SELF-SHOCK: THE DOUBLE-BINDING
CHALLENGE OF IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT. *Numerous scholars have spoken of the painful effects of identity confusion in sojourner adjustment. We know that it exists, but how does it occur? The question is not about outcomes or differences, but about understanding the dynamics of the contact process itself. How does contact with a different Other produce identity anxiety for the sojourner? Following an intracultural survey of self-identity formation and maintenance, discussion turns to the intercultural dynamics of self-identity processes. The concept of self-shock is introduced. Self-shock rests on the intimate link between Self, Other, and behaviors. Any situation that alters the meanings for behavior has the potential for hampering the individual's ability to maintain consistent, recognizable self-identities. Confusion is no longer with the Other (culture shock), but rather with the Self (self-shock). Self-shock is the intrusion of inconsistent, conflicting self-images. Three dimensions of self-shock are presented: loss of communication competence vis-a-vis the Self, distorted self-reflections in the responses of Others, and the challenge of changing identity-bound behaviors. From the intercultural communication perspective, self-shock is a double-bind based on behavioral ambiguity: Unshared meanings for behaviors increase one's need to confirm self-identities, however, unshared meanings for behaviors decrease one's ability to do so. The analysis stresses the importance of identity-bound behaviors as well as the need to develop strategies that will enable the sojourners to renegotiate viable identities in the new sociocultural context.*

Identities are socially bestowed. They must also be socially sustained and fairly steadily so. One cannot be human all by oneself and, apparently, one cannot hold on to any particular identity all by oneself.

Peter Berger
Invitation to Sociology

Many scholars have highlighted the problem of identity confusion in the study of intercultural discomfort. Although the intercultural experience is primarily viewed in terms of the differences of the Other, these differences appear to stimulate differences with and within the Self. Psychologist Peter Adler, in fact, commented that the intercultural experi-

ence begins with "an encounter of another culture and evolves into the encounter with the self" (1975, p. 18).

As a feature of culture shock, identity confusion is supported by the work of scholars who have discussed its debilitating effects (Adler, 1975; Bennett, 1977). Others have theoretically linked intrapersonal communication (including self-concept and identity) to intercultural communication (Dyal & Dyal, 1981; Kim, 1988; Ruben, 1983; Singer, 1987).

Yet, many questions remain unanswered. For example, from a behavioral perspective (Argyle, 1983; Furnham & Bochner, 1983; Hall, 1976) we know that differences in communicative behaviors will produce a strained relationship with the culturally different Other. However, does this strained relationship with the Other affect the individual's relationship with himself or herself? How do our relationships with different Others effect our ability to maintain self-identities? These questions tie into the major theme of this paper: What is it about the intercultural experience that brings into question one's identity?

In this paper the challenge of identity is seen not as an outcome, but rather, as a process. The focus is on process of contact: What is happening to individuals who prolong contact with a different Other? What role does behavior and the different Other play in one's ability to maintain one's self-identity in the intercultural context?

The literature review, which follows, highlights the question of identity in intercultural scholarship. It is followed by a more in-depth examination of self-identity formation and maintenance in the intracultural context, and of the out-of-awareness role of the Self in communication. The relationship among communication behavior, Self, and Other is highlighted. In the concluding section of the paper, the concept of self-shock is offered to explain the sojourner's struggle to maintain consistent and recognizable self-identities in the face of radical behavior change and contact with a culturally different Other.

THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY IN INTERCULTURAL SCHOLARSHIP

Even before Kalvero Oberg (1960) identified identity confusion as a feature of culture shock, other scholars, as well as the sojourners themselves, were critically aware of the acute ontological challenge encountered in the cross-cultural setting. Albeit approached from numerous different angles, the problem of self-identity is primarily found in the extensive literature on sojourner adjustment and adaptation (see, Brein & David, 1971; Church, 1982; Kim, 1985, 1988; Kim & Gudykunst, 1987, for review).

Many of the early studies of intercultural adjustment were conducted from a psychological perspective and imbued the sojourner literature

with "a distinct clinical flavor" (Furnham & Bochner, 1983, p. 163). Culture shock was associated with maladjustive mental and emotional attributes of the sojourners themselves. George M. Foster, for example, called culture shock "a mental illness, and as true of much mental illness, the victim usually does not know that he is afflicted" (1962, p. 187).

Reports from the field served to confirm the psychological stress of the sojourners (Leopold & Duhl, 1964; Thomson & English, 1964). Although sojourners had been given in-depth knowledge about the target country, many of the problems they encountered were not related to a lack of host-country knowledge. Instead, "even more significant was the dawning recognition that becoming effective overseas involved a heavy measure of self-understanding and awareness" (Hoopes, 1979, p. 4).

Sensitivity-type training was employed to address the psychological problems. Unfortunately, this approach backfired in a major way as trainers sometimes induced psychological problems which they were unequipped to handle (Hoopes, 1979). The Peace Corps experience with this type of training was so negative that, not only was it banned, but all "experiential cross-cultural training in the Peace Corps came under a cloud" (Hoopes, 1979, p. 5).

While the question of self-understanding and self-identity at the intensive individual level was dropped from the intercultural training agenda, the research continued to show that sojourners were experiencing personal discomfort and changes that could not be explained solely on the basis of cultural-level variables, that is, behaviors. There were issues of "personal growth" (Coelho, 1962; Nash, 1976), acculturative stress (Berry & Annis, 1974), attitude change (Sell, 1983) self-image change (Bailyn & Kelman, 1962), and "self-awareness" (Adler, 1975; David, 1971; Smaliey, 1963).

The question of identity and self-awareness was also explored at the group level. An awareness of cultural identity, for example, stressed the individual's need to gain an awareness of the cultural influences on his or her behaviors (David, 1971; Kohls, 1979). Social identity (Tajfel, 1974) similarly stressed the social component of the individual's identity. While studies of this nature (i.e., Frideres & Goldberg, 1982; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Ting–Toomey, 1981; Graham, 1983) do help to illustrate how identity questions arise during intergroup dynamics, they do not, and perhaps cannot, dive into the immediacy of identity confusion as it affects the individual at a personal level.

Several scholars have specifically highlighted the dilemma of identity confusion in their discussions of intercultural discomfort. Most notable is Peter Adler (1975), who views the intercultural experience as a transitional experience that "begins with the encounter of another culture and evolves into the encounter with self" (p. 18). He attributes the "progressive unfolding of the self" to "a set of intensive and evocative situations in

which the individual perceives and experiences other people in a distinctly new manner and, as a consequence, experiences new facets and dimensions of existence" (p. 18). He contends that the positive aspect of intercultural discomfort is heightened self-awareness.

Janet Bennett (1977) also highlights the sense of self-identity in her discussion of culture shock as transition shock. "During any transition experience, the quandary is frequently: 'Who am I?' There is a loss of continuity in one's purpose and direction" (p. 48). Supporting her view with the works of Draguns (1977) and Barna (1976), Bennett contends that "the individual most likely to master this situation (transitional experience) is the one who has a firm sense of self-identity" (p. 48). Supporting this, Hawes & Kealey (1981) found that the best indicators of sojourner effectiveness were interpersonal skills, realistic predeparture expectations, and identity.

While identity confusion has often passed under the vague guise of "psychological discomfort," Barna (1983) sought to unravel its intricacies by applying stress research to sojourner adjustment. Although the biological reactions associated with stress are often in response to perceived threats of physical harm, she poignantly touches upon the importance of identity in our contemporary social environment: "The 'danger' is usually to one's self-esteem or social self—it involves saving one's face instead of one's skin" (p. 23). Thus preservation of self-identity appears vitally important to the individual.

Several scholars have placed prominence on the question of identity in the intercultural adjustment process. For example, Garza–Guerrero (1974), a clinical psychologist, saw as one of the "two most conspicuous and fundamental elements of culture shock . . . the vicissitudes of identity in the face of the threat of a new culture" (p. 409). While his discussion includes tangential references to the Other, it focuses primarily on the ego identity and is not incorporated fully into the context of intercultural communication research.

Nash & Shaw (1963) saw the "crucial factor" in adjustment as a psychological one: "the maintenance of personal identity, i.e. a sense of continuity or sameness in a strange environment" (p. 252). They saw culture shock as "an anxiety state resulting from the individual's inability to maintain a sense of sameness or continuity in a new situation" (p. 252). Sense of sameness or continuity are two critical components in Allport's (1955) conception of identity. However, instead of developing this theme to explain the intercultural dynamics involved, they used it to support the necessity of foreign enclaves for Japanese immigrants to Cuba.

Norman Chance (1965) also focused on the problems of self-identification and personal adjustment in the acculturation process. His study of an Eskimo village highlighted the self-identity dilemma resulting from contact with others from a different culture. Chance connected the cost

of rapid change at the social and cultural level with recognizable symptoms of maladjustment at the individual psychological level. However, again his analysis was presented at a group-level and did not explore the intrapersonal dynamics. The study also was presented from a host culture perspective instead of from the sojourner's perspective.

Another important related study is that of Bailyn & Kelman (1962) which documented the changes in self-images of Scandinavian students studying in the United States. The study showed how individuals use their new intercultural experiences as a way of testing the social anchorage of self-images. The study highlighted four response patterns by sojourners: internalization, identification, confirmation, and resistance. Albeit an important processual study in itself, the study was not developed into a discussion of identity confusion.

While the above studies speak directly of changing identity, the idea of a "new identity" and personal change appears to be an implicit byproduct of the intercultural experience. No longer is the person's identity rooted in a particular cultural milieu, but rather transcends cultural boundaries (Adler, 1974; Bochner, 1981; Kim, 1988). An example is Adler's (1974) concept of "multicultural" persons who maintain no clear boundaries between themselves and the varieties of personal and cultural contexts they may find themselves in.

Theoretically, the idea of a "new identity" has been addressed via the relationship between intrapersonal and intercultural communication. Dyal & Dyal (1981) list specific intrapersonal variables potentially affected by the intercultural experience. Ruben's definition of adaptation (1983, p. 137) highlights the relationship between internal equilibrium and environmental challenges. Kim (1988), in fact, uses this systemic approach to develop a theory of intercultural adaptation, relating the intrapersonal system to the intercultural system. Yoshikawa (1987) provides a creative visual model called a "double-swing" to illustrate the process of identity transformation.

Theoretically, the connection between intrapersonal and intercultural communication is clear, yet the level of theoretical abstraction does not address the personal immediacy of identity confusion. Both culture shock and acculturative stress carry with them the notion of "psychological strain." That this strain is discomforting for the individual is clear, yet how this strain develops via interaction with the Other or behavioral differences is not as clear. Also the *process* of how this strain stimulates a "new identity" is not clear. Again, the role of the Other as well as differing behaviors are not interwoven into an interactive analysis of the process.

That adjustment process is even a continual process with one low point followed by a gradual, ever-increasing satisfaction is even suspect. Aguilar (1981) was against the concept of culture shock on the basis that

it was a series of low points. Kohls (1979) also noted two phases of culture shock. This raises the question, if intercultural learning produces greater communication competency and improved relations with the Other, then why is the discomfort not a one-time, initial occurrence?

Similarly while theories of intercultural adjustment incorporate a "new identity" as part of the adaptation process, they omit the problems of reentry shock (Sussman, 1986) as well as those of returning emigrants. Reentry shock poses an interesting paradox to theories of intercultural adjustment: Why does a returning sojourner who has developed a "heightened self-awareness" plus new intercultural communication skills still encounter problems upon returning to a culture which is not "unknown"?

Part of the dilemma of understanding the question of identity may stem from the way in which we approach it. The research highlights the very personal, individual-specific nature of the intercultural experience. Yet most studies of sojourner adaptation use group populations. William Fitts (1981), working with self-concept in the American intracultural sphere, speaks to the critical need to go beyond the group statistics to an understanding of what is happening to the individual.

One should not be content to collect data from a group of people, feed them into a computer, then report and interpret the group findings. It is more important to get one's hands on the data and see what is really there—what's happening to the *individuals* there. When this has been done, one often finds that there is a great deal happening with individuals that is completely obscured or confounded by the group data. (1981, p. 262)

One way to address this methodological problem is through more intensive review of the first-person accounts of sojourners. Indeed, the moving accounts of articulate anthropologists as they struggle to make sense of their experiences are as compelling as they are revealing (see, for example, American Friends Service, 1984; Freilich, 1970; Kimbal & Watson, 1972; Messerschmidt, 1981; Ruby, 1982; Spindler, 1970; Stocking, 1983; Wax, 1971). These accounts contrast sharply with the many conflicting and narrowly defined sojourner adjustment studies based on the responses of college students to researchers' questions (Brein & David, 1971; Church, 1982; Sell, 1983).

The quagmire in intercultural adjustment does not appear to be about cultural-level communication variables, or individual-level sojourner variables, or the communication outcomes, but about the process of communication itself. What is missing in the adjustment literature is a "contact theory." As Kim noted, "Cross-cultural comparisons of communication patterns do not describe or explain directly what actually happens when individuals from two different cultures come into direct or indirect contact and begin to communicate for varying periods of time" (1984, p. 21).

Contact is the critical term. From the systemic perspective, underlying Ruben's (1983) view of "adaptation" is the notion of contact. From the perspective of phenomenology and hermeneutics, "betweeness" again highlights the notion of contact (Casmir, 1983). Yoshikawa's (1987) "double-swing" model similarly rests on the notion of "inbetweenness." From the studies of culture shock and acculturative stress, sojourner discomfort over cross-cultural differences emerges when the sojourner comes into contact with the different Other. The dramatic responses to culture shock—fight, flight, and filter (*Overseas Diplomacy*, 1973)—are in themselves dramatic attempts to break contact with the different Other.

It is perhaps possible to state that if one did not come into contact with the different Other, one would not experience culture shock, acculturative stress, or reentry shock. Contact is also implicit in the importance of sojourner–host "relationships." Positive intercultural experiences have been tied to the sojourner's ability to establish meaningful relationships with members of the host culture (Bochner, McLeod, & Lin, 1977; Furnham & Bochner, 1983).

Thus, in the intercultural context we see that contact with the Other, as well as behavior, is directly related to the question of identity. To understand how behavior, Other, and self-identities relate in the process of intercultural communication, I turn to theories of self-identity formation and maintenance developed within the intracultural context. The viability of applying an intracultural understanding to dimensions of intercultural phenomena is supported by the theoretical model developed by Larry Sarbaugh (1979).

IDENTITY & INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: THE INTRACULTURAL CONTEXT

How are self-identities formed and maintained? The answers offered by interpersonal communication theorists highlight the critical importance of both behavior and contact. First, I highlight the relationship between behavior and self-identity.

In a series of research experiments using the responses of small children, Rosenberg (1979) found that among our first attempts at self-definition is observation of our own behavior. Daryl Bem (1972) introduced the idea that self-attribution, the self-images which we attribute to ourselves, are derived from our observing our own behavior. "Individuals come to 'know' their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behavior and/or the circumstances in which this behavior occurs" (p. 5). Thus, in an example supplied by Rosenberg & Kaplan (1982), if I observed myself polishing off two helpings at dinner, I was hungrier than I thought. If I know all the right moves on the dance floor, I'm a good dancer. If I get

straight A's on all my tests in all my classes, I am a good student. Bem also stressed the importance of circumstances of our behaviors. We are not just observing our behavior in a vacuum. Much of how we interpret the circumstances is tied to how others respond to our behaviors.

The role of others highlights the importance of contact in self-identity formation. From the interactional perspective of communication (see Fisher, 1978, pp. 164–193), the meanings of things are the products of social interaction (Blumer, 1969; Cooley, 1924; Manis and Meltzer, 1972; Mead, 1934; Shibutani, 1961). Not only are the meanings of things— chairs, flags, behaviors, national anthems—products of social interaction, but we ourselves are the products of social interaction. Our self-identities are the products of social interaction.

Sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1924) coined the term the "looking-glass self," arguing that just as we use a mirror to gain an estimation of our physical appearance, so we use the responses of others as a mirror to gain a social estimation of ourselves. We use the responses of others to form images of ourselves.

Employing another graphic term for the phenomenon is Harvey Stack Sullivan (1953) and his notion of "reflected self-appraisal." According to Sullivan, it is through interaction with others that we learn about ourselves. Each exchange provides us with cues about how others see us, and this, in turn, shapes our view of ourselves.

We do not, however, simply see ourselves as others see us. A significant note about Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self is the element of uncertainty inherent in those reflected self-images. We cannot know for sure what the other thinks of us; we are not privy to the private thoughts or inner workings of the other's mind. To account for this, Cooley stressed "imputed sentiments," or imagination. We use our imagination to try to see ourselves as others see us. Hence, in terms of reflected images, "we see ourselves as *we think* others see us" (Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982, p. 174). Mead (1934) advanced Cooley's theory by introducing the notion of perspective-taking. In order to see ourselves as others see us, we try to take the other's perspective.

The role of the Other in self-definition is also apparent in Leon Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory. Festinger suggested that people have a constant need to evaluate their abilities and test the validity of their opinions. However, because few "objective tests" exist, people use others to compare themselves with. For example, a student might assess her performance by comparing her test scores with others in the class.

The importance of contact is heightened when we look more closely at the concept of identity. "Identity," says White (1958) "refers to the self or the person one feels oneself to be" (p. 332). Erikson (1968) stresses the relational aspect, "the sense of the reality of the self within the social reality" (p. 199). "Identity is the accrued confidence that one's ability to

maintain inner sameness and continuity is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson, 1950, p. 135).

Berger (1963) and Berger and Luckmann (1967) further ground identity into the context of social knowledge. As Berger (1963) stated, "even identities that we consider to be our essential selves have been socially assigned . . . identity is socially bestowed, socially sustained and socially transformed" (p. 98). Baumeister (1986) adds, "identity is a definition, an interpretation, of self" (p. 4) and that identities "exist only in societies that define and organize them" (p. 7). Hence, identity appears to be intrinsically based on the relationships between Self and Others in the social context.

Albeit a cursory overview (see Baumeister, 1986; Gordon & Gergen, 1968; Hamachek, 1971; Lynch, Norem–Hebeisen, & Gergen, 1981; Patton & Giffin, 1974; Rosenberg, 1979; Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982; Zucker, 1977; for more extensive discussion), the above theories of self-identity formation highlight two important features. First there is an intimate link between behavior and Self. This view, that persons behave in a way that is consistent with their self-conceptions, is substantiated by the wealth of self-concept research (Gordon & Gergen, 1968). Second, the overview highlights the intimate link between self-identity and Other. "Every relationship," says Laing, "implies a definition of self by other and other by self" (1961, p. 86).

SELF-IDENTITY AND COMMUNICATION:
AN OUT-OF-AWARENESS PROCESS

While the links between Self, Other, and behavior are evident in the theories, individuals may not hold this knowledge in their active awareness. This is understandable. There appears to be a parallel developmental process between learning about the Self, learning about Others, and learning the meanings for behaviors. Because this Self-Other-behavior developmental process occurs via the communication process, which is an out-of-awareness process (Hall, 1976; Bateson, 1971; Forsdale, 1974), one might not be aware of the intimate link between the Self, Other, and behavior. Indeed, this appears to be the case with every major link in the chain

First, the Self-behavior relationship appears to be outside of awareness. Most of us do not actively think of our behaviors as identity-bound. Yet the unique combination of our verbal and nonverbal behaviors uniquely reflect who we are. The uniqueness of our self-identities is reflected in the uniqueness of our individual communication style. Self-identities also influence perception. Research has shown that our self-identities influence not only what we look for in others, but how we perceive the behavior of others (Hamachek, 1971). This out-of-awareness link be-

tween behavior and Self is evident in attribution bias. People attribute the behavior of others to personal dispositions, but believe that their own behavior depends primarily on the situation (Jones, 1976, p. 301).

Second, the intimate link between Self and Others also lies predominantly out-of-awareness. We may not be aware of how our own self-images reflect others' images of us because, as Vallacher noted, "we internalize—adopt as our own—the perspectives of others" (1980, p. 5). In other words, the distinction between what others think about us and how we come to see ourselves becomes blurred.

Similarly, we may be unaware of the critical role that the Other plays in our efforts to maintain self-identities. Most of us view our communication as "transferring information," not as an act of creating and validating self-images. We focus on the information, the "message." Yet, as Giffin (1970) states, "The initiation of any communicative event carries with it an implied request: 'Please validate me'" (p. 351). Erikson states the necessity of self-validation even more strongly. "Social confirmation of *some* identity, even a negative one, is often preferable to a lack of confirmation and the uncertainty and confusion that results" (1960, p. 62, italics his).

Finally, the link between Self, Other, and behavior is also held largely outside of awareness. Because self-identity formation occurs within the intracultural context, the notion of shared meanings for behaviors between Self and Other is not explicitly questioned. In fact, identity maintenance appears to rest on two unstated assumptions: (a) that we know the meanings of behaviors and (b) that the Other shares those meanings of behavior.

Again, most individuals do not necessarily hold in-awareness the knowledge that their ability to maintain a stable self-identity is based on a shared knowledge with the Other of what behavior means. Nevertheless, the assumption of knowing what behaviors mean is reflected in an individual's ability to test incongruities in self-images, behaviors, and the (behavioral) responses of Others. A wealth of communication research focuses on the behavioral strategies people use to acquire their information (Baxter & Wilmot 1984, p. 172). Our out-of-awareness knowledge of what behavior means is also reflected in our ability to enhance self-presentations by changing our communication behavioral strategies (Goffman, 1959).

Examples of the self-identity and behavior link abound in the intracultural setting. The brochures of the American Lung Association talk not just about giving up the smoking habit (behavior) but include sections on the "new you" after the behavior change. In communication education and training, the intimate link between behavior and Self is not only discussed in an in-awareness manner, but is also emphasized. Assertiveness training, for example, is not simply about communication re-

sponse strategies, but about strengthening self-confidence. Research shows marked change in individuals' self-esteem after assertiveness training (Lange cited in Rozema, 1982, p. 12). Similarly, one of the most popular courses on public speaking, the Dale Carnegie Course, again is not just about adopting new communicative behaviors. One of the required texts, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, highlights the link between how we feel about ourselves, how that feeling relates to the behaviors we use, and how changing our behaviors can change us.

FROM CULTURE SHOCK TO SELF-SHOCK

To discuss the process of how identity confusion develops in the intercultural context, I introduce the concept of self-shock. In contrast to culture shock, which is seen as a reaction to the differences of the Other, self-shock is an extended reaction to the differences with and within the Self. 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. The strained relations with the Other and the behavioral ambiguities ultimately filter down to a strained relationship with the Self. The strained relationship affects the individual's ability to hold on to recognizable, consistent self-identities. The sense of "wrongness" is no longer ambiguities about the Other or about behavior, but rather, about the Self.

Self-shock is potentially more discomforting for the sojourner simply because the ambiguities are about the Self, and not the Other. As Prescott Lecky (1968) pointed out, the Self is the "central axiom" for the individual's whole life theory. Thus, self-shock can become a global sense of wrongness associated with the "free-floating anxiety" that many sojourners experience (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Also, because self-shock strikes at the core, the central axiom, whatever intercultural "need" there may be to learn about the Other will take a back seat to the need to reintegrate and defend the core. This explains why defensive communication postures are so prevalent and why learning postures can be so difficult for sojourners to maintain. The need to understand the Self takes precedence over the need to understand the Other. As Hamachek (1971, p. 95) observed, it is when we cannot predict our own behavior, not others, that we get most anxious.

The root of self-shock lies in the intimate relationships among Self, behavior, and Other and the various assumptions that we hold out-of-awareness. The intracultural survey highlighted that both behavior and the relationship with the Other play an important role in an individual's ability to maintain consistent, recognizable self-identities. This out-of-awareness ability is challenged in the intercultural context.

In the intracultural setting, the relationship between Self, behavior, and

Other appears to be a complementary one—behaviors are used to create and maintain self-identities and the relationship between Self and others is based on a shared understanding of what behavior means. In the intercultural context, because of behavioral ambiguity, the intimate relationship between behavior, self, and other becomes strained or contradictory. This strained relationship impacts upon the individual's ability to maintain consistent, recognizable self-identities, leading ultimately to self-shock. There are three dimensions in which we can see the process of self-shock evolve. The three dimensions are extensions of self-concept theory applied to the intercultural communication process.

The first dimension of self-shock relates back to the notion of self-attribution based on observing one's behavior (Bem, 1972). In the intercultural setting the individual strains to use and control behaviors in a manner consistent with self-identities. Because the intercultural setting has variable meanings for behaviors, the individual may find his or her behavior producing inconsistent self-images. The newness of the environment can also make even duplicating the simplest of behaviors seem awkward or unnatural. The behaviors reflect upon the Self. A painful example would be the wife of an overseas business executive who considers herself to be a gourmet chef, yet cannot boil water right in the new environment. Festinger's social comparison theory helps further explain the self-doubt based on observing behavior. Sojourners often compare their awkward behavior with that of the members of the host culture. As Brislin (1982) noted, many (adult) sojourners find their behavioral skills comparable to those of the host-culture children.

This first dimension of self-shock can be seen as a loss of communication competence vis-a-vis the self. Often, communication competence is viewed primarily in terms of social skills vis-a-vis the Other or meeting the behavioral goals and expectations of the Other. In this case, we are not able to meet our own goals or self-expectations. We observe our behaviors, and our behaviors do not confirm our own self-expectations. We are not able to use our behaviors to maintain a consistent or recognizable self-identity. Loss of self-confidence and feelings of self-doubt, which many scholars have noted as a symptom of culture shock, are based on self-expectations that we have for our own behavior. Failure to meet these self-expectations impacts upon our ability to hold on to self-identities.

The second dimension of self-shock relates back to Cooley's notion of the looking-glass self, or how the responses of others relate to our self-conceptions. There are two important points to remember. First, there is an edge of uncertainty in the self-reflections because we cannot know for sure how the Other actually sees us. We use our imagination, we try to employ perspective-taking. Yet much of our imagination and experience in perspective-taking is derived from our own primary culture—which

might not necessarily reflect the Other's perspective accurately. Second, the "responses" of others are behavioral responses. Thus any behavioral ambiguity will be reflected in the reflected self-images.

In this second dimension of self-shock, the individual attempts to give meaning to his own behavior through observing the responses of Others and assigning meaning to those responses. On both accounts the individual may encounter difficulties. First, the individual may employ behaviors that do not produce the responses that he wanted and that would confirm his self-identity. For example, the individual would employ a "polite behavior" that leaves the host aghast. Second, the individual may assign a different meaning to the behavioral responses of the Other than what the Other intended. For example, the host was aghast, yet the sojourner thought the host was "elated."

Over time, the ambiguities multiply and again reflect upon the Self. The responses of the Other do not confirm the individual's self-identities. We encounter the maze of distorted reflections and self-reflections. We try to see ourselves as Others see us. Yet we are not able to take the perspective of the different Other, nor are we able to understand the behavioral responses of the Other. We may know that the Other is responding to us, but we cannot recognize ourselves in those responses. The reflection is distorted, the image blurred.

This second dimension illuminates why the nature or quality of the relationship with the Other in the intercultural setting is so important. If, as Giffin (1970) suggests, all communication seeks self-validation, then positive relationships help verify the Self, while negative ones challenge self-identities. Indeed researchers have found that positive relationships with at least one member of the host culture is vital to sojourner satisfaction (Furnham & Bochner, 1983).

The first-person accounts of sojourners and anthropologists (Kimball & Watson, 1972; Ruby, 1982; Spindler, 1970; Stocking, 1983) are even more revealing. If one looks closely, the change to satisfactory relationships comes at the precise moment when the sojourner is not just accepted, but most importantly, accepted for who he or she is — when the uniqueness of the self-identity is validated. Kim (1988) provides a poignant quote from the journal of one sojourner's adaptation process:

September 10, 1977 — I'm enjoying life here now. I finally belong, I'm accepted. *I am at last Vicki Holmsten* to the people of Foequelle, not the 'Peace Corps volunteer.' It's almost time for me to leave. I'm not sure I really want to. (p. 8, italics mine)

In contrast, the literature also contains examples of negative relationships in which the sojourner validates the Other yet is unable to validate the Self. Two experienced researchers commenting on their prolonged

effort to accommodate the unfamiliar ways of their study group described it as "a devastating sense of losing one's own soul" (Wacaster & Firestone, 1978, p. 273). Nash & Shaw's (1963) study, cited earlier on the "necessity of foreign enclaves," is predicated on this need for self-validation.

The third dimension of self-shock stems from the continual, and longer-term effects of changing identity-bound behaviors. Given the intimate link between Self and behavior, one realizes that our behaviors are not only culture-bound (Hall, 1976), but identity-bound. This relates back to the intrapersonal communication research, which suggests that individuals employ behaviors which are consistent with their conceptions of themselves (Hamachek, 1971). Intrapersonal communication theory further stresses that in order for an individual to be "effective" he or she must strive to maintain a consistency between Self and behaviors. Yet, intercultural communication stresses that in order for an individual to be "effective" he or she must strive to learn and employ new behaviors. Thus, the intercultural challenge is how to maintain consistency and sameness of Self in the face of radical behavior change.

Again we see the role of communication competency as the need to meet both the goals of the Other as well as the goals of the Self. The goals are not necessarily the same. Given the intimate link between Self and behavior, radical change of identity-bound behaviors may hamper the individual's ability to maintain a consistent sense of Self. The individual risks alienation from the Self. If the individual's goal is to develop a new sense of Self and this process is carried out in-awareness, as the many intracultural communication programs are, then the difficulty of changing identity-bound behaviors may be matched by the individual's conscious desire to tackle the change. The individual has a sense of control over the process. However, if radical change of identity-bound behaviors occurs out-of-awareness or in violation of the Self-behavior link, then the change may be perceived as threatening or overwhelming, withhe individual having a sense of little control over the process.

Intraculturally, we saw how behavior modification was complemented by an active, in-awareness process of self-development and self-change. The link between Self and behavior was stressed. In the intercultural context, because the need to change behavior is stressed, the effect that it has upon the Self may be held out-of-awareness. Nevertheless, the process occurs as the individual transforms "intercultural" behaviors into "self-expressive" behaviors. At this stage, the individual may show increased intercultural competency vis-a-vis the Other, yet experience increased intrapersonal strains in the Self–behavior relationship. If the intercultural behaviors are blatantly new or unprecedented, the addition of the behaviors can spawn feelings of (Self) growth. However, if "new" behaviors contradict "old" behaviors, the Self-behavior relationship may be

strained. Discomfort and confusion can arise when subtly different behaviors are used to maintain a sameness of Self.

This continuous realignment of the Self–behavior relationship associated with changing identity-bound behaviors makes intercultural discomfort a process (not a product or a one time occurrence) and arguably explains why intercultural discomfort is recurring (Kohls, 1979; Aguilar, 1981). As long as there are intercultural, external (behaviors) demands for changes, there may be a corresponding intrapersonal, internal (Self) struggle to resist change—a struggle to try to hold on to cultivated self-identities and the identity-bound behaviors associated with those self-identities. The result can be discomfort, confusion, and anxiety. However, it is through this process of changing identity-bound behaviors that new self-identities can emerge.

This self-shock dimension relates to the culture shock phase in Grove and Torbiorn's analysis; when the individual is "thoroughly involved, and deeply confused" (1985, p. 215). "Involved" may reflect changes of identity-bound behaviors, while "confused" may relate to self-identity trying to keep pace with the behavior change. To continue the process of trying to integrate new intercultural behaviors into the Self–behavior relationship as well as the Self–Other relationship is perhaps best visualized in Yoshikawa's notion of the "double-swing." It is an up and down process, yet always interconnected.

This dimension of self-shock also helps to explain some of the ironies associated with culture and reentry shock. For example, if a sojourner pursues rapid adjustment to the Other at the expense of the Self–behavior link, one might expect the sojourner to experience strain in the internal relationship with the Self as relationships with the Other gradually improve. This was the case highlighted by Ruben & Kealey (1979). Also, because this rapid change of identity-bound behaviors may occur out-of-awareness, one might well expect sojourners who "adapt" best to the new culture (i.e., change identity-bound behavior) to be the same ones who experience the most strain when they are confronted with vicissitudes of the former Self–behavior relationship upon their return to their home culture. Again, this was the case found by Bochner (1977).

Since both the communication process and the Self–behavior link are held out-of-awareness, the individual may experience this painful internal–external tension, yet have little awareness as to how to control or arrest the process. Further, if asked to identify the cause of the discomfort, the individual will probably point to external causes (i.e., the different Other, strange behavior, or unfamiliar environment). This reaction to the different Others and external culture variables is culture shock. The problem is seen as external to the individual. Culture shock is "out there"—the different Other, the new environment. As the communication process and contact with the different Other continues, the individual

encounters questions about himself or herself. Self-shock is the individual's reaction to the differences with the Self—"something is different, not quite right, about me"—that are brought about by challenges to self-identities and identity-bound behaviors.

SELF-SHOCK: THE DOUBLE-BINDING CHALLENGE OF IDENTITY

Paramount to this discussion of self-shock is why does it progress to the level that it does? If we feel uneasy, uncomfortable, confused, and anxious, why do we allow the process to continue? Short of fight, flight, and filter, all of which are attempts to escape the process, the process from culture shock to self-shock continues. The answer again relates to the out-of-awareness nature of the communication process itself as well as the intimate link between Self, behavior, and Other.

Thus far we have viewed self-shock from the perspective of the individual, focusing on what is happening to the individual viewed as a participant in the process of creating meaning. When we step out of the intrapersonal dynamics of self-shock and into the observer perspective, we see the dilemma that the individual is caught in. At the intercultural communication level, self-shock is a double-bind.

The first side of the double-bind is the individual's fundamental need for a consistent, stable sense of Self. Prescott Lecky underscored this when he stated, "the individual's conception of himself is the central axiom of his whole life theory" (1968, p. 297). Several scholars have dramatized the repercussions of what happens when this axis, the Self, is lost (Laing, 1965; Branden, 1973). Thus, the need for a sense of Self is paramount to the individual. This is the first side of self-shock coin.

The second side hinges on the individual's ability to establish and maintain consistent self-identities. Fundamental to this ability is knowing what behaviors mean and sharing those meanings with others. Intraculturally, what behaviors mean is so fundamental that this ability is often taken for granted. In the intercultural context, however, ambiguity of meanings for behavior severely hampers the individual's ability to maintain self-identities.

Thus, self-shock emerges as a mismatch between *need* to confirm self-identities with *ability* to confirm self-identities. However, self-shock is more than a mismatch; it is a double-bind of *increased need* to confirm self-identities, with *diminished ability* to do.

In the intercultural setting, dominated by unknowns, uncertainty, and ambiguity, the one thing that the individual needs to be confident about is the Self. With such external chaos—caused by the unshared meanings—the one thing that the individual can least afford is internal chaos. Hence, there is a heightened need to confirm self-identities.

However, despite this heightened need to confirm the Self, the ability to do so rests on behavior. The prerequisite for confirming the Self is knowing the sociocultural meanings for the behaviors, that is, the prerequisite for the ability is shared meanings. Because the individual does not share meanings, the ability to confirm self-identities is drastically diminished. Hence, the double-bind: Unshared meanings for behaviors *increase* one's need to confirm self-identities. However, unshared meanings for behaviors *decrease* one's ability to confirm self-identities.

The problem of self-shock as a double-bind is that diminished ability does not negate the need to confirm self-identities. Because the Self is the axiom for the individual (Lecky, 1968) and the need for self-validation is so fundamental (Erikson, 1960; Giffin, 1970), need overrides ability. Thus, an individual may continue to try to introduce conflicting and distorted self-images despite the fact that those images are just that — distorted. Distorted self-images are preferable to no images.

The double-bind can become truly entangling. The more one struggles to reduce external, intercultural ambiguity by adopting the behavior of the Other (changing identity-bound behaviors), the more one challenges the Self–behavior link, and the more internal ambiguity one may create within the Self.

Paradoxically, the more one begins to understand the Other, the less certain one may feel about one's Self. The double-bind also goes in the reverse. The more one struggles to reduce internal tension by resisting new behavior patterns or limiting contact with the Other, the more intercultural communication problems or intolerance may persist between the Self and Other.

Because of the out-of-awareness nature of the communication process, the individual caught in the double-bind of self-shock may feel powerless to control or arrest the process. The internal ambiguity may cause discomfort, but the sojourner may not be aware as to the exact nature or locus of such discomfort. In this regard, self-shock is not the form of heightened self-awareness that other scholars have spoken of (Adler 1975; David 1971; Smalley, 1963). The sojourner may be more cognizant of Self because of external differences vis-a-vis the Other, but the immediate intrapersonal dynamics between Self, Other, and behavior tend to escape awareness. Similarly, the out-of-awareness change of identity-bound behavior helps to explain why reentry shock is so prevalent.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In exploring the intercultural challenge of identity, the concept of self-shock was introduced. Self-shock rests on the intimate link between Self, Other, and behaviors. Any situation which alters the meanings for behavior has the potential for hampering the individual's ability to establish

and maintain consistent, recognizable self-identities. Left unaddressed, this challenge of self-identity not only may exacerbate stress and prompt defensive communication postures in the intercultural setting, but also may resurface when sojourners return to their home cultures.

For the sojourner, self-shock is the intrusion of inconsistent, conflicting self-images. At a time when we are searching for meaning "out there," our own internal axis for creating meaning is thrown off balance. Our frustration becomes not so much trying to make sense of the Other (i.e., culture shock) but rather the Self (i.e., self-shock). Three dimensions of self-shock were presented: loss of communication competence vis-a-vis the Self, distorted self-reflections in the responses of others, and the challenge of changing identity-bound behaviors.

From the intercultural communication perspective, self-shock is a double-bind based on ambiguity of meanings for behavior. Unshared meanings for behaviors increase one's need to confirm self-identities, however, unshared meanings for behaviors decrease one's ability to do so because ability is tied to shared behaviors. Because need overrides ability, self-shock becomes a perpetuating double-bind: The more the individual struggles to reduce behavioral ambiguity with the Other, the more ambiguity he or she may create within the Self, and vice versa.

The applicability of self-shock theoretically is not limited solely to intercultural settings. Within the comforting boundaries of one's own culture the seeds of self-shock find fertile ground, especially in terms of transitional experiences (Adler, 1975) and dramatic life changes which may force one to change one's identity-bound behaviors or interact with a different Other.

This introductory article did not address another potential dimension of self-shock. This analysis focused on behavior as a pivotal facet of self-identity formation and maintenance. Much of the literature used in the analysis was drawn from Western theorists. This focus on behavior is consistent with Stewart's (1972, pp. 36–38) discussion of Western cultures as "doing" cultures, the self is defined by what the self does, that is, behavior. In contrast, "being cultures" define the self in terms of relations. In looking at self-shock from a being culture perspective, the relational aspect may be more important to the individual's self-identity. This would place prominence on understanding the process of how the intercultural experience alters identity-bound relationships and how difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships may hamper the individual's ability to maintain consistent, preferred self-identities. Such an exploration might illuminate why one finds orientation and friendship programs prevalent in the Foreign Student Office of American campuses, while Americans tend to focus on training programs.

Because there are many different facets of the self-concept, with each facet assuming different degrees of saliency for the individual's self-iden-

tities, another open area is the contributing dimensions of social identity, that is, social roles and social associations. To the extent that people identify with and root their self-identity in social roles and social associations, changes in social roles and association may affect an individual's ability to hold on to self-identities. Role shock (Brynes, 1966) may be developed and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) expanded.

In the immediate run, self-shock does, however, hold a word of caution for cross-cultural training programs that focus exclusively on behavior change. While behaviors may indeed be culture-bound (Hall, 1976) and thus cause intercultural communication problems, this analysis stressed that, for the individual, behaviors are fundamentally identity-bound. In the zeal to "train" individuals, intercultural trainers need to be sensitive to and not ignore the repercussions of changing identity-bound behaviors. Like the many intracultural communication training programs, changing identity-bound behaviors to meet social-cultural goals must be an in-awareness process that leads to a new sense of Self within the intercultural context. One who pursues a rapid intercultural adjustment to the Other to avoid culture shock may well encounter the repercussions of self-shock.

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATIONS

De nombreux chercheurs ont abordé l'étude des effets pénibles de la confusion d'identités durant l'adaptation du voyageur itinérant. Nous savons qu'elle existe, mais comment se présente-t-elle? La question ne s'adresse pas aux résultats ou aux différences, mais porte sur la compréhension de la dynamique du processus de contact lui-même. Comment le contact avec un Autre, différent, produit-il une anxiété dans l'identité du voyageur itinérant? A la suite d'une enquête intra-culturelle traitant de la formation et du maintien de l'identité de soi, la discussion s'adresse à la dynamique interculturelle des processus d'identité de soi. Le concept de "choc du moi" (self-shock) est introduit. Le "choc du moi" repose sur le lien intime entre le moi, l'autre et les comportements. N'importe qu'elle situation qui altère les significations du comportement a le potentiel d'entraver l'abilité de l'individu a maintenir une identité de soi, consistante et reconnaissable. La confusion ne se manifeste plus envers l'Autre (choc culturel) mais plutôt avec le moi (choc du moi). Le "choc du moi" est l'intrusion d'images inconsistantes et conflictuelles de soi. Trois dimensions du "choc du moi" sont présentées: l'incompétence à communiquer avec soi-même; la déformation des reflexions de soi par rapport aux réactions des autres; et le défi de changer les comportements "liés à l'identité" (identity-bound).

Dans la perspective d'une communication interculturelle, le "choc du moi" est une contrainte ambivalente basée sur l'ambiguité du comportement. Les significations non partagées du comportement augmentent le besoin de l'individu à affirmer sa propre identité, toutefois, ces mêmes significations exclusives du comportement diminuent son abilité à le faire. L'analyse met l'emphase sur l'importance des comportements "liés à l'idnetité" ainsi que sur le besoin de développer des stratégies permettant au voyageur itinérant de négocier des identités viables au sein du nouveau contexte socio-culturel. (author-supplied abstract)

Numerosos eruditos han hablado sobre los penosos estados de confusión en la identidad que ocurre con el residente durante el periódo de adaptación en el nuevo país. Sabemos que esto existe sin saber como ocurre. La pregunta no se refiere solamente a los resultados o las diferencias sino a una mayor comprencion de la dinámica en si el contacto mismo del proceso. ¿Como es que este contacto con un otra persona de diferente cultura produce una ansiedad en la identidad del residente?

Continuando con el estudio dentro de la cultura en la formación y consevación de la autoidentidad la discusión torna al proceso intercultural de autoidentidad surgiendo de esta manera la autoconmoción (self-shock). La autoconmoción yace en un profundo vínculo de conexión entre uno mismo el comportamiento

y las otras personas. Cualquiera sea la situación que modifica
el sentido en el comportamiento del individuo tiene la fuerza
para impedir a la persona la habilidad para mantener consistente
el reconocimiento de su propia identidad.

La confusión no continua con el choque cultural sino con la
autoconmoción. La autoconmoción es la intrusión del inconciente
produciendo con conflictos en las propias imágenes. Tres
dimensiones de autoconmoción aparecen: pérdida de communicación
consigo mismo; distorción de sus propias reflexciones en
respuesta a los otros; y el desafió de cambiar los lazos de
identidad en al conducta (identity-bound behaviors).

Con respecto a la perspectiva de la communicación
interculturas, la autoconmoción es una constreñida ambivalencia
basada en un comportamiento ambiguo. Las intenciones no
conpartidas aumentan la propia necesidad para confirmar su
autoidentidad, si bien las intensiones en comporta miento
disminuyen su propia habilidad para hacerla. El análisis de
énfasis a la importancia de los lazos de identidad in el
comportamiento tanto como la necesidad de desarrollar estrategias
que capacitan al residente a negociar identidades viables en el
nuevo contexto sociocultural. (author-supplied abstract)