

**Cultural Distance and Expatriate
Attitude and Value Adjustment**

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Introduction

Research indicates that somewhere between 16 to 40 percent of expatriate managers return home prior to the completion of their assignment. In addition, each premature return costs the firm about \$100,000 not to mention the cost in terms of human suffering both to the expatriate manager and his family (Baker and Ivancevich, 1971; Black, 1988; Copeland and Griggs, 1985; Misa and Fabricatore, 1979; Tung, 1984). Additional costs accrue to the organization in the form of lost revenues, ill-will with local peoples and so on due to the 30 to 50 percent of expatriates who serve their full time but are considered ineffective (Copeland and Griggs, 1985). One reason given for the disappointing record of continuance commitment among expatriate managers is their inability to adjust their attitudes and values to the new environment (Adler, 1975).

At least two bodies of management literature come to bear on the issue of foreign individuals changing their beliefs to more closely match their new environment. The first stream, largely identified with Schein (1968) and Lewin (1951), focuses on socializing individuals so that they experience affective commitment through holding values and goals that closely match those of the organization. While differences may exist between someone entering a new organization and someone crossing national borders, this stream of research seems to hold implications for international relocation.

Lewin (1951) states that in order for individuals to undergo permanent change they must experience an unfreezing of previously held beliefs and behaviors, a change, and then a refreezing of the new beliefs and behaviors. This unfreezing can result simply from a recognition of the dissonance between previously held assumptions and the new situation or it can be forced on the individual through the socialization efforts of the organization. The larger the distance between the values held in the new environment and those held by the individual the more likely it is that dissonance will be recognized and, potentially, unfreezing will occur. Regardless of whether the organization promotes the recognition of such differences or the individual simply recognizes those differences herself, Lewin (1951) suggests that such recognition increases the individual's potential for change.

In addition to the socialization literature, the expatriate management literature also notes the influence of value differences between the old and the new situation on the value change process. Several authors have noted that the greater the distance between the cultures of the home and host countries (cultural distance) the less likely an expatriate manager is to adjust and, subsequently, the more likely the manager is to return home prematurely (Black and Gregersen, 1991; Church, 1982). For this reason U. S. expatriates return prematurely from developing nation assignments at a higher rate than those working in developed countries (Copeland and Griggs, 1985; Misa and Fabricatore, 1979). It is concluded that they are unable to adapt behavior and values sufficiently to remain in the new setting and, those who do remain are frequently ineffective.

Drawing from these two literatures, it appears that there must exist a certain amount of dissonance or "unfreezing" for an individual to recognize the need for change. The greater this dissonance the greater the motivation to alter one's behaviors and/or beliefs so as to fit into the new environment. On the other hand, extremely large degrees of dissonance or unfreezing are found to inhibit the change necessary to effective functioning despite the increased awareness of the need to change.

The current study seeks to reconcile these two literatures on individual adjustment by proposing a threshold level of unfreezing, on either side of which the role of such dissonance is altered. In doing so it draws on ideas of expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) and Lewin's (1951) ideas regarding driving and restraining forces as motivators or inhibitors of change as well the international sojourner literature.

Specifically, this study examines the extent of value change occurring among a group of foreign students at a large university in the United States over the period of their sojourn. The amount of change in values over the sojourn period is posited to vary according to the distance between the home culture's emphasis on values of individualism versus collectivism (Hofstede, 1984; Smith, Dugan and Trompenaars, in press; Triandis, 1990) and the emphasis placed on individualism in the United States.

Review of the Literature

As indicated above, at least two streams of literature come to bear on this issue of value change by foreign individuals. Lewin (1951) proposed that enduring change is a three step process consisting of *unfreezing*, *change*, and *refreezing*. In the first step, unfreezing, the individual is made aware of the inadequacy of his current state and the desirability of an alternative position. Change occurs when the individual moves from the old state to

the alternative condition. Finally, the person must refreeze the new values into a more permanent state if regression to the status quo is to be avoided.

Additionally, Lewin specifies that there exist factors known as *driving forces* that push the individual toward the new state and *restraining forces* that seek to maintain the original condition. Whether the individual changes or not depends on the relative strength of these two opposing sets of forces as well as the initial degree of difference between the current reality and the old state.

While early definitions of socialization saw the organization as a driving force for teaching and modifying role behavior (Brim, 1966), Schein (1968) seized on the idea of unfreezing and stated that organizations may go so far as to overtly attempt to "unfreeze" the individual's currently held values if they are not in line with those espoused by the organization. This could be done by devaluing the values and abilities the individual brought into the organization causing the individual to attempt to reaffirm self-worth by adopting the values and behaviors appropriate to the organization. The idea behind the plan was that the more that the organization could make the individual feel that she was idiosyncratic in her beliefs, the more likely she would be to substitute those beliefs with a new set espoused by the organization..

This hypothesized relationship between change and the disparity between old and new states is not unique to Schein (see Strauss, 1959; Brim, 1966; Hall, 1971). Nicholson (1984) also drew on this idea to suggest that greater "personal development" will result from greater novelty in the situation. Specifically he proposed that lateral moves within a company involve much less personal development than career moves which are accompanied by greater role novelty.

An awareness of such differences can be brought about by means other than relocating to a different environment. One specific way in which this happens is by a second party making the individual aware of the discrepancy between her values and actions and those considered important by the social environment. Rokeach and Cochrane (1972), for example, found that long-term change in values can result from feelings of self-dissatisfaction brought about either by self-examination or through overt confrontation by a second party.

A second example of the influence of others in the change process comes from the organizational socialization literature. This research suggests that individuals will conform to a greater or lesser extent to organizational practices or beliefs depending on the type of socialization processes employed. Van Maanen and Schein, (1979) hypothesize that if individuals are socialized in groups rather than individually, are given mentors to emulate, and are treated in a way that seeks "to deny and strip away certain personal characteristics of a recruit" (divestiture rather than investiture) that the recruit is likely to adapt more closely to the organization's procedures and values. These processes seek to make the individual aware that there exists a preferred way of acting and believing in the current setting that may not match the recruit's current way of thinking.

As Jones (1986) notes, empirical support for the effects of varying socialization tactics has lagged behind the theoretical development. Some empirical support, however, is available. Of particular note are those several studies which indicate that the greater the distance between the individual's current beliefs regarding appropriate behavior and values and those sanctioned by the new setting, the more likely the individual is to change. These studies indicate that most individuals have a great need for positive reinforcement and are, therefore, willing to change in ways that would result in such reinforcement (Hulme, 1956; Schein and Bennis, 1965; Turow, 1977).

In summary, there exists theoretical support for the idea that differences between the bundle of values and behaviors brought by the individual to the new environment and those practiced in that environment can stimulate change on the part of the individual entering the new environment. While empirical work studying this issue is somewhat sparse, it does suggest that those individuals who experience a greater degree of unfreezing, either through their own perception of differences or that pushed on them by the organization, are more aware of the need to change and more likely to make such change (Rokeach and Cochrane, 1972; Nicholson, 1984).

These findings suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1A: Greater cultural distance between the home and the host country will be positively associated with the amount of value change experienced.

The expatriate manager literature, on the other hand, provides a somewhat contradictory view of the role of value and behavior differences in value change. In this literature, the term *cultural distance* is employed to

indicate the dissimilarity of cultural values between a host country and an expatriate's home country. Three approaches, including a cultural distance approach, have been taken to conceptualize the role of culture in the adjustment process.

One approach looks at the home culture's role in the adjustment process while another looks at the host country. It is possible that individuals from a particular nation adjust more easily than those from other nations regardless of where they may go. It is also possible that it is easier for everyone to adjust to some cultures than others. Galtung (1965) in a study of three host countries and sojourners of three different nationalities concluded, however, that home country nationality was a better predictor of adjustment and satisfaction than was host country.

While the role of home culture and host culture have received some attention in the expatriate manager literature (Stening and Hammer, 1992), there also exists evidence of the role of cultural distance in the adjustment process. In his review of the sojourner literature, Church (1982) concludes that the greater the cultural distance between a home and host culture the more difficult it is for the sojourner to adjust his values and behaviors in ways necessary to effectively function in the new environment.

The roots of this argument can be traced to Oberg's (1960) concept of *culture shock* wherein an individual experiences a shock caused by the loss of familiar signs and symbols upon entering a different culture. This loss of the familiar results in anxiety, irritability and a desire to reduce uncertainty.

Indeed, the process of adjustment can be thought of as the actions taken to reduce such uncertainty by learning how to interact in the new environment. One way to reduce uncertainty is to change one's self including one's values. This characterizes the final stage of successful adjustment according to Adler (1975). A second way to reduce uncertainty is by reaffirming one's own behavior and value patterns and rejecting those of the new environment. Such rejection of host country values leads to weak expatriate performance and premature termination of the assignment (Tung, 1987).

Both Church (1982) and Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) conclude from their reviews of the literature that empirical evidence to support the cultural distance proposition does exist. It should be noted, however, that most of these studies focus on nationality as the variable of interest rather than examining a particular dimension of culture.

Recent studies build on the early work of Torbiorn (1982) who found that cultural novelty has its greatest effect in the first two years. Black and Stephens (1989) and Black and Gregersen (1991) found some limited link between an eight item cultural distance scale and cross-cultural adjustment. The items employed in their scale measure cultural distance in terms of such practical issues as ease of using health care facilities and the availability and quality of familiar foods. These scales ignore the broader, taken-for-granted attitudes and values that have been used to classify culture in other research and which are also included in this study (Hofstede, 1980).

One study that (Galtung, 1965) defines cultural difference in a way that includes taken-for-granted attitudes and values in home and host countries merits a more complete review. Based on his personal assessment, Galtung classified Indian students as being the most culturally distant from the cultures of West Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States where they were studying. They were followed by Iranians and then Egyptians. He found that the students from the countries, Egypt and Iran, whose cultures had more in common with the host countries,, adjusted more to their host countries than did the Indian students.

In addition, Indian students reported less problems adjusting to daily life in India upon their return and fewer differences between their own interests and opinions and those of friends and relatives at home than did Egyptians. This finding suggests that the individuals whose sojourn experience involved less cultural distance also changed less during their sojourn than did those whose studies were conducted in a cultural environment that was more culturally different from their home countries. As Galtung notes, this finding suggests a consistent story of greater cultural distance limiting the degree of both behavioral and value adjustment to the new culture.

Despite the fact that this study is based on Galtung's personal estimation of cultural distance rather than a more objective measure, it merits note as it appears to be one of the few studies to date which adds empirical rigor to the role of culture in the value change literature.

Galtung's findings do receive some empirical support in a later study of Malaysian students studying at the University of Singapore (Ward and Kennedy, 1993). In this study, the authors find that greater cultural distance (measured at the individual level rather than the national level) was associated with greater difficulty of sociocultural adaptation.

Based on these empirical results and the rich anecdotal expatriate literature, we propose a competing hypothesis for the role of cultural distance.

Hypothesis 1B: Greater cultural distance between the home and the host country will be negatively associated with the amount of value change experienced by foreign students.

The current study proposes a third hypothesis combining these two conflicting theories regarding the role of cultural distance in value change. It is possible that within some range of cultural distance one effect would dominate while the other effect would be stronger outside that range. Expectancy theory provides one way of framing this juxtaposition of the two effects.

Expectancy theory states that the strength of an individual's motivation depends on three elements (Vroom, 1964). First, will effort lead to a certain level of performance? If the person perceives that an expenditure of effort will lead to a performance objective she is more likely to be motivated to action. Second, if a performance level is obtained will it lead to a specific outcome? If increased performance, for example, is not noted by those who have the power to reward then one is less motivated to take action. Third, how valued is the outcome? If the outcome has high value to the individual that person will be more motivated to action than if the outcome is not highly valued.

In the case of value change among sojourning individuals, expectancy theory might be thought of as playing out in the following. First the sojourner notes a difference between her values and those espoused by others in the new environment. This dissonance unfreezes her value system and she, next, tries to determine whether putting forth effort will achieve a greater fit with those of the new environment. Then she must understand what is the outcome associated with fit. Perhaps she will be treated as less of a novelty, she may experience greater social interaction with those of the host environment, her opinions may be given more serious consideration and so on, or, perhaps, nobody will notice the change and she will still be treated as before. Finally she must evaluate the valence or value placed on these potential outcomes. Is being considered similar to others in the environment necessarily a good thing?

A sojourner who experiences a large cultural distance between the home and host countries may experience decreased motivation in several ways. While the pressure to change is great due to the large gap between his values and those of the local community, he may question whether he is capable of changing his values in such a way as to fit with that environment. In addition he may question the value of making such changes particularly if they are in direct opposition to that which he has been taught to value from an early age. As an end result, he may be unmotivated to attempt value change.

At slightly smaller cultural distances, the individual is likely to see that change is both possible and less dramatic than it would be for those facing greater initial cultural distances. For the purposes of this paper we label the effects of this movement from extremely high cultural differences to somewhat lesser cultural differences as *positive expectancy effects*. At the high end of the cultural distance scale, one would expect to see more motivation for value change as the cultural distance decreased.

At the low end of the cultural distance scale, expectancy theory would play out quite differently. Individuals may very well perceive that effort could lead fit but question the necessity of the change. They might feel that there is very little to be gained by changing one's values as the differences are minor. Indeed, they may not even notice a difference between the new cultural environment and the one from which they came. Such individuals would not experience the unfreezing necessary to motivate change. At the low end of the cultural distance scale, then, increases in cultural distance would lead to greater awareness of differences and a greater motivation to change one's values. These scenarios suggest, therefore, the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1C: Toward the high end of the cultural distance scale, decreases in cultural distance will be associated with increases in value change while at the low end of the cultural distance scale, decreases in cultural distance will be associated with decreases in value change.

In addition to providing insights into the role of cultural distance in the value change process, the expatriate manager literature also identifies several restraining forces which may inhibit an individual from adopting the new values, attitudes and behaviors needed to function effectively in the new environment.

First, the role of family is widely examined in the expatriate manager literature. The general consensus suggests that a poorly adjusted spouse or children may affect the morale and adjustment of the manager (Bormann, 1968; Hays, 1974; Tung, 1982; Harvey, 1985; Black and Gregersen, 1991). Black and Gregersen (1991) in a study of expatriate managers and their spouses in Pacific-Rim assignments found a significant ($p < .001$) link between the spouse's adjustment and the manager's general adjustment. The authors note, however, that such correlation is not necessarily causal and could be the result of mutual influence, similar adjustment processes, or some other unmeasured factor influencing the adjustment of both the spouse and the expatriate manager.

Black and Stephens (1989) found mixed results regarding the influence of marriage on expatriate adjustment, finding that being married can provide a certain advantage in terms of having a spouse for social support but that spouses can be dissatisfied with social interactions, food, schooling for children and so on which push the expatriate manager towards premature termination of the assignment.

In addition to the role the spouse plays during the overseas assignment, he also may figure into the selection process. Tung (1981) found that firms which interview both the candidate and the spouse experience significantly lower failure rates. This result could, however, simply be a result of the fact that companies which interview the spouse as well as the candidate are those companies which take the expatriation process very seriously and probably provide the candidate with additional resources to facilitate the successful completion of the assignment.

While the role of the spouse has received some empirical attention, the role of the children in the adjustment process has received much less. The domestic relocation literature suggests that children have the most difficult time adjusting to a move when they are between the ages of 3 to 5 and 14 to 16 (Harvey, 1985). Gaylord (1979) found that the younger group most often experience emotional difficulties while the older group is more likely to suffer social difficulties. Other than these findings, however, it has simply been hypothesized that those expatriate managers whose children have difficulty adjusting will be more prone to premature return or to other forms of failure (Harvey, 1985).

That there exists a theoretical relationship between expatriate failure and lack of family adjustment is clear; the mechanism through which this occurs, however, has not been specified. One possibility is that the family simply demands that the assignment be terminated. A second possibility is family members could serve as restraining forces in the manager's change process. The family has been uprooted and placed in a new environment not infrequently despite some desire to remain in their former surroundings. Their new environment is full of uncertainty which they strive to reduce, a task to which they may come unprepared. In such an environment the stability of the family serves as one of the few areas with which family members may feel comfortable. The family resists threats to this stability especially in the form of value and behavior changes on the part of the manager. In this way they restrain the manager's ability to change and may, ultimately, lead to his failure to adjust to the contingencies of the new environment.

Hypothesis 2: Being married will be negatively associated with the amount of value change experienced by sojourning individuals.

Hypothesis 3: Being accompanied by dependent children will be negatively associated with the amount of value change experienced by sojourning individuals.

In addition to the adjustment influences of family, at least two other variables are of interest - age of the expatriate and length of the new assignment. Feldman (1991) suggests that middle-aged managers may have the most difficult time adjusting to a foreign assignment. He proposes that at this age, managers face the most restraining forces which come in the form of ties to the home country including family, civic, corporate, social, and religious ties. On the other hand, they are not old enough to have "large amounts of status and responsibilities" in their new assignments. While positions of high status and responsibility may facilitate adjustment, their role in

value change is less clear. Feldman's argument seems to indicate that greater age brings with it additional restraining ties which would serve to inhibit value and behavior adjustment.

The larger sojourner literature indicates a similar trend. Church (1982) summarizes the findings on age by considering the experiences of foreign students. He reports that younger students interact more both socially and in living arrangements with host nationals than do older students. Older students, on the other hand, generally reported greater academic and general satisfaction with the educational experience. He notes that such results are consistent with the objectives of undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students are concerned with professional goals while the emphasis for undergraduates is more likely to be on personal development.

These limited findings indicate that younger sojourners are more likely to interact with natives and younger expatriate managers are likely to have fewer restraining ties binding them to the values and behaviors of the home country environment. Such interaction with those of the host culture and freedom from home country ties is likely to lead to greater value adjustment.

Hypothesis 4: Age will be negatively associated with the amount of value change experienced by sojourners.

In addition to age, length of stay can also be included among the set of forces which restrain value change. While the domestic literature suggests that individuals identify more with the values of an organization the longer they have been in that organization (Hall, Schneider and Nygren, 1970) it is unclear how tenure affects cultural value adoption.

Tung (1984) notes that Japanese multinationals generally send managers abroad for almost five years at a time as compared to U.S. firms where the average overseas assignment ranges between two to three years. During the first year of the assignment the Japanese manager may not even be evaluated on typical performance measure but may be given this time to adjust to the new environment. While Tung provides no evidence for a direct link between length of stay and lower Japanese expatriate manager failure rates compared to U.S. failure rates, these facts at least suggest the possibility of such a link.

Earlier studies hypothesized a "U-curve" model stating that adjustment occurs during the initial months of the overseas assignment and during the later months but was resisted during the middle of the stay (Lysgaard, 1955). This model receives mixed support in the empirical literature with the general conclusion being that support for this model is weak, inconclusive and overgeneralized (Becker, 1968; Breitenbach, 1970; Spaulding and Flack, 1976). Torbiorn (1982), on the other hand, found that cultural novelty had its greatest effect during the first two years of foreign residency. A more recent study (Ward and Kennedy, 1993) indicates that length of stay is negatively correlated with difficulty in making sociocultural adjustment, a measure which includes dealing with everyday situations such as making one's self understood.

Other than Tung's work, the early expatriate management literature is silent regarding length of stay as a factor in adjustment. This may be due to the fact that much of this literature defines adjustment as completing one's rotation, a measure integrally linked with length of stay. Recent studies which conceptualize adjustment in a more complex manner do, however, show a relationship between length of time in the host country and adjustment by the expatriate manager. Gregersen and Black (1990) for example, show that time in the country is positively correlated with adjustment to work, interaction with host nationals, and adjustment to the general environment. Time spent in the country was, however, not found to be related to the spouse's adjustment (Black and Gregersen, 1990).

None of these studies, however, specifically examine the causality of the relationship between tenure length and value change. In general, causality is problematic in most studies as it cannot be determined whether staying longer helps individuals adjust to the new environment or whether being someone who has facility in adjusting allows her to finish the assignment. While the current study cannot claim to resolve such issues, it does include only those individuals who complete the specified assignment time and, therefore, somewhat avoids this complication. Given the literature on the role of stay duration, we propose the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5: Greater length of stay will be positively associated with greater value change among sojourners.

Finally, gender is also included in the model. Church (1982) notes that few studies have explored the role of gender differences among sojourners. Both studies involving students (Porter, 1963; Hill, 1966; Fong and Peskin, 1969) and those involving Peace Corps volunteers (Thomson and English, 1964; Menninger and English, 1965) indicate that women may have more difficulty in making the adjustment to the new environment. Given the significant movement over the last twenty to thirty years in women's roles, experiences and so on, one would expect that these early studies may not capture the current reality.

More recent anecdotal studies in the expatriate management literature suggest that the advantage could go either way. Jelinek and Adler (1988) found that, in several cases, female expatriates in Japan had an advantage in earning the respect of Japanese managers. Harris (1989), however, gives anecdotal evidence of the problems facing female expatriate managers. And finally, Feldman and Thompson (1993) find no significant relationship between gender and any of several adjustment indices for those relocating whether domestically or internationally.

Given the dearth of findings in this area and the general lack of theory regarding gender differences in international assignments, no hypothesis is made for the influence of gender on sojourner value change.

Method

Sample

The sample for this study was drawn from graduating 1992 undergraduate business majors and from graduating MBAs (class of 1993) at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States. All 106 students indicated that they were coming from a non-United States country and listed themselves as foreign nationals. These students represent some 40 different countries including students from Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and Australia.

Measures

Value Adjustment. The dependent variable (VALUES) is taken from a question administered during the final month of studies which asks: "To what extent did your views change about the following as a result of your experience?" followed by ten categories. Responses were coded on a scale from 1 to 5 with a score of 1 representing "no change" and a score of 5 meaning "major change." A factor analysis of the ten categories yielded three factors of which one consisting of personal ethics, value of interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, and political views ($\alpha=0.71$) was selected as the dependent variable. Each variable loaded on the factor with at least a 0.8 loading once a varimax transformation was completed. The factor examines the relationship of the individual to others, whether personal and immediate friends or some larger community.

Cultural Distance. Cultural distance (CULTDIS) is coded such that low scores on this measure indicate that the home country of the foreign student is similar to the United States in terms of the individualism-collectivism construct put forth by Hofstede (1980) while high scores indicate greater cultural distance. The variable itself is the individualism score which Hofstede recorded for the United States in his original study minus the individualism score calculated by Hofstede for the home country of the foreign student. As the United States was the highest ranking nation on this scale, there is no question of direction in addition to the issue of absolute distance.

The selection of an appropriate measure of cultural distance is an important and many sided decision. The first issue to be considered is whether cultural distance is additive across various measures of culture or if large differences on a single dimension are more significant. One could make the argument either way. It is possible that Herman Melville (1923) during his four month stay in the Marquesas islands was willing to adopt so many of the values of his Typee despite the islanders practice of cannibalism due to an additive effect of cultural similarities in other areas. On the other hand, Melville escaped at the first opportunity, with cannibalism clearly on his mind.

Whether an additive effect matters most or a large difference on a single dimension of culture is unclear. What is clear is that large differences on a single measure of culture could be obscured by small differences on the remaining dimensions once the measures have been summed or averaged. As a result, depending on the nature and number of dimensions chosen, rather large differences could be obscured with an additive technique. On the other hand, cultures which differ from each other on many dimensions may receive lower cultural difference scores than they merit if cultural distance is measured along a single dimension.

A second issue that arises is whether one operationalizes culture at the level of artifacts, concepts/values, or behaviors (Almaney and Alwan, 1982). Most of the previous research employs the more accessible measures of culture including artifacts and behaviors (Black and Stephens, 1989; Black and Gregersen, 1991; Ward and Kennedy, 1993). These measures are useful in that they capture the most transparent and obvious features of a culture. On the other hand, they fail to capture many of the subtleties of cultural influence on every day life in a foreign country.

With these two aspects of the decision in mind, we decided on the use of Hofstede's measure of individualism/collectivism for several reasons. First, while measuring taken-for-granted aspects of culture, this measure is also likely to capture artifacts and behaviors to some extent due to its high correlation (Hofstede, 1980) with income levels. Wealthier countries tend to be more individualistic. This is an important overall measure of cultural difference as expatriate managers experience greater difficulty in adjustment when moving from a developed country to a less developed country (Copeland and Griggs, 1985; Misa and Fabricatore, 1979).

Second, the authors decided that a one dimension measure of cultural distance was less likely to obscure differences encountered by sojourners than would a multidimensional scale.¹ Having made this decision, it was relatively easy to select individualism as the dimension of choice given the national setting of the study and that dimensions ties to income levels. As previously mentioned, measures of individualism capture culture at all three levels due to a positive relationship between individualism ratings and per capita GDP. In addition, the United States received the highest individualism score of all countries surveyed by Hofstede. This fact is likely to increase the salience of this dimension among sojourners as differences are more transparent.

Family. The marriage variable (MARRIED) is a dummy variable coded 0 for those who are unmarried and 1 for those who are married. The number of children (CHILDN) is also included in the equation with scores ranging from 0 to 7.

Age. The age variable (AGE) is the age of the student at the time she completed the survey. All surveys were completed shortly before graduation and, in essence, reflect the age of the foreign student at graduation.

Time in the country. All subjects completing the survey completed the term of assignment by graduating. For the MBA students this period was approximately 21 months while it varied a bit more for the undergraduate students but would be somewhere between four and five years on average. The length of residence variable (MBA) is a dummy variable coded 1 for MBA students and 0 for undergraduate students.

Gender. Gender is a dummy variable (GENDER) coded 0 for women and 1 for men.

RESULTS

Correlation Results

Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations and correlations for all dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable averaged 2.27 on a 1 to 5 scale corresponding to an average response of moderate change or less. The average Hofstede score for individualism is 51 on a scale ranging theoretically from 0 to 100 (12 to 91 in terms of scores actually obtained). This means that students came from countries which were, on average, 40 points distant from the new culture. Other averages indicate that 42% of the sample is married, 46% are undergraduates, and 76% are male. The mean number of children is 0.17 and students were 26 years old on average.

In addition to these mean values, Table 1 indicates that value changes are negatively correlated with age and marriage but positively associated with length of tenure in the country. The cultural difference variable only correlates marginally (0.13) with value change while the number of children and gender of the respondent do not correlate significantly with the dependent variable.

¹The authors did construct such a multidimensional scale employing all four of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. This scale produced regression results which varied only in strength of significance from regressions run using the unidimensional measure of cultural distance. With the multidimensional form, the quadratic term and the linear term are both marginally significant.

Multiple Regression Results

The most central relationship explored in this paper regards the role of cultural distance in the value change process among foreign students. Two multiple regressions were run to test the three hypotheses regarding this variable. The first regression included a linear cultural distance variable to examine whether cultural distance had a linearly positive or negative effect. Hypothesis 1A suggested that greater cultural distance between the home and host countries would be positively associated with value change for the foreign student. Hypothesis 1B, on the other hand, hypothesized the opposite relationship. Table 2 shows the results of this analysis.

As shown in Table 2, a linear operationalization of the cultural distance variable yields non-significant results. Neither the unfreezing effect nor the positive expectancy effect dominates the other. In addition, the results indicate that both older students ($p < 0.1$) and married ($p < 0.05$) tend to report less value change, as was hypothesized. This model explains 12% of the variance in self-reported value change.

A second multiple regression was run to test Hypothesis 1C which states that at the high end of the cultural distance scale, smaller cultural distances will be positively associated with value change while the opposite occurs at the low end of the cultural distance scale. This hypothesis effectively suggests that within one range of cultural distance, positive expectancy effects will outweigh unfreezing effect while the opposite will occur within another range of the data. In this regression, a squared cultural distance variable (CULTDIS2) is included to provide the possibility of obtaining the hypothesized inverted U-shaped relationship. In order for the hypothesized relationship to hold, the two cultural distance variables must be of different signs and must experience inflection within the range of the data (Wong and Campion, 1991).

The results of this analysis indicate that adding a quadratic term to the equation does significantly improve the predictive power of the model ($F = 5.24$ with 1 and 96 d.f., $p < 0.05$). In terms of Hypothesis 1C, Table 2 demonstrates that the cultural distance variable and its squared term have opposite signs and are both significant ($p < 0.05$). By taking the first derivative of the cultural distance variables and setting them equal to zero, it can be shown that the point of inflection does occur within the given data range at approximately 52 (the data ranges between 12 and 90 on this measure). In addition, age ($p < 0.05$) and marriage ($p < 0.05$) are again both negatively associated with value change. Gender, length of residence and number of children were all insignificant. This model results in an R-square value of 0.16 and is significant at the 0.01 level.

DISCUSSION

Summary and Implications

This study examined the role of cultural distance as well as several other "forces" in the value change process of foreign students. First, the evidence suggests that cultural distance cannot be thought of as having a simple positive or negative association with value change. A linear modeling of cultural distance produced no significant relationship with value change indicating that neither Lewin's unfreezing concept nor the "positive expectancy effect" received support (Hypothesis 1A and Hypothesis 1B). The second regression suggested that the relationship is best modeled as a quadratic of inverted U-shape. This result lends support to a dual-effects model (Hypothesis 1C) with the unfreezing effect dominating within the low cultural distance range of the data and the positive expectancy effect dominating within the high distance range.

In addition to the cultural distance hypotheses several restraining forces were also examined for their effects on value change. Among these, marriage (Hypothesis 2) and age (Hypothesis 4) were most consistently found to demonstrate a significant relationship with the dependent variable in the hypothesized direction. Married students experienced less value change than unmarried students and older subjects experienced less value change than younger students. Both of these findings are consistent with Lewin's model of restraining forces with a second person serving as the force in the first case and the fact that one has had greater time to explore and solidify one's value system prior to the foreign experience serving as the restraining force in the second case. It is important to note that these relationships do not necessarily remain stable when we split the sample.

Hypothesis 3 which postulates a negative relationship between number of children and value change was consistently insignificant. This was true even when treating children as a dummy variable. One possible explanation for the lack of significance in this hypothesized relationship is the lack of variance in the number of children variable. Only 9 of the 105 respondents had any children at all. The remaining 96 students were childless suggesting that this data may not provide an accurate test of the children/value change relationship.

Hypothesis 5 which proposes a positive relationship between length of stay and degree of value change was also not supported by the results. This may be due to the fact that only two relatively long time periods are included in the study. Torbiorn (1982) found that cultural novelty has its greatest effect on adjustment during the first two years of residence. If this were the case we would not necessarily expect to see a large difference in value change between MBA students who were in residence for almost two years and undergraduate students who stayed between four and five years.

In general then, the results identify several variables which can be thought of in terms of Lewin's model of restraining versus driving forces. On the other hand, the results lend only qualified support for Lewin's unfreezing effect within the realm of sojourner adjustment. The unfreezing effect is tempered by a second factor which we have termed the positive expectancy effect. This effect is the stronger of the two at high levels of cultural distance while the unfreezing effect dominates at lower levels. These results seem to indicate that a certain amount of cultural distance is needed to promote the dissonance necessary for change. If this distance becomes too large, however, the task of changing one's values may appear to be too demanding, and the results associated with such change too much in opposition with one's current values, to be worth the effort.

Limitations

Aside from the data limitations listed previously, there exists some concern for the generalizability of the current study. While this study draws on both the expatriate management and educational sojourner literatures, the sample is limited to students. Students and business people are unlikely to have the same set of experiences as they live overseas. Foreign students typically do their work in an environment of great cultural diversity whereas an expatriate manager may be one of very few foreigners at a business site. For many students, school is a more complete experience that includes everything from social life to physical fitness whereas a business person working in a foreign setting may be left to herself outside of business hours. These and other differences between a student and an employee experience may result in heterogeneous values change processes for the two groups.

In addition to concerns about study generalizability, the single nation nature of this study also suggests caution in interpreting the results. Since the cultural distance variable is simply the individualism measure of the United States minus that of the Hofstede score for the country of the respondent it can also be interpreted as differences in levels of individualism. One could then craft an argument that withing a group of students whose culture is at the high end of the individualism scale, decreases in individualism lead to greater change. At the low end of the individualism scale, increases in individualism lead to greater values change. At some level this argument makes intuitive sense in that one must be sufficiently individualistic to make changes away from the values derived from one's "community" in largely collectivistic cultures. On the other hand, one must have some desire to conform to the larger collective's value orientation in order to move away from a highly individualistic position.

While such an interpretation is plausible, two factors speak against it. First, the individualism dimension is measured at the national level rather than the individual level. Such dimensions measure tendencies within a culture but say little about a given individual from that country. Indeed, students who face the uncertainty of study abroad are different from the majority of people in a country who did not take such a risk. They are probably more individualistic in general given their ability to pay for a costly foreign education and the link between wealth and individualism. This favors a cultural distance interpretation since any one individual is likely to notice differences between the degree of individualism in two cultures but will not necessarily be representative of the national individualism score.

Further, in a supplementary exploration using a cultural distance variable composed of all four of Hofstede's (1980) culture dimensions, the authors found similar results regarding the relationship between cultural distance and value change. While the results were only marginally significant, they do indicate some degree of support for a cultural distance interpretation over an individualism interpretation of the effect.

Third, one must also be careful in interpreting the age findings in the terms specified by prior sojourner literature. While it is true that the negative correlation between age and value change may be indicative of ties to the home country (Feldman, 1991) or the differing motivations of younger versus older sojourners as suggested by Church (1982), it is also possible that older individuals are less likely to change in any situation whether domestic or international (Rokeach and Cochrane 1972). This possibility should certainly be examined though data gathered from the American students at the university did not show a significant link between age and the amount of value change reported.

A third issue is raised by the reliance on Hofstede's measures which are now some thirty years old. While culture has been observed to vary little from generation to generation (Samovar and Porter, 1997), ideally one would seek to create measures of individualism from the sample itself. Such measures would more accurately reflect the current state of values. Unfortunately, such measures require larger samples than were available in the current survey. The use of such dated measures may actually provide a more conservative test of the cultural-distance hypotheses as they are likely to include greater noise. That these measures support the hypothesis strongly suggests that cultural distance does play a role in the value change process.

Finally, the self-report measurement of value change raises certain concerns. While some individuals may have accurate perceptions of the ways in which they have changed, others are probably less accurate in their assessment. A more desirable approach might be to create a group of questions regarding social views, political values, interpersonal relationship values and so forth which would be administered upon entrance to the university and then again at a later date, perhaps upon graduation. By comparing the actual responses to such questions in different time periods one might hope to obtain a measure of value change less clouded by the respondents memory.

Future Research

The first step to be taken in furthering this research is to make the links between the identified restraining and driving forces and organizational commitment explicit. This could be done by creating a sample of individuals working in a foreign environment and administering a longitudinal survey regarding their commitment to their employing organization and their response to the forces identified in the current study.

Such research might then prove useful in developing an international cadre of managers who are responsive to both issues of global scale economies and the need to be responsive to the local environment (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989). It would also inform work examining the repatriation process of international managers, a process which is in the initial stages of theoretical development (Black and Gregersen, 1991).

In addition to engaging better measurements and expanding the generalizability of this study's results, future research also ought to examine the U-shaped model of cultural distance effects more closely. This data used in the current study indicate that an inflection point exists which basically separates the world into developed nations versus developing nations (with the exception being the Asian countries which fall into the latter group). While this inflection point seems to carry a great deal of face validity (most Europeans would probably experience less cultural novelty in the United States than would most Asians, for example), these results should be examined in light of previous research and tested using independent data. Also, future studies could explore whether other factors differ in their influence on value change on either side of the inflection point. Our supplementary regressions suggest that this might be the case but their sample sizes are small and the data is not independent from that used to pinpoint the inflection.

Finally, future research should also consider multinational samples with sojourners residing in various nations and originating in various nations. It may certainly be the case that our results would hold for students in the United States but might be altered if the research were conducted in different national settings (Hofstede, 1980). This would aid in determining whether the current operationalization of cultural distance indeed measures the proposed construct or only the dimension of individualism.

Such additional research would greatly add to our understanding of the experience of individuals moving across national and cultural boundaries and how it relates to their alignment with the goals and values of an employing organization.

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Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cultural Distance	Cultural Distance Squared	Marital Status	Number of Children	Age
Cultural Distance	51.19	24.19	1.00				
Cultural Distance Squared	3200.10	2600.80	0.98***	1.00			
Marital Status	0.42	0.50	0.07	0.04	1.00		
Number of Children	0.17	0.77	-0.14	-0.12	0.08	1.00	
Age	25.56	3.98	0.29***	0.22**	0.21**	0.11	1.00
Tenure in Country	0.46a	0.50	-0.37***	-0.31	-0.18*	-0.03	-0.85***
Gender	0.76	0.43	0.18*	0.17*	0.12	0.12	0.11
Value Change	2.27	0.91	.13	.19	-0.25**	-0.02	-0.36***

a. This is a dummy variable representing undergraduates versus MBAs. This number indicates that 46% of students had a residency of approximately 21 months.

* $p < 0.10$

** $p < 0.05$

*** $p < 0.01$

Table 2
Linear and Quadratic Model Multiple Regressions on Full Sample

Variables	<u>Linear Model</u>		<u>Quadratic Model</u>	
	Parameter Estimate	T-value	Parameter Estimate	T-value
INTERCEPT	4.01	3.35***	3.33	2.75***
MARRIAGE	-0.35	-2.01**	-0.38	-2.26**
CHILDN	0.01	0.08	0.04	0.40
AGE	-0.07	-1.63*	-0.08	-1.98**
WAVE	0.06	0.18	0.11	0.35
GENDER	0.21	1.02	0.19	0.97
CULTDIS	0.002	0.004	0.04	2.16**
CULTDIS2	-	-	-0.0004	-2.29**
Adjusted R2	0.12		0.16	
F-value	3.42***		3.81***	
n	104		104	

*p < 0.10

**p < 0.05

***p < 0.01