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ABSTRACT

Accepting a definition of culture as "the total accumulation of an identifiable group's beliefs, norms, activities, institutions, and communication patterns," this paper, in an extensive literature review, conjectures that the environment has a far-reaching impact on the performance of the foreign student in the United States. The paper notes that a negative or hostile environment can affect the individual's ability to communicate effectively and that this failure of communication may lead toward entropy within the individual. Applying the findings in organizational and intercultural communication literature to the experiences of foreign students (notably Africans) on American campuses, the paper presents two perspectives on organizational entry: the organizational and the individual's perspectives. According to the paper, the newcomer who is an "active-player" type readily immerses himself/herself into existing cultural networks and through these taps into the basic assumptions, norms, and sense-making mechanisms of the new environment. The paper notes that, all other things being equal, most of the sojourners who emigrate are active-players in the host environment. Echoing a study of J. P. Wanous (1976) which suggested the need to examine the dynamics of organizational entry, socialization, assimilation (or exit) from the perspective of the individual, the paper sees the point of entry into another culture or organization as a clash of cultures. The paper concludes that, ultimately, it is the individual involved in the transition who makes the decision as to which of the two cultures wins. Contains a figure and 71 references. (NKA)

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE AND SOJOURNER ASSIMILATION INTO THE HOST ENVIRONMENT: AN EXAMPLE OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE AND SOJOURNER ASSIMILATION INTO THE HOST ENVIRONMENT: AN EXAMPLE OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction

> Culture is the total accumulation of an identifiable group's beliefs, norms, activities, institutions, and communication patterns. (Dodd, 1991, p. 41)

Dodd's definition of culture is favored in this study for its simplicity and comprehensiveness in its scope. His definition agrees, to a large extent, with those from other researchers (Herkovits, 1955; Hall, 1977; Bormann, 1983). Herkovits (1948) defines culture as "the man-made [sic] part of the human environment" and as "essentially a construct that describes the total body of belief, behavior, knowledge, sanctions, values, and goals that make the way of life of a people" (1948, p. 625). For Luzbetak (in Hasselgrave, 1978, p. 68) "culture is a design for living. It is a plan according to which society adapts itself to its physical, social, and ideational environment." In his thesis on the comprehensiveness of culture, Hall (1977) says that "culture is man's [sic] medium; there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture" (p. 14). Hall further posits that culture affects "how people express themselves (including shows of emotion), the way they think, how they move, how problems are solved, how their cities are planned and laid out, how transportation systems function and are organized, and how government systems are put together and function" (p. 14). Hall's definition, like Dodd's (1991), makes culture an extremely complex and pervasive concept that reaches into every aspect of life. Samovar and Porter (1991) echo the same

sentiment when they say that, culture is our "invisible teacher" (p. 47) and that it "dictates who talks to whom, about what, how, when, and for how long" (p. 48). Keesing, in Gudykunst & Kim (1992, p. 12) sees culture as " a system of knowledge, shaped and constrained by the way the human brain acquires, organizes, and processes information and creates 'internal models of reality." Schein (1992, p. 12), defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." From the above, one can easily infer that an individual's cultural orientation affects both his or her understanding of a communication act and the "correct" behavior within the context of the act. This assumption is valid in view of the ways researchers have conceptualized communication *vis-a-vis* culture. To Bormann (1983, p. 100), communication refers to "the human social processes by which people create, raise, and sustain group consciousness." He sees culture as "the sum total of ways of living, organizing, and communing, built up in a group of human beings and transmitted to newcomers by means of verbal and nonverbal communication." These conceptualizations of culture and communication are neatly tied together by Gudykunst and Kim, (1992, p. 16) in their definition of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is defined by the authors as, "communication between people from different societal cultures." Their definition applies to situations where individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. In particular, their definition covers the complex dynamics of organizational or cross-cultural entry, socialization, assimilation, or exit which constitute the crux of this present study. For the purposes of this study, however, their definition will be restricted to the cultural

dynamics within the United States and how they relate to the decision of the African students to stay on or leave for home after their studies. A detailed discussion on the concept of culture from intercultural and organizational perspectives is outside the scope of this study. An attempt will, however, be made to examine the impact of cultural dynamics within the host environment on the acculturation efforts of the sojourner.

Environmental Influences on Acculturation

> In the course of everyday living, people constantly make adaptations to their environment, which is constantly in a state of change. . . .They adapt by using any of four strategies: reconstructing their perception of the environment, adapting their behavior to the demands of the environment, or changing the environment, either by reshaping it or moving to a more congenial one. (Taft,1988, p. 150)

The environment in which communicative acts take place influences both the interactants and the outcome of the interaction (Lewin, 1936). Lewin recognized this effect when he included the environment as one of the factors that affect behavior in the formula:

$$B = f(P,E)$$ where B = Behavior; P = Person; and E = Environment.

This means that our behavior at any time is a function of who we are and the environment in which the interaction is taking place. Khun (1975) echoes the same thought when he says: "human beings are controlled systems behaving in an environment" (p.112). Kim (1991) says: "each person is an 'open system' with a fundamental goal of adapting to its environment through its inherent homeostatic drive to maintain equilibrium, both internally and in relation to the environment (including the other person). When the system is challenged by the environment, its internal equilibrium is temporarily disturbed as the person-

environment symmetry is broken" (p. 268). Kim notes that this resultant situation is stressful and causes the individual to make necessary adjustments in an effort to regain internal equilibrium. "Acculturative stress" refers to one kind of stress in which "the stressors are identified as having their source in the process of acculturation" (Berry, 1990). Berry and Kim in Berry et al. (1988, p. 74) found "the nature of the larger society" as one of the five moderating factors in the relationship between acculturation and stress.

The systems framework, recommended by Kim (1991), makes it possible to conceive of the individual and the environment as two interdependent systems that have vital links to each other. The individual receives necessary inputs from the environment while generating outputs for the environment. In discussing the relationship between a person's frame of reference (those cognitive elements that inform a person's behavior), behavior, and environment, Grove and Torbiorn (1985) declare: "the environment is affected by a person's frame of reference because the frame recommends behaviors; these, in turn, directly and immediately affect what is occurring in the environment" (p. 209). They further observe that "as a person notices what is occuring in his [sic] environment and the extent to which his behavior is in harmony with that of others, the facts and evaluations thus acquired are fed back into his [or her] frame of reference to become part of his [her] total accumulation of values, attitudes, opinions, ideas, knowledge, and so forth" (p. 209). The implication of this can be far reaching in the sense that the type of feedback can affect our view of ourselves, others, and the environment. Pandey (1992) identifies three major domains of the environment:

1. Natural Environment: Includes geographical features, landscapes, wilderness, disasters, pollutions, flora and fauna, etc.
2. Built Environment: Buildings, architecture, technology, cities, etc.

3. Social environment: Territory, crowding, space, and so on... (p. 181).

Pandey is of the opinion that each individual relates uniquely with the environment at all levels. It is, however, necessary to indicate that this conceptualization of the environment becomes more complex when the subjective dimension of culture (Pandey,1992) is superimposed on these domains of the environment. There is the element of culture which includes "people's perceptions, values, norms, and behaviors" (p. 255); and which underlies Pandey's three domains and goes further to touch on issues that are much deeper than the physical environment. We adopt the definition of culture as "a body of knowledge that is drawn upon as a resource for explaining and making sense of new experiences" (Pacanowsky & O'Donnel-Trujillo, 1982), and "total accumulation of identifiable group's beliefs, norms, activities, institutions, and communication patterns" (Dodd, 1991) which the group teaches "to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel" (Schein, 1992, p. 12). Deertz and Kersten's description of organizational (and cultural) reality as comprising two structures can also be applied to the larger host environment. The authors distinguish between "surface" and "deep" structures of organizational (and cultural) reality. They define "surface reality" as "the world in which members self-consciously live, where things are rational and are made rational, where the guidelines are clear and get clarified, and where individuals are seen as having and exercising power. Meaning here is largely taken for granted so that work can be done in an apparently efficient manner" (p. 157). Pandey's three domains of the environment belong in this level of appreciation. The "deep structure," on the other hand, includes "the

unexamined beliefs and values upon which the taken-for-granted surface structure rests" (Deetz & Kersten, 1983, p. 158).

Our idea of the environment (this can be the cultural environment of the host country or the organization) is further complicated by the fact that the individual stranger imports into the situation environmental variables that may be totally different from those of the host. An organizational newcomer, therefore, will be faced with three levels of the environment at any one time:

1. The Surface Structure of the host environment which includes:

   i. The values: These are the basis of evaluation that organizational members use for judging situations, acts, objects, and people. The values of an organization or, in fact, any society, reflect the real goals, ideals, standards, as well as, sins of the group and represent members' preferred means of resolving life's problems. Values represent a people's understanding of "what ought to be" (Cummings & Huse, 1989) in the organization or society.

   ii. The norms: A group norm is " the standard by which the group judges behavior. . . . [it] is what is expected and what usually occurs" (Van Fleet, 1991, p. 137). It is the written or unwritten code of behavior that tells members how to behave in a particular situation. Van Fleet suggests that "norms result from the traditions of the group, individual members' personalities, the situation, and the task" (p. 138). He identifies four basic functions of norms in a group:

   (a) Norms ensure group survival by discouraging behaviors that threaten the group's existence.

(b) Norms create the atmosphere that reduces uncertainty within the group.

(c) Norms restrict members' behavior to acceptable limits.

(d) Norms distinguish one group from the others.

iii. The artifacts: Artifacts and creations of the group are at the highest level of cultural awareness and represent visible levels of the other cultural elements of the group. Schein (1992) brings "all that one sees, hears, and feels when one encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture" (p. 17) under this classification. He indicates that this level of culture (or the environment) is "easy to observe but hard to decipher" (p. 17). For a newcomer to any organization, decoding the group's classificatory system for its artifacts is a function of time and socialization.

2. The Deep Structure: This structure encompasses the basic assumptions in the host culture, and lies at the deepest levels of cultural awareness. From its dictates members of the host culture or organization perceive, albeit unconsciously, what to think, how to think, and how to respond to situations. It is at this level that the out-of-awareness assumptions about the environment, human nature, activities are stored to be referred to as the need arises. The description of the deep structure agrees with Pacanowsky and O'Donnel-Trujillo's (1982) definition of culture as "a body of knowledge that is drawn upon as a resource for explaining and making sense of new experiences" Assumptions are the unconscious underpinnings of the first three [four in this study] levels - that is, the implicit, abstract axioms that determine the more explicit system of meaning. Basic assumptions stored up in the deep structure are so taken-for-granted that people are reluctant to examine them, thus

making change difficult. Schein (1992, p. 22) attributes this reluctance to the fact that "reexamination of basic assumptions temporarily destabilizes our cognitive and interpersonal world, releasing large quantities of basic anxiety." To avoid dissonance that may arise from incongruities between a group's basic assumptions and reality, members tend to deny and distort reality to suite their assumptions (Schein, 1992, p. 22).

3. The Individual's Culture: This is the sum total of the individual's initial culture of socialization.

Dealing with initial contact with host environment

> For the persons proceeding to an unfamiliar culture, the mundane, everyday interpersonal encounters with members of the host society, e.g. in the streets, shops, factories, and bars are often a major source of stress, due to the person not knowing the rules and conventions that apply to these episodes in the receiving culture. (Bochner, 1982, p. 159)

For successful adaptation to a new environment, the adapting individual must maintain adequate information about the environment, adequate internal conditions to enact an appropriate response, and flexibility or freedom of movement so that the response is possible. But in order to properly articulate a position on the impact of environmental factors on cross-cultural or inter-organizational transition, it is necessary to examine the relevant literature as it relates to the cross-cultural experiences of the organizational newcomer from the intercultural and organizational communication perspectives. Sojourner studies really began in the late 1950's and early 1960's. One of the earliest such studies was by Committee on Cross-Cultural Education of the Social Sciences Research Council in the early 1950's (Gudykunst, 1977). Gudykunst

credits this committee with the creation of a positive research situation that yielded several monographs out of which came many studies on student sojourners (Lambert & Bressler, 1956; Beals & Humphrey, 1957; Bennet, Passin & McKnight, 1958; Morris, 1960). Sojourner research since this initial start has examined facets of the experience like personal characteristics of the sojourner (Mottram, 1963; Cleveland, Mangone & Adams, 1960; Kleinjan, 1972). Other researchers (Adler, 1975; DuBois, 1956; Oberg, 1960) chose to examine the stages that sojourners go through during the adjustment period in host culture. Oberg (1960), credited with the introduction of the term "culture shock," identifies four stages of sojourner adjustment: the first period - the honeymoon stage- covers the first six months of the sojourn. According to Oberg, this period is characterized by fascination with everything in the host culture. The second stage is characterized by hostility towards the host culture and increased identification with fellow sojourners. Increased knowledge of host language and more fluidity in relationships with host nationals characterize the third stage. In the fourth and final stage, the sojourner settles into the new culture and continues the adjustment process. Other researchers examined the role of communication in the adaptation process (Abe & Wiseman,1983; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Kim, 1976, 1977a, 1978). Research effort on adaptation of international students, like those of other sojourners, did not really take off until the late 50's and early 60's. Early studies in this area include Baylin & Kelman (1962); Davis, Hanson, & Burner, (1961); Deutsh & Won (1963); Morris (1960); Schild (1962) and Veroff (1963). Researchers (Lysgaard,1955; Coelho, 1958; Gullahorn, 1963) examined student adjustment by extending Oberg's (1960) 'Culture shock' hypothesis to student sojourners. Lysgaard (1955) studied 200 Norwegian Fulbright grantees visiting the United States for periods ranging from 0 - 6 months; 6 - 18 months; and over 18

months. He discovered that the students adjusted better during the first and third periods than during the second stage. Inspite of the weaknesses of the U curve hypothesis it has spun further research (Coelho, 1958; Spaulding, Flack,Tate, Mahon, & Marshall, 1976; Becker, 1968). Pruitt (1977) notes that paucity of research on foreign students in the mid 60's was compensated for by renewed interest in the subject since the late 60's (Becker, 1968, 1971; Brislin & Penderson, 1976; Coelho, 1972; Eide, 1970; Golden, 1973). In particular, Pruitt (1976, 1977) found that prior knowledge about the host culture has an impact on adjustment. Others found that adjustment is positively correlated with satisfactory academic achievement (Rising & Capp, 1968; Sharma, 1971). Sofola (1967) found that Nigerian students in the United States showed slightly more negative attitude towards the US. in the middle of their stay than at the beginning. Of particular interest to this study is what happens to the African students when they first establish contact with the host environment. Researchers agree that international students, like other organizational newcomers, frequently encounter culture shock (Church, 1982; Westwood & Barker, 1990) and many other problems that arise from transition from one environment to the other. Pruitt (1977) lists the following as major problems that confront African students in the United States:

1. Social and Environmental Problems:
   Housing, climate, communication with Americans, dating, discrimination, health, finances, food, homesickness, loneliness, and studies.
2. Psychological and Physical Problems:
   Depression, irritability, and tiredness.

As students, foreign students have to cope with the same problems which the local students face. However, they must also deal with the additional problems that arise from their being in an unfamiliar environment. For the foreign students, academic success does not depend entirely upon their preparedness and inner resources. To a large extent, success is also determined by their adjustment to new academic demands, institutional setting, and the people with whom they must interact. Westwood and Barker (1990) list some of the concerns and difficulties encountered by foreign students:

1. Information overload and lack of familiarity with the educational institution.
2. Faulted decisions and bad judgments that arise from initial problems with culture shock and from not being aware of the requirements.
3. Negative evaluations of the foreign students by the host society arising from initial mistakes. These initial impressions, especially by faculty members can haunt the student all through the program.

From the foregoing, one may safely conjecture that the environment has far-reaching impact on the performance of the foreign student in the United States. It follows that the type of environment can affect the individual's ability to function effectively. One can even stretch this line of thinking further to argue that a negative or hostile environment can hamper an individual's ability to effectively communicate and, that such failure to communicate may lead toward entropy within the individual (Kuhn in Ruben and Kim,1975, p.115) thus frustrating his/her "acculturative motivation" (Kim,1976). The frustration from the status quo may, in turn, lead to lack of interest in the environment and, therefore,

to the decision to quit. Conversely, as Kuhn (in Ruben and Kim,1975, p.115) argues, an individual in an open system with positive feedback may develop greater differentiation, and thus the need to stay on.

The Concept of Entry, Socialization, Assimilation, and Possible Exit in Organizational and Intercultural Communication

Organizational entry refers to several processes that take place as new members enter organizations (Wanous, 1977). It is necessary at this stage of the present study to indicate that the word "organization" is being used in its broadest sense to include the organization as "a group of people working together to achieve a common goal" (Van Fleet, 1991, p. 474), and the host society as a cultural entity. This study intends to apply the findings in intercultural and organizational communication literature to the experiences of the foreign students (notably Africans) on US. campuses. Wanous presents two perspectives on organizational entry: the organizational and the individual's perspectives. He posits that the major difference between the two types "stems from the different goals or objectives pursued by the individuals as opposed to organizations during entry" (p. 601). According to Wanous, the typical organization is primarily concerned with the ability or competence of newcomers to perform satisfactorily. The individual, on the other hand, is concerned with satisfying personal needs through the agency of the organization. The universities to which the foreign students admitted are no exceptions because most universities and colleges, like any other organizations, would admit only such students as have the potential for success. The students, on the other hand, need to use the opportunities offered by the universities to achieve their personal goals. Wanous (1976) examined

the organizational entry process in three stages: prior to entry (the individual is an outsider), shortly after entry (newcomer), and after more experience (insider). Jablin (1985a) calls the first stage 'anticipatory socialization' which, he suggests, has two phases: (1) the process of vocational choice/socialization, and (2) the process of organizational choice or entry. Researchers agree that occupational socialization precedes organizational choice and entry especially for "those on their first full-time job" (Wanous, 1977; Jablin, 1987).

Organizational entry is the final step in what Crites (1969) calls 'the exclusion process'- a process during which the individual constantly narrows down the range of choices of organizations (or using our example of the foreign students, a process whereby options for the choice of both the host country and institution are considered) until decision is made. In his review of specific topics in organizational entry, Wanous (1977) raised three questions which are relevant to the purpose of this study:

1. How do individuals develop preferences and choose new organizations?
2. How accurate and complete is the information that outsiders have prior to actual entry? and
3. What is the impact of recruitment activities on an individual's organizational choice, as well as, on post entry attitudes and behavior?

Researchers identify three stages of organizational socialization (Wanous, 1977; Louis, 1980):

1. Anticipatory socialization and organizational choice:

Anticipatory organizational socialization is primarily concerned with the ways in which individuals seek and transmit information about available jobs, make employment decisions and develop expectations of what life within the organization in which they are considering working. The impact of pre-entry socialization on post-entry performance will be discussed briefly later in this chapter. It is, however, necessary to mention that research supports the correlation between realistic anticipatory socialization and satisfactory post-entry socialization and performance on the job (Wanous, 1976, 1977). Louis (1980) defines organizational socialization as "the process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member" (p. 230). Jablin (1987) says that when a baby is born he/she begins to imbibe the values of, first, the immediate family, then friends at school, and finally society at large. He suggests that during this process of growth from childhood to young adulthood the individual gathers several pieces of information which are used in making occupational decisions later in life. Jablin (1985a) lists a number of likely sources through which people acquire information during this stage of the socialization process: (1) family members, (2) educational institutions, (3) part-time job experiences, (4) peers and friends, and (5) the media. These five sources apply directly to the student planning to come to the United States to study especially the role of the media and the significant others in the student's life. At this stage the newcomers, while still outsiders, anticipate their experiences in the new culture or organization they are about to enter. Several studies in this area suggest that individuals often know very little about the organizations they plan to enter and that their expectations are largely unrealistic (Wanous, 1977). The

question that needs to be answered at this stage is: How does an individual finally arrive at a choice in the face of many alternatives? From Wanous'(1977) study, some researchers (Swinth, 1976) view the organizational choice process as one of "unprogrammed decision making." Unprogrammed decision making process, according to Wanous, "views individuals as using only a few criteria to screen alternatives and make an implicit choice" (p. 604). Of interest to this study is the application of expectancy theory (Wanous,1977) and what Crites (1969) describes as an exclusion process. The exclusion process, as already indicated, presupposes the fact that an individual starts out having many choices which are consistently reduced until the final choice is made. Citing Lawler (1973) Wanous says that:

> According to expectancy theory, two psychological considerations determine the attractiveness of an organization: (a) expectations about the organization and (b) the valence, or desirability, of each characteristic for each person....these two components are multiplied for each characteristic considered, and the products are then summed for all characteristics. (Wanous,1977, p. 608)

Wanous posits that the particular organization that emerges with the highest rating stands a good chance of being chosen. Jablin (1987) suggests two basic sources of information for organizational outsiders: (1) organizational literature and (2) interpersonal interactions with other applicants, organizational interviewers, current employees, and the like (p.685). Louis (1980, p. 229) raised three pertinent questions regarding pre-entry expectations relevant to this study:

1. How do newcomers cope with unrealistic unmet expectations?
2. How do newcomers cope with early job [or school] experiences?

3. How do they come to understand, interpret, and respond in and to an unfamiliar organizational setting?

These questions lead to the second stage in the organizational entry process:

2. Encounter stage and transition shock:

> The encounter or "breaking-in" period of organizational assimilation is often a traumatic one for the new employee. During this phase. . . . the new employee's cognitive scripts and schemas must be redefined and re calibrated and attributional models created to explain why people behave and think as they do in the new work environment. (Jablin, 1982, p. 266)

During this stage, the newcomers' anticipations are tested against the reality of their new cultural or organizational experience. Differences between anticipations and experiences (including unmet expectations) become apparent and contribute to transition or reality shock. Transition shock is a state of loss and disorientation precipitated by a change in one's familiar environment which requires adjustment (Bennett, 1977). Hughes (1958 in Louis,1980) describes the experiences of newcomers to an organization as 'reality shock'. Louis says:

> "Reality shock" is the phrase that Hughes (1958) used to characterize what newcomers often experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. Time and space become problematic at the moment of entry. At that particular time, all surroundings, that is, the entire organizationally-based physical and social world are changed. There is no gradual exposure and no real way to confront the situation a little at a time. Rather the newcomer's senses are inundated with many unfamiliar cues. It may not be clear to the newcomer just what constitutes a cue, let alone what the cues refer to, which cues require response, or how to select

responses to them. Time and space remain problematic until . . . the newcomer is able to construct maps of time and space specific to the new setting." (p.230)

It is interesting that inter-organizational transfers have the same effect on the transferee as cross-cultural entry on the sojourner. Hughes' description of this experience agrees with those of other researchers (Oberg, 1960; Lysgaard, 1955; Adler, 1975; Bennett, 1977). Kahn et al. (1964, in Berlew and Hall, 1966) suggest that when a new manager first gets to the organization, that portion of his/her life-space corresponding to the organization is blank. According to Kahn and his colleagues, the manager will "feel a strong need to define this area and develop constructs relating himself (sic) to it. As a new member, he is standing at the boundary of the organization, a very stressful location, and he is motivated to reduce this stress by becoming incorporated into the 'interior' of the company." It is at this stage of the entry experience that many newcomers to the organization or culture decide whether to continue the acculturation process or quit (Dodd, 1991, p. 307). Dodd suggests that people at this "everything is awful" stage of entry respond to the psychological stress in one of four ways:

(1) Fight: The tendency to look down on the culture of the host country and act ethnocentrically.

(2) Flight: The urge to leave for home shortly after arriving the host culture.

(3) Filter: The tendency to deny reality. They can either deny any differences between their home culture and the host culture; glorify their culture by extolling only the good things; or they go native."

(4) Flex: The decision to understand and adapt to the foreign ways of the host culture.

In addition to the very stressful experience of culture shock, Zaharna (1989) argues that a degree of self shock is an integral part of the overall transition package. This is that aspect of the psychological confusion that arises during culture contact that affects the individual's relationship with himself or herself (p. 502). Says Zaharna, "self-shock is the intrusion of new and, sometimes, conflicting self-identities that the individual encounters when he or she encounters a culturally different Other" (p. 511). In other words, both the individual's cognitive maps and his/her self-identity are affected during organizational entry.

3. Organizational adjustment and assimilation:

If the newcomer resists the urge to "voluntary turnover" (Louis, 1980), or the "flight" (Dodd, 1991, p. 307), both of which speak of premature exit, he or she begins the adjustment process within the culture or organization. This learning process involves the functionally-defined elements of the organization (the mission, values, strategy, artifacts, and the basic assumptions) as well as the network of shared symbols of meaning which members use to make sense of their environment. Geertz (1973, in Griffin, 1991) writes: "man [sic] is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself [herself] has spun" (p. 254). Geertz pictures culture as those webs.

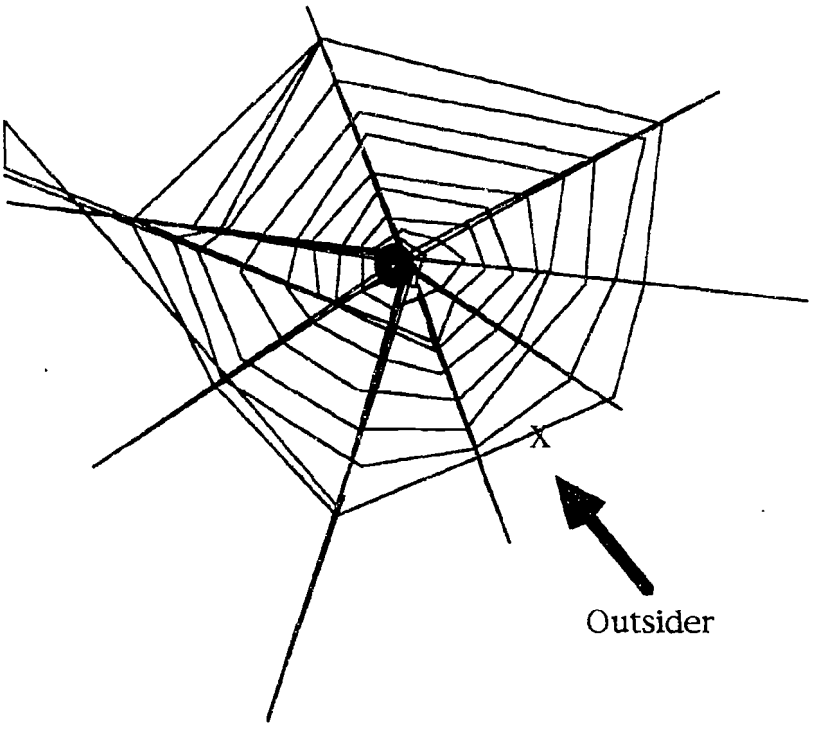

Figure 1

Cultural web and the outsider

In order to travel across the strands towards the center of the web, an outsider must discover the main strands that support the web (Figure 1). Culture, according to Griffin (1991, p. 254), is "shared meaning, shared understanding, shared sense making." By direct application, the culture in an organization can be likened to a web the center of which holds the future of the outsider or new member within the organization. The "strands" of this cultural web include the "surface structure" and the "deep structure" (Deetz & Kersten, 1983, p. 157) of the organization. Jablin (1987) defines organizational assimilation as the process by which an individual becomes integrated into the "reality" of the host

culture or culture of the organization; a process by which organizational members become a part of, and are absorbed into, the culture of an organization (Jablin, 1982, p.256). It is the transition from outsider to newcomer to insider (Wanous, 1976). Jablin sees two reciprocal dimensions to the assimilation process: (1) deliberate and unintentional efforts by the organization to 'socialize' employees (see Van Maanen, 1975), and (2) workers' attempts to 'individualize' or modify their roles and organizational environment to better satisfy their needs, ideas, and values (see Schien, 1968). The process of adjustment to new environment poses for the newcomer (student, cross-cultural manager, or immigrant) the fundamental alternatives of adapting to meet environmental requirements or manipulating the environment to meet individual needs (Nicholson, 1984). Louis (1980) notes that it is after the entry stage that the newcomer really begins to 'learn the ropes' and experience a series of surprises that enhance the development of cognitive maps suitable for sense-making and survival in the new environment. Using the cognitive complexity-simplicity template, it is possible to have two types of newcomers to the new environment. the "side-liners" and the "active players." The side-liners are those newcomers whose main motivation is to get by and meet their basic life-needs. They are satisfied with basic membership privileges and accept the status quo as satisfactory, if not ideal. The side-liner is overwhelmed by any effort to enter the active life of the new environment and would rather maintain non-challenging relationships or networks outside the new environment. The social life of this type of newcomer is oftentimes limited to the pre-entry friendships and networks. These individuals are "nativistic" (Chang, 1972, p. 15) in their approach to acculturation into the new environment and tend to resist any change in the status quo. At the other end of the spectrum is the newcomer who wants to be an active player in the new environment. This type of person

belongs to one of Chang's remaining acculturation types: the "bicultural movement" that recombines the cultural elements of his/her first culture of socialization with the culture of the new environment to form a new cultural whole; and the "cultural assimilation movement" in which the individual literally abandons the "old' culture for the new. The newcomer who is an active-player type readily immerses him/herself into the existing networks and through these taps into the basic assumptions, norms and sense-making mechanisms within the new environment. It is the position of this study that, all other things being equal, most of the sojourners who emigrate are active-players in the host environment. This present study of the adaptation process postulates the following assumptions:

The Environment: The word 'organizational' in organizational environment can be conceptually replaced with 'cultural' and 'organizationally-based' with 'culturally-based' without serious loss of equivalence.

The Experience: Also the experience of 'reality shock' (Hughes, 1958) mirrors that of 'culture shock' (Oberg, 1960).

The Newcomer designation: Because of the similarity in the entry and acculturation processes, this study draws no distinction between the experiences of a manager on cross-cultural posting and a student on cross-cultural training.

4. Organizational Exit and the Quality of organizational information available to outsiders:

Organizational entry researchers agree that the expectations outsiders have of organizations are largely unrealistic and inflated and that individuals know very little about new organizations they join until they are inside them (Wanous,

1976). Jablin (1987) suggests two basic sources of information for organizational outsiders: (1) organizational literature and (2) interpersonal interactions with other applicants, organizational interviewers, current employees, and the like (p.685). He further posits three approaches adopted by researchers in examining the above sources:

(1) the relative effectiveness of various information sources in recruiting/attracting newcomers,

(2) the realism or accuracy of job/organizational expectations that result from contacts with each source,

(3) the role of employment interview as a recruiting and selection device.

This study focus is on the second approach, and briefly examines the realism and accuracy of information given to outsiders by organizational agents and recruiters. The kind of organizational information given to outsiders and the method of passing on the information are blamed for the unrealistic expectations of outsiders (Wanous,1977). Part of the problem is that to be legitimized by their environments, organizations present a "public relation image" - that view of the organization that tells the world that everything is OK for the organization - which they project to their 'important others.' In their effort to make their organization look good, recruiters fail to distinguish between the two levels of outsiders: those without any interest in becoming insiders and those who are interested otherwise. The resultant effect of this is that an inflated image of the organization is presented to job seekers: those outsiders who are genuinely interested in becoming insiders (Okoli, 1991). However, as Jablin (1987) has found, newcomers recruited informally through employee referrals tend to stay with the organization longer than those recruited through formal means. It is also necessary to point out the fact that certain aspects of

organizational life are better experienced than explained. How would the recruiter explain issues like organizational culture, informal networks, and all the other nuances that constitute the life within the organization to an outsider. One would suspect that some of these recruiters are themselves in need of such information. Researchers agree that voluntary turnover among newcomers is attributable to "unrealistic or inflated expectations that individuals bring as they enter organizations" (Louis,1980, p. 227). Louis says: "turnover is attributed to differences between newcomers' expectations and early job experiences" (p. 227). Efforts have been made by both researchers and organizations to bring the expectation of outsiders in line with organizational reality. Researchers have suggested various ways to better prepare people for "the unpleasant aspects of the new environment" (Wanous, 1977). Wanous and others proposed using realistic job previews (RJP). In RJPs candidates for jobs are presented with realistic picture of the organization. It is believed that this will lower their expectations thus making them more realistic attainable. Ilgen (as cited in Louis, 1980, p. 227) hypothesizes that met expectations lead to satisfaction and satisfaction is inversely related to turnover. Wanous (1976) had suggested the need to examine the dynamics of organizational (and cross-cultural) entry, socialization, assimilation (or exit) from the perspective of the individual. The author's suggestion echoes the position of this paper. This writer sees the point of entry into another culture or organization as a clash of cultures. At this point (represented by the letter "X" in figure 1), the individual's initial culture of socialization and the culture of the new environment join in a mortal combat for supremacy. Ultimately, it is the individual involved in the transition who makes the decision as to which of the two cultures wins. If the pull factors within the new culture or organization overwhelm the home-bound, nativistic factors, the individual may decide to assimilate or emigrate. If, on the

other hand, the outward-bound pull factors prove stronger, premature exit or turnover occurs.

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