systems" or systems of communication, the cells in the matrix include the totality of activities in any culture. Thus, Hall conceived of culture as a vast system of communication composed of these message systems into which all of the aspects, activities, and elements of a culture may be categorized. Each cell has associated with it a "meaning" or communication value that is generally understood by the majority of members of a given culture. Since only one cell of the matrix is used to represent the process of verbal communication, all of the remaining cells pertain to messages that occur nonverbally and largely out of awareness. Therefore, nonverbal, in comparison with verbal communication, would seem to be of much greater significance within the culture (see Duncan, 1969, for a recent review of nonverbal behaviors).

Hall contends that the greatest confusion in intercultural communication can be traced to a failure to interpret correctly the subtle cues that precede and surround a verbal communication. A person may understand the actual spoken message, but may be totally unaware of the nonverbal messages that are occurring on the unconscious level. This unconscious communication is described as following certain culturally determined and relatively inflexible "rules," and may be discovered through analyses of nonverbal behavioral patterns. Often the unconscious behaviors become known to

the sojourner during the period of his relatively greater adjustment difficulties. In the sojourner's home country many actions which were automatic and primarily unconscious are relatively inappropriate within the host culture and become conscious in the process of adjustment (see David, 1971). According to Hall and Whyte (1963) sojourning has an "inoculation" effect. An American, for example, by virtue of his previous travel experience becomes more aware of his own modes of behavior, which were previously unconscious to him in the United States. This new awareness helps, then, to reduce the obstacles that interfere with understanding in subsequent intercultural encounters.

Apparently a variety of differences between cultures may contribute to misunderstandings in the communication process. Cultural differences with respect to time and space are two examples. Important cultural differences and their implications for intercultural communication may be found in the way that people from various countries conceive time. As described by Cleveland et al. (1960), if an American is invited to a seven o'clock dinner, he will probably arrive between 5 and 15 minutes after seven. A Scandinavian will probably arrive exactly at seven, and it is likely that he will bring a gift. A Latin may arrive at nine o'clock, and an Ethiopian may arrive somewhat later. A Javanese may not arrive at all, although he had politely accepted the invitation in order to prevent the host from losing face. Hall (1959) reported that an American who has to wait 45 minutes for a business appointment will likely be insulted, whereas, in some Latin American countries a wait of 45 minutes would be considered unusually prompt.

The nonverbal communicative significance of spatial behavior and its implications for intercultural communication, in particular, have been discussed by Brein<sup>6</sup> and Hall (1959, 1966, 1968). When two persons from different cultures interact, various misunderstandings may result from each interactant's lack of insight into the other's use of space. Misunderstandings can arise from crosscultural differences in territoriality. The middle-class

<sup>4</sup> Loubert, J. D. *The trans-cultural research and training institute (TCI)*. (ONR Tech. Rep. No. HSR-RR-67/7-Cs, Contract Nonr-4346-(00), NR-177-238) McLean, Va.: Human Sciences Research, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Wight, A. R., Hammons, M. A., & Bing, J. *Cross-cultural and community involvement training*. (Peace Corps Tech. Rep., Contract PC-25-1710) Estes Park, Colorado: Center for Research and Education, 1969.

<sup>6</sup> Brein, M. *Psychoproxemics*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Hawaii, 1970.

American, for example, believes that he has an inherent right to an office, room, or desk of his own, whereas, his English counterpart does not have the same apparent need to establish such territoriality. Also, the American tends to establish territorial rights in public places, for instance, if he is sitting at a public counter, another person is not expected to attempt to dispossess him of his seat; however, the Arab, according to Hall, believes that a public area really is public, and that a person does not have rights to an area or location simply because he occupies it. In such encounters, any number of potential misinterpretations of behavior could occur between Arabs and Americans.

The conversational interaction distances that people maintain between themselves have been noted to vary across cultures. Arabs, Latin Americans, Indonesian, and African groups, among others, have been described as maintaining generally closer interaction distances among themselves than Americans do (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Hall, 1959, 1963, 1966; Hall & Whyte, 1963). Hall suggested that since cultures apparently vary in their norms for interaction distance, people from these cultures structure their spatial experiences differently and may not necessarily attach the same meanings to their space usages. Hall emphasized the implications these differences might have with respect to intercultural communication by providing an example of the misunderstandings that could result from the different cultural meanings attached to the use of space. When a Latin American and a North American converse, both try to maintain their normal conversation distances with

the result . . . that when they [Latins] move close, we withdraw and back away. As a consequence they think we are distant or cold, withdrawn and unfriendly. We, on the other hand, are constantly accusing them of breathing down our necks, crowding us, and spraying our faces [1959, p. 164].

Although Hall's observations are largely impressionistic, some experimental evidence tends to support his views regarding interaction distances (Brein, see Footnote 6; Forston & Larson, 1968; Sommer, 1967; Watson & Graves, 1966). Other investigators have studied crosscultural differences in spatial behavior by using object arrangement

procedures. Based on the methods of Kueth (1962a, 1962b, 1964), subjects arranged pairs of dolls or paper human cutouts into simulated conversational interactions in any manner they wished onto backgrounds or fields. The distances resulting between these figures have been found to correspond to the actual distances that persons maintain between themselves during conversational encounters. Little (1965, 1968) termed these spatial separations "reproduced interaction distances," and observed that Mediterranean groups (Greeks and Italians), in comparison with Northern European groups (Swedes and Scots), placed dolls significantly closer together during simulated "conversations." Engebretson,<sup>7</sup> in a similar study reported cultural differences between Americans and Japanese. It seems, then, that such object-arrangement tasks may be potentially valuable for studying interaction distances in relation to the processes of intercultural communication.

Triandis, Vassiliou, and Nassiakou (1968), in a cross-cultural study of social perception, suggested that two persons from different cultures interacting with each other could develop misunderstandings and misinterpretations of each other's behaviors as a result of differences in their perceptions of social behaviors. It is possible that they could perceive their shared encounter "in very different terms" with respect to the exchange of reinforcements occurring between them, the degree of intimacy of the encounter, as well as their relative differences in status. For example,

a person from one culture may provide what he considers to be friendly criticism to a person from another culture only to discover that the other person interprets it as "hatred." Or, a person from culture A behaves in a manner which he considers extremely "positive" toward a person from culture B. However, the individual from culture B perceives the behavior as "neutral," and in turn, the individual from culture A feels that he is "given the cold shoulder" [p. 33].

Triandis et al. also gave a specific example of Greek and American differences in the perception of certain kinds of social behaviors, and discussed the implications of these differences

<sup>7</sup> Engebretson, D. E. Cross cultural variations in territoriality: A base-line determination of interactional distance between shared culture dyads. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1969.

for intercultural interactions between Americans and Greeks.

Fayerweather (1959) described how Americans feel complimented when they are told that they are open, direct, and approachable; however, Mexicans are seen to regard openness to be a form of weakness or treachery. The Mexican can give in or humiliate himself, but he should never allow the outside world to penetrate his intimate being. The person who is open is not to be trusted. He is a traitor or a man of doubtful fidelity, one who tells secrets and is incapable of facing dangers as they should be faced. In an article about the first Peace Corps Volunteers to the Philippines, Guthrie (1966) described how the volunteers were urged by some members of the staff to "be perfectly frank" in discussions with the Filipinos. This was a devastating piece of advice. The frankness of the Americans resulted in disrupted interpersonal relationships with the Filipinos because Philippine social interaction depended upon "smooth interpersonal relationships." Szanton (1966) described smooth interpersonal relationships as the handling of potential disagreements by ignoring or denying them, or calling on a third party to negotiate a compromise. Adams (1962) discussed some of the differences between value orientations of Koreans and Americans and also discussed the implications of these differences as they pertain to the role of an American educational adviser.

According to Cleveland et al. (1960), the American sojourner may have difficulty adapting to a culture in which indirection and innuendo are a way of life. For example, in some Asian languages the word for "no" is rarely used or is the same word as "yes"; thus, the Oriental "yes" may mean "maybe" or "no." The Oriental may consider it better to say an untruth than to cause another person to lose face. Cleveland et al. presented a story about an Indonesian middle-class boy who wanted to marry an upper-class girl. The boy's mother went to the house of the girl's mother for tea. A banana was served with the tea, which was a most unusual combination. The women did not discuss the marriage during their visit, but the boy's mother knew that the marriage was unacceptable—bananas do not go with tea. The relevant information had been communi-

cated, but nobody had lost face. However, an American might have picked up the banana and started to peel it while discussing the wedding date.

The preceding examples of intercultural misunderstandings suggest that the adjustment of the sojourner is related to those areas in which differences occur between cultures. Thus, the basis for ineffective communication of the sojourner would seem to be embedded in the differences between the home and host cultures; consequently, further investigations of cross-cultural differences should be able to establish the areas in which intercultural communication may be improved. More specifically, to understand the adjustment difficulties of an individual sojourner it would be necessary to relate specific background factors, personality traits, and situational factors to the communication process. Relating these factors to intercultural communication may then provide an integrating frame of reference by which any number of independent approaches could be compared and understood in relation to the adjustment of the sojourner. In turn, the effective exchange of information would allow for improved intercultural encounter to develop, resulting in improved adjustment for the sojourner. Although effective intercultural communication seems to establish the necessary basis for adjustment, it does not insure that the sojourner will show good adjustment. A sojourner may know how to communicate effectively in the host culture, but he may not be able to either accept or reconcile the differences between cultures. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, the next step in understanding the adjustment of the sojourner may be related to his acceptance of the host culture once he has developed effective patterns of communication.

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\* Asterisk indicates author for whom the address is supplied.