CAC 12

"Culture Shock"

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- Kalervo Oberg (1901-73): Finnish-Canadian anthropologist
- *The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians of Alaska* (1954, research from '30s)
- 'cultural shock'

"Culture Shock" as illness

- Early studies of CS sometimes viewed it as a medical condition, an illness
- Use of medical practises to alleviate problems related to CS

Shock/Stress: Symptoms

- Excessive concern over health and cleanliness
- Feelings of helplessness and withdrawal
- Fear of being cheated, robbed or injured
- Glazed stare
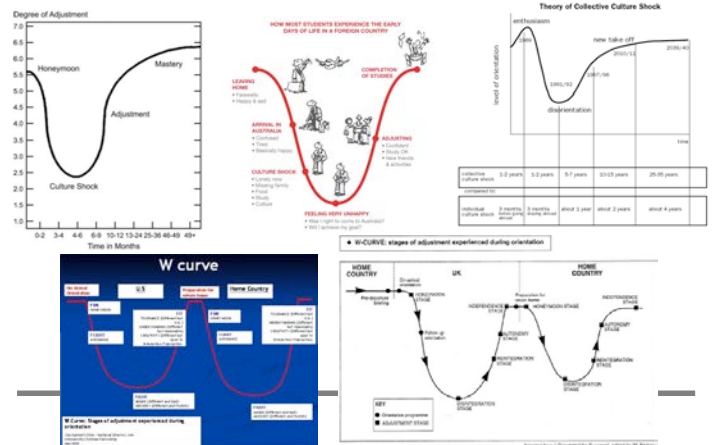- Desire for home, old friends
- Physiological reactions...

Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments, Oberg (1960)

Transition Shock/Stress

- Bennett (representing an updated view) describes 'culture shock' as one of many other kinds of *psychological reactions to life changes*
- Transitions (life events)
- **Transition Stress (TS)**

Process NOT event

Highly variable process

- General 'shape' of process
  - U-curve (sojourn only)
  - W-curve (sojourn and return)
  - Honeymoon → crisis → recovery → adjustment
- Individual variations too great to graph
- 'Stress' & 'Coping'

Factors...

- Educational, economic, religious etc
- 'Society of origin'
- 'Society of settlement'
- Individual & group/society
  - Personality
  - Norms, values etc. 'Cultural distance'

'Acculturation'

[A]cculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups.

Memorandum on the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist. 38.* 149-152. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936)

'Acculturation'

- **Assimilation:** Acculturating group become absorbed in 'host group'
- **Reactive:** both groups resist change
- **Creative:** stimulates new cultural forms not found in either group
- **Delayed:** changes may be initiated but not fully realised until years in the future
- **Group** vs **Individual**

Memorandum on the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist. 38.* 149-152. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936)

More Factors

- Acculturation strategies
- Social support
- Added stress from 'life events'...
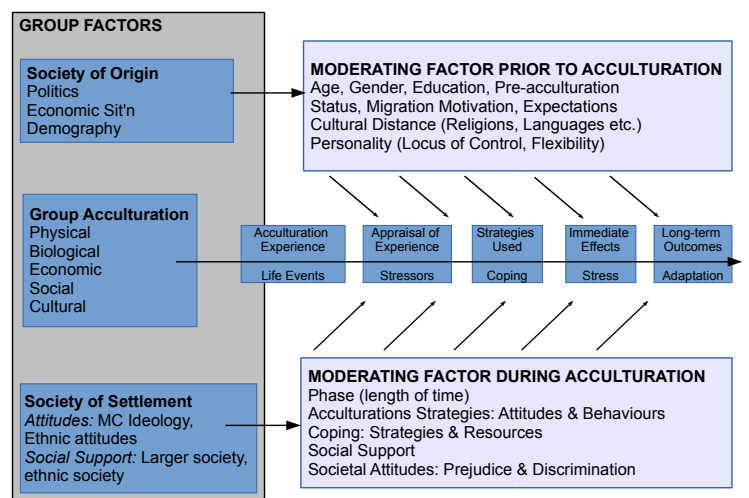
Attempts to measure TS

- Developed 1967-70
- **Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale**
- Attempt to investigate possible link between 'stress' and illness.

Holmes and Rahe: Interpretation

Score	Comment
>300	You have a high or very high risk of becoming ill in the near future
150-299	You have a moderate to high risk of becoming ill in the near future
<150	You have only a low to moderate chance of becoming ill in the near future

Spradley & Phillips: Readjustment(1)

- How punctual most people are
- How free and independent women seem to be
- The language spoken (assume you have only limited ability in that language)
- Sleeping practices such as amount of time, time of day, and sleeping arrangement
- The amount of privacy I would have
- General standard of living
- Ideas about what offends people / Ideas about what is funny / Ideas about what is sad
- The number of people of your religious faith
- How ambitious people are

Spradley & Phillips: Readjustment(2)

- How ambitious people are
- How formal or informal people are
- My own financial state
- Personal cleanliness of most people
- The degree to which your good intentions are misunderstood by others
- Type of recreation and leisure time activities
- The general pace of life
- How parents treat children
- The sense of closeness and obligation felt among family members
- How much friendliness and hospitality people express

Methodology

- Survey of returned Peace Corps Volunteers, Chinese students (in the US) and US students

- "cultural re-adjustment measures the intensity and length of time necessary to accommodate to a cultural difference, regardless of the desirability of that difference."

Spradley & Phillips: Results

	Peace Corps (83)	Chinese Students (34)	US Students (42)
Language spoken	1 (962)	1 (1059)	1 (1201)
Pace of life	2 (527)	11 (349)	30 (404)
Punctuality	3 (504)	29 (130)	32 (290)
Food	4 (500)	3 (500)	20 (500)
Standard of living	5	6	3
Male/Female closeness/'intimacy'	12	2	12
What offends people	7	22	2
Family oblig'n / closeness	28	4	26
Opp's for social contact	6	9	4

'Expectations'

- Black and Gregersen (1990) surveyed American managers relocating to Japan: OVERMET expectations, that is things that happened turned out even better than these people had expected meant that subjects were more satisfied in their lives.

- 'Overmet' & 'undermet'

Expectations, satisfaction, and intention to leave of American expatriate managers in Japan
JS Black, HB Gregersen. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (1990)

Ways of Coping

- Problem solving
- Wishful thinking
- Detachment
- Social support
- Positive thinking
- Self-blame
- Tension reduction
- Withdrawal responses

Folkman and Lazarus (1985)

Coping Strategies

- COPING: dealing with stress – is a *process*.

- It's not the kind of person you are, it's not your personality, it's what you *decide to do* in any particular given circumstance and in reaction to certain events.

- Different strategies work for different people

"Dynamics of a Stressful Encounter: Cognitive Appraisal, Coping, and Encounter Outcomes." Folkman et al. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50:5, 1986

Results vary...

- **Positive thinking** (being optimistic): Chinese students in Canada who employed this strategy didn't necessarily undergo less stress, but they DID *feel better* about their ability to cope (Chataway and Berry 1989)

- **Detachment strategy:** found to be more prone to more serious psychological and psychosomatic problems

Detachment – Escape/Avoidance

- Also known as 'distancing'

- "didn't let it get to me", "refused to think about it too much", "tried to forget the whole thing"

- **Active:** "wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with", "slept more than usual", "tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc."

'Personality' and TS

- 'Locus of control'

- Introversion / extraversion
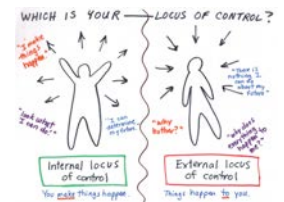
Locus of control

"the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them"

- **Internal:** "I can control my life"
- **External:** "Stuff just happens (to me)"
  - *shō ga nai*

Introversion & Extraversion

- It depends...
- Malaysian & Singaporean students in NZ: extraversion was **+ve**: more satisfied
- English-speakers in Singapore: extraversion was **-ve**: boredom, frustration, poor health

Social Support

- Proximity of friends and family
- Same-culture friends
- Informational / emotional support
- 'Expat Bubble'
  - Provides support
  - Impedes cultural learning

Cultural Skills

- Language proficiency is important
  - Allows better situational understanding and access to information
  - Making friends
- But depends on:
  - reaction of hosts
  - expectations

GOT PROFICIENCY

ONE STEP CLOSER TO WORLD DOMINATION

Demographics

- **Male-female:** differing 'typical' roles means different opportunities and problems
- Reactions to TS differ:
  - Girls → depressive
  - Boys → antisocial behaviour
- **Age:** younger people adapt quicker

Next Week

- Political uses of 'culture'

- **To read:**

  Discourses of Homogeneity in a Rapidly Globalizing Japan

  Chris Burgess (ejcjs 2004, revised 2012)
  www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/Burgess.html