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The Significance of Role Behavior Differentiation  
for Cross-Cultural Interaction Training

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The Significance of Role Behavior Differentiation  
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Abstract

In order to train people to deal effectively with persons from another culture, it appears necessary to identify cross-cultural differences which are critical to the working of culturally heterogeneous groups. A theoretical analysis of the development of role differentiation, within and between social systems, in traditional and modern cultures, leads to the hypotheses that traditional cultures stress differentiation of the roles of the same system, while modern culture tends to empathize differentiation of comparable roles of different systems. These hypotheses were tested on the content of a cultural training program found to be effective in improving an individual's performance and interpersonal relations in heterocultural task groups. This training program is composed of 55 problem episodes to be interpreted for causes of conflict by the trainee. The problem episodes were derived from "critical incident" interviews with individuals who had had cross-cultural experience, as well as from the relevant literature on the target culture, the Middle East.

The results support the hypotheses and suggest that role differentiation may constitute an important area for cross-cultural training. A facet analysis of the content of the training program is presented and used in formulating proposals for a systematization of the program. The relationship between acculturation training and socialization is also briefly discussed.

The Significance of Role Behavior Differentiation  
for Cross-Cultural Interaction Training<sup>1</sup>

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The frequency of cross-cultural contacts has increased in the modern world. Mutual economic and military assistance between nations, the work of international organizations, and internalization of large corporations have led to countless occasions in which people of different cultural backgrounds have to work together, to negotiate, or to interact in some other way. It has been recognized that a task performed in a cross-cultural situation is likely to present more difficulties than when the same task is entrusted to a culturally homogeneous group (Fiedler, et al., 1961; and Fiedler, 1965). It is not surprising, therefore, that the problem of how to train people to interact effectively with people of another culture has become important and urgent.

There are countless differences between any two cultures. Training people so that they will learn about all of these differences would be an impossible task. To reduce the training problem to manageable proportions, it is necessary to find out what cross-cultural differences are critical in the interaction situation.

This problem can be approached from a theoretical viewpoint by considering the manner in which persons in a given culture are trained, since childhood, to stress certain conceptual differentiations more than certain other ones (Foa, 1964). Another, more empirical, possibility is to study actual situations of cross-cultural contacts in order to identify critical incidents (Flanagan, 1964), that is, incidents which lead to tension between

the two cultural groups or to a better understanding of members of one group with respect to the culture of the other one. Both approaches will be discussed here. It will be shown that there is a considerable degree of convergence between them.

#### Roles and Systems Differentiation

It may be suggested that the family is the cradle of all roles: The beginning of role differentiation of the child occurs in his family and is later extended to other social systems. It has been shown (Foa, Triandis and Katz, in press) that two basic criteria of role differentiation in the family are the sex of the child and his status or generation position with respect to the other members of the family. The status differentiation might be stronger in a traditional culture than in a modern one. For example, the difference between the behavioral norms of a father toward his son and of a son toward his father is likely to be larger in a traditional culture than in a modern one.

If it is true that status differentiations learned in the family system serve as a model for other systems, it will be expected that, in any given system, norms pertaining to the behavior of persons in different status positions will be more differentiated in a traditional culture than in a modern one. This hypothesis refers to status differentiation among the roles of the same social system. Let us now turn to the problem of differentiation among roles belonging to different social systems.

It is common knowledge that an economically and technically developed culture has many more systems than a traditional one. In fact, modern culture is characterized by specialization of functions so that it tends to have a social system for each function. For example, in western culture, the family specializes in the raising of children; it does not perform primarily economic functions any more. On the other hand, in a traditional

culture, functions such as producing goods and services, taking care of the sick, etc. are characteristic of the family system. In fact, it seems possible to suggest that only two systems are necessary and sufficient in a very undifferentiated culture: the family and the hospitality system. The first one to take care of the relationship between family members, and the second one to regulate the relationship between family members and non-family members. Thus, these two systems may be called primary. The other systems, to be called secondary ones, may be conceived of as a result of the differentiation of functions of the primary systems. The school and work systems seem likely to derive from the family organization. Commercialized entertainment (coffee-house, spectacles, etc.) and the tourist or catering trade constitute derivations from the hospitality system: a person staying at a hotel is still called a guest.

As already noted, family roles can be defined in terms of sex and status differences between the actor and the recipient or object of the behavior. It seems now that a role in secondary systems may be derived from a role in the primary system which has the same elements with regard to status and, possibly, also to sex. Thus, the role of son to father may serve as a model to such roles as pupil to teacher, worker to foreman, worshipper to priest and the like. In all these roles, the status of the actor is lower than the status of the object. Roles having the same status and sex relationship and belonging to different social systems may be called corresponding roles.

This process of differentiation of corresponding roles between the primary and secondary systems may be more advanced in technically developed cultures than in traditional ones. If so, it may be expected that the differentiation between the behavior norms of a role in one system and the norms for the corresponding role in another system will be stronger in the

Western culture than in more traditional ones. This hypothesis leaves open the question of what the normative difference consists of. Previous work (Foa, 1964) has shown that western culture makes a stronger differentiation between status manipulation behavior and affect manipulation behavior. This is not too surprising in view of the fact that in the western culture status is achieved rather than ascribed. In other words, in western culture there is more status mobility and, therefore, a greater need for the manipulation of status position through behaviors which give or deny status. It seems that in traditional cultures this distinction between manipulation of status and manipulation of affect is less strong, so that in such cultures one cannot easily manipulate status without touching upon the affective aspect of the relationship.

It may be further surmised that certain secondary systems in Western culture, such as the school and work systems, seem more concerned with the manipulation of status than with the manipulation of affect. All these considerations lead to the hypothesis that within western culture there is greater differentiation of behavioral norms in various systems than in traditional cultures. This differentiation implies larger discrimination between status and affect in western than in traditional cultures. Traditional cultures, on the other hand, tend to apply the same norms to corresponding roles of different systems and not to differentiate between status and affect.

In summing up, it is proposed that, within a given system, a traditional culture will tend to differentiate more among roles in terms of status than a Western culture. Between systems, on the other hand, the contrary will occur: Western culture will differentiate more than the traditional one, . . . in terms of status and affect. So, it appears that these two types of cultures stress different differentiations.

A similar pattern of what may be called differential differentiation across cultures has been reported (Foa, 1964) with regard to interpersonal behavior. On a broader level of generality, this might indicate that there are limits to the number of differentiations a person can make while maintaining his own self-identity. Thus, when the development of the culture requires certain new differentiations, other differentiations, previously made, have to be reduced so as not to overstretch the ability of the subject to differentiate.

#### The Culture Assimilator

A more empirical approach to the problem of identifying critical cross-cultural differences was used in the construction of Culture Assimilators (Stolurow, 1965). The purpose of a Culture Assimilator is to train a person to interact effectively with persons from another culture. An assimilator which has been constructed so far is concerned with the American and the Middle Eastern cultures. It consists of a series of stories depicting interpersonal situations often encountered in cross-cultural contexts. After each story, a list of alternative interpretations of the behavior described in the story is presented to the trainee, who is requested to choose the interpretation which seems most correct to him. If the interpretation is the "correct" one, the trainee is provided with some additional information and instructed to go on to the next story. If the chosen explanation is "wrong" the trainee is given some additional cues to help him understand the situation and he is instructed to read the story again and to choose another alternative. Here is an example of a story, followed by four alternative explanations:

Three American military emissaries were sent to a Middle Eastern country. Their job was to establish a favorable working relationship with the natives in a particular rural area where an American military base was to be located in the near future.

The high military officials of the foreign country suggested that the Americans go into the rural areas and talk to the villagers.

When the Americans arrived in the village with their native interpreter and native liaison officer, they were immediately invited to dinner and conversation with the headman of the village after they had presented their credentials to him. They readily accepted the invitations and were pleased with their progress. During dinner, the conversation drifted to the plans for the new base and the possibility of the villagers helping in the construction of the necessary buildings.

The head villager made several suggestions concerning the recruitment of the native laborers. However, the ranking American officer disagreed with him and said that his suggestions could not be accepted because they would be in violation of the policies set for and followed by the American armed forces. The village headman made no further suggestions and for the remainder of the dinner conversation consisted of general questions about the area, its people, and the nationally famous pottery which the villagers make.

As the three Americans were taking leave at the end of the evening, one of the women of the headman's house appeared and handed the host several beautiful and apparently expensive plates and vases made by local potters. The headman offered them to the Americans as a gift of welcome, but the Americans made several excuses for refusing them and they left without the ceramic ware.

The village members proved to be somewhat hostile to the personnel of the new base when it was being built and after it began operations. It was often difficult for the Americans to find villagers to work on the base in the jobs that were available, and it was necessary to raise the local employee payroll to the maximum that the military scale permitted for each of the job classifications filled by native personnel.



In view of the sequence of events described in this incident, which interpretation of the villagers' reluctance to work with and for the American military is the most accurate?

A. They did not help the American military because to do so would jeopardize their loyalty to their own country.

Go to page 56.

B. They did not help the American military staff because they had realized that if the three American military envoys wouldn't accept bribes then they would be impossible to "work" with.

Go to page 57.

C. If the Americans would not accept the village headman's suggestions, which he made as an authority on village affairs, then he would not cooperate, and neither would his people.

Go to page 58.

D. The villagers felt that the Americans were disrespectful of the village headman and that they did not like the village as a whole either.

Go to page 58.

(This is the correct explanation.)

Preliminary results suggest that a person trained with the assimilator is better able to perform in a cross-cultural situation than an untrained one (Chemers and others, in preparation).

A source of content material for the Culture Assimilator was supplied by the critical incident technique. Individuals, who had spent time in the target culture, were asked to report incidents which had altered their perceptions of the culture. A large number of such critical incidents were analyzed in order to identify cross-cultural differences.

A second source of assimilator material was obtained through a review of the anthropological and sociological literature on Middle Eastern culture. Selection of material was based on consensus in the literature as to its importance and relevance to cross-cultural difference.

An empirical validation of the information obtained from these two sources was also undertaken. Samples of American and Arab students were compared in their ratings of a value orientation questionnaire dealing with several areas of social and personal behavior. Large differences in value orientation in a particular area provided support for information on differences supplied by the other two sources.

The stories made up from these sources were then submitted to a panel of judges, composed of persons from the relevant culture, to test whether each story was realistic and relevant to the culture, and whether there was agreement on the explanation designed as "correct".

The stories obtained from critical incidents are of particular interest to us in order to test if (a) the type of differentiations made in the story are the same as those proposed in our hypotheses, and (b) the cross-cultural differences in terms of more or less differentiation, correspond to these hypotheses. To clarify the test procedure, consider two more stories from the assimilator. Here is a story dealing with one system only.

An American professor was 20 minutes late for an appointment that he had made with two of his graduate students. The students were looking at their watches when the professor finally came into the room. The professor said, "I am terribly sorry I am late". The two graduate students jokingly replied, "Better late than never." The professor laughed and after a few more informal exchanges of conversation the group enthusiastically got down to the business that the appointment had been scheduled for.

Judging from the behavior exhibited in this incident, which one of the following do you see as the most accurate description of what that behavior mainly signifies?

- A. The students do not have the proper respect for their professor. Go to page 64.
- B. No Americans like to be kept waiting 20 minutes for an appointment, regardless of what the status of the person who is late may be. Go to page 65.
- C. The professor is asserting his status and authority over the students by making them wait until it is convenient for him to meet with them. Go to page 66.
- D. The professor felt that the students were impertinent in their manners and remarks. Go to page 67.
- E. The students were flattered to have a special appointment with their professor. Go to page 68.

The hypothesis regarding role differentiation by status in a given system proposes less differentiation in the American than in the Middle Eastern culture. The American professor recognizes the nearly equal status norm by apologizing for being late. Being late is a denial of status to the students. Apologizing means giving status to the students. The professor thus suggests that the equilibrium is re-established. The students' joking reply means a mild denial of status of the professor and acceptance of the equilibrium at the new level thus established. Through these status manipulating behaviors, the two sides reconduce the situation to the culturally approved position of nearly equal status, from which it had deviated due to the status denying behavior of the professor (being late). Thus, the correct explanation for the American culture, according to the hypothesis is B. This is also the correct alternative indicated by the assimilator, on the basis of empirical evidence.

In the Middle Eastern version of the same situation, the superior being late at the appointment, is given in another story. Here the superior

does not apologize and the subordinates behave toward him in the usual deferent manner. In this culture the subordinate is expected to give status to the superior even when the latter denies status to him. The correct explanation of this story, as given by the assimilator, is "In Arab countries, subordinates are required to be polite to their superiors, no matter what happens, or what their rank may be." That is, the differentiation between the behavior of the higher status person and the behavior of the lower status person is stronger in the Middle Eastern culture than in the American one. Thus, again, the Culture Assimilator and our hypothesis agree.

Turn now to an example of a story involving two systems, the work system and the leisure system. Here is the story.

Haluk, an Arab exchange student, was working on a class project with several American students. At a meeting of the project staff, the Arab student was asked to give his suggestions concerning the way the project should be carried out. Immediately after he finished talking, Jim, one of the American associates, raised his hand and said in a clear voice that he disagreed with Haluk's proposals. Then he pointed out a number of specific difficulties that Haluk's approach would incur for the project as a whole and its staff.

After the meeting, Haluk told Jim and another student on the project that he would not be able to go to the movies with them as they had planned because he had just remembered that he had to get a book out of the library to prepare for a class the next day. When the two boys expressed disappointment and suggested that they could go the next evening, Haluk politely told them that he already had another appointment for the next evening.

Assume that you were the other student who had planned to go to the movies with Jim and Haluk after the meeting. Which of the following

... thoughts would you regard as most likely to be a correct analysis of the situation as you went off to the movies with Jim?

A. Haluk was certainly a more serious student than you and Jim.

Go to page 47.

B. Haluk was offended because Jim had disagreed with his ideas in front of others.

Go to page 48.

C. Jim really should have listened more carefully while Haluk was talking.

Go to page 50.

D. Jim always talked loud, but his shouting in the meeting had been unnecessary.

Go to page 51.

E. You should have gone to the library with Haluk.

Go to page 52.

The hypothesis proposes that the differentiation between systems, in terms of status and affect, will be less strong in the Middle Eastern than in the American culture. In this story, Haluk is denied status by Jim in the work system. Haluk transfers this denial to the leisure system, in terms of affect, i.e. Haluk feels: "if Jim denies me status at work, this means he also denies me affect, so I must <sup>not</sup> give affect (go to the movies) to him." The correct explanation for the Middle Eastern culture, as suggested both by the assimilator and the hypothesis is B. The American, Jim, differentiates more than his Arab friend between affect and status as well as between work and leisure, so for him the relationship between denial of status in work and denial of affect in leisure is not as strong as for Haluk.

If Haluk had gone to the movies with Jim, this would have probably created another cross-cultural problem, according to our hypothesis. The differentiation between the commercial leisure system and the hospitality system is weaker in the Middle Eastern culture than in the American one.

Two Americans may go to the movies and "Go Dutch", neither of them becomes

host nor guest. For the Middle Easterner this situation is recognized as belonging to the hospitality system: the initiator becomes the host and the other person the guest. Haluk felt he could not be the guest of the person who denied him status and affect.

This lack of differentiation of the Middle Eastern culture between the commercial catering system and the hospitality system is well exemplified in the following story.

An Arab graduate student asked his co-workers on his lab assistantship if they wanted to go to lunch with him at the Student Union. They agreed, adding that it was time to eat, and they all chatted as they went to the Union where they got in line at the cafeteria. When they reached the cashier's station, the Arab student who was first in line, paid for all of them. When the group got to their table, his two co-workers insisted on giving the Arab student the money for their lunches. The Arab refused it, but Americans insisted; and the one sitting beside him swept the money off the table and dumped it into the foreign student's jacket pocket. Later, the Americans commented that the Arab student had been unusually quiet and reserved while he ate his lunch.

If the Americans had analyzed this incident correctly, they probably would settle on which one of the following explanations for the Arab's behavior during lunch?

A. The Arab graduate student must have had an upset stomach.

Go to page 32.

B. It is the Arab custom not to talk during meals.

Go to page 33.

C. The Arab student had wanted to pay for their lunches and he was hurt that they wouldn't let him.

Go to page 34.

D. The Arab student felt the Americans thought he was too poor to pay. Go to page 35.

E. When he was away from the lab, the Arab had nothing to make conversation about. Go to page 36.

The correct explanation is, of course, C. The Arab student wanted to pay because in his definition of the situation, he was the host.

In the examples given, the theoretical framework which has been developed appears to be appropriate for a formal analysis of the stories of the assimilator. Furthermore, the explanation suggested by theoretical considerations appears to be identical with the correct explanation of the assimilator chosen on empirical ground. The hypotheses which have been developed are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

A Formal Test: Procedure

In order to obtain a more systematic picture of the extent of the fit between the theory and the assimilator, the 55 stories were analyzed.

First, stories were classified according to the source, critical incidents and literature. Then, for each source, the stories were classified according to whether they deal with roles in one social system only, roles in more than one system, or with some other aspect of the culture which is not directly referring to roles and systems, like religion, dietary laws, population parameters, etc. This classification by number of systems involved was necessary in order to test the hypotheses. It will be recalled, indeed, that a different hypothesis was proposed for stories dealing with one or more systems. No hypothesis was proposed for stories not pertaining to social roles,

Finally, the appropriate hypothesis, according to the number of systems in the story, was used in choosing the correct explanation of the story. Whenever the explanation chosen by the hypothesis coincided with the correct explanation proposed by the assimilator, the hypothesis was deemed to be supported. The "correct" explanations of the assimilator were decided upon

on the basis of knowledge of the relevant culture, and were further tested on a panel of judges made up of persons from this culture.

### Results

The results of the cross-classification of the stories, according to whether they do or do not fit our hypotheses are given in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 2 shows that only three out of the 28 stories derived from critical incidents and are not concerned with differentiation among roles. In the remaining 25 stories, the hypotheses are sustained in every case. In the stories derived from the literature, the proportion of those dealing with cultural differences other than roles is higher, nine out of 27. When roles are involved, the large majority of the stories will support the hypotheses.

The <sup>2</sup> test indicates that the frequency of "No system" vs. "System" stories differs significantly from randomness, at least at the .01 level. So does the frequency of the stories fitting the hypothesis as compared to the frequency of the non-fitting ones. Although this is true for both sources, the frequency of stories dealing with role differentiation is significantly higher, at the .05 level, for the stories from critical incidents than for the stories from the literature. This supports the contention that most real life incidents are related to role differentiation, while in the literature there is some tendency to focus on the non-interpersonal aspects of the culture. Apparently, cross-cultural differentiation by religion, dietary laws, levels of technological development, and the like, are easier to learn and/or less crucial to cross-cultural interpersonal contacts, than the role differentiations which emerge from the critical incidents and which have been analyzed here.

### A Facet Notation

These preliminary results seem to be encouraging enough so as to justify an attempt to express our hypotheses in a more formal fashion. The



notation of facet theory (Guttman, 1955; Foa, 1965) will be used for this purpose.

Let us first state the relevant facets as follows:

- A. The Culture:
  - a<sub>1</sub> Middle Eastern
  - a<sub>2</sub> American
- B. The Social System
  - b<sub>1</sub> Primary: Family, Hospitality
  - b<sub>2</sub> Secondary: Work, School, Leisure
- C. The Status of the Object of Behavior, as compared to the Status of the Actor:
  - c<sub>1</sub> Higher or similar
  - c<sub>2</sub> Lower
- D. The Content of Behavior:
  - d<sub>1</sub> Giving
  - d<sub>2</sub> Denying
- E. The Mode of Behavior:
  - e<sub>1</sub> Affect
  - e<sub>2</sub> Status

This ABCDE design includes  $2^4 = 16$  variables, which can be defined as follows:

Giving ) (Affect) (Higher or similar)  
 ) ( ) to a person in ( ) status position  
 Denying ) (Status) (Lower )  
 (Primary ) (Middle Eastern)  
 in a ( ) social system in the ( ) culture  
 (Secondary) (American )

A variable belonging to this set can be denoted, in general, by:

$$a_{i_1} b_{j_2} c_{k_3} d_{l_4} e_{m_5} \quad \text{where: } i, j, k, l, m = 1, 2$$

Our hypotheses deal with the relationship between certain variables, more precisely, they suggest predictions about the relative size of the relationship in the American and Middle Eastern cultures. The more the culture requires differentiation between any two variables, the lower will be their relationship. For example, if Middle Eastern culture requires more differentiation between the behavior of father to son and the behavior of son

Table 1

Extent of Differentiation in the Two Cultures

Culture	Differentiation	
	Within System	Between System
U. S.	Less	More
M. E.	More	Less

Table 2

Cross-Classification of Assimilator Stories by Source,  
Number of Social Systems Involved and Hypotheses Fitting

Source	Hypothesis Fitting	Number of Social Systems Involved			Total Stories
		No System	One System	More than One System	
Critical Incidents	Yes	0	13	12	25
	No	3	0	0	3
Literature	Yes	0	7	9	16
	No	9	2	0	11
Total Stories		12	22	21	55

Comparison	$\chi^2$	P
System <u>vs.</u> No System		
Critical Incidents <u>vs.</u> Literature	4.0	<.05
Fit of Hypothesis <u>vs.</u> No Fit		
Critical Incidents	25.0	<.001
Literature	11.9	<.01
Both	35.8	<.001

to father, than American culture, we shall expect that these two behaviors (father to son and son to father) will correlate lower in the Middle Eastern than in the American culture.

We can now reformulate the hypotheses thus: Hypothesis regarding differentiation among roles in a given system: In any given social system, the correlation between giving (or denying) status to persons in higher and in lower status positions, will be higher in the American than in the Middle Eastern culture.

In formal notation:

For any given  $b_j d_k e_2$  ( $j, k = 1, 2$ )

$$(1) r_{c_1, c_2/a_2} > r_{c_1, c_2/a_1}$$

The hypothesis regarding differentiation among roles in different systems can now be formulated as follows:

The correlation between giving (or denying) status in a secondary system and giving (or denying) affect in primary system to a person in a given status position, will be higher in the Middle Eastern than in the American culture.

In formal notation:

For any given  $c_j d_k$  ( $j, k = 1, 2$ )

$$(2) r_{b_1 e_1, b_2 e_2/a_1} > r_{b_1 e_1, b_2 e_2/a_2}$$

#### Some Problems in Assimilator Construction

The formal analysis of cross-cultural role differentiation, which has been developed, may provide some guide lines in the construction of an Assimilator. This may reduce the labor involved and possibly increase the effectiveness of the instrument.

The facets which have been defined may be considered the core of a particular story: they are, in fact, the elements required for the differentiation training. But a story will include many other facet elements which

are not directly relevant to the training problem, such as the names of the persons involved and the like. Two stories having the same explicit facet elements and differing in some other undefined facets may be equivalent for training purposes. When the stories differ in the explicit facets, and are not equivalent, it may be possible to predict, on theoretical ground, which story is simpler and which one is more complex. Stories can now be classified according to whether they require differentiation between the roles of (a) one system; (b) two systems; and (c) both within the system and between systems. We further know that differentiation within one social system involves one facet only, namely the status position of the object, as shown by inequality (1). Inequality (2) shows, on the other hand, that a differentiation between systems involves two facets, the system and the mode of behavior (affect and status). It may be proposed that differentiation between the roles of one system, which involves one facet only, will be easier to learn than differentiation between the roles of various systems involving two facets. A story requiring differentiation both within and between systems will be the most difficult one since this differentiation involves three facets.

If these notions apply, stories can be ordered by difficulty in the following manner going from the easiest to the most difficult one: (1) differentiation among the roles of the same system; (2) differentiation among the roles of two different systems; (3) differentiation among the roles of one system and also differentiation between these roles and the roles of another system; and (4) differentiation among the roles of two different systems and also among the roles of each one of the two systems taken separately. Even more difficult items could be constructed by having more than two systems.

The hypothesis of order of complexity among the various types of stories has been derived from more general notions of facet theory (Foa, 1958 & 1965), the contiguity principle and the hypothesis of counting facet elements. The order assumes that each facet taken separately is nearly as difficult to differentiate as any other one, so that differentiations involving two facets will be more difficult than differentiations involving one facet. If this is true, it is sufficient to count the number of facets to be differentiated in order to establish the rank of difficulty of a particular story. Such an approach has also been employed in analyses of small group behavior (McGrath, 1964; McGrath & Altman, 1966). If the facets differ very much in difficulty, but the contiguity hypothesis holds, a partial order will still be obtained: differentiation within system, for example, will still be simpler than differentiation within and between systems.

The proposed order of complexity also assumes that learning a new differentiation presents nearly the same difficulty as forgetting a previously learned one. For an American to be "assimilated" in the Middle Eastern culture means to learn to differentiate more within a system and less between systems. For a Middle Eastern the problem of learning the American culture is just the opposite. If learning is easier than forgetting the proposed order will hold for the American, but will have to be modified for the Middle Eastern. If the reverse is true, a modification of the order will be necessary for the American, but not for the Middle Eastern.

Another problem for which our formal treatment may prove helpful is to devise, for each story, various explanations having different degrees of correctness. The most correct explanation will be the one which refers to all the facets varying in inequality (1) and/or (2). The next correct answer will be one referring to only some of the above facets. Next in the order of correctness will be an explanation involving some, but not all, of the

above facets and also some other facet which is not included in the formal design. Some of these explanations varying in degrees of correctness can be found in the stories of the assimilator which have been developed.

Let us consider, for example, the various explanations offered as to Haluk's refusal to go to the movies after his project had been criticized by Jim. The best explanation is B, "Haluk was offended because Jim had disagreed with his ideas in front of others", since it involves the two relevant facets, the system and the mode. Explanations C (Jim didn't listen carefully) and D (Jim shouted) are partially correct since they refer to one correct facet, mode out of two: lack of attention and shouting imply denial of affect. Likewise, explanation E (You should have gone to the library with Haluk) is partially correct since it refers to the system facet: going to the library means remaining in the school system. The least correct explanation appears to be A, Haluk is a more serious student than Jim, as it does not involve either of the correct facets.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

In the foregoing analysis it has been proposed that cultures may differ in the extent to which they differentiate among roles between and within social systems. The differentiation among systems appears to be stronger in the modern western culture which is, in fact, characterized by a large number of systems. The differentiation within a system may be stronger in the traditional cultures. This does not mean that all the traditional cultures are likely to require the same differentiations. One possible difference among them is the extent to which the sex differentiation overlaps with the status differentiation. In certain traditional cultures female always means lower status. In other cultures status and sex differences are not necessarily linked up. It is possible to have a woman Prime Minister in Ceylon or India; hardly so in Pakistan or Syria. Taking into consideration

the differentiation between same and different sex roles will require the introduction of an additional facet into the formal design described, and may provide for discrimination among different traditional cultures. Furthermore, cultures are likely to differ in the gestures and verbal expression they use for conveying a particular type of interpersonal relationship: The same gesture or verbal expression may have different meaning in different cultures. For example, putting the hand on one's shoulder means giving affect in the Middle Eastern culture and denying status in the Thai culture. The discussion presented above has not been concerned with the symbols used in a particular culture to convey a certain interpersonal relationship, important as this may be, but rather with the differentiation in the relationship itself apart from the symbols used.

The empirical material which has been analyzed seems to suggest that the ability to differentiate among roles to the extent required in a particular culture is important in order to interact effectively with persons of this culture. To the extent that the assimilator provides training in a given differentiation it fulfills a task closely similar to the one performed by the socializing agents in the particular culture; it is a socializing agent of a sort. But the assimilator does more than this; it also provides training in the weakening of differentiations which the trainee has overlearned as a result of socialization in his own culture and which are required to a lesser extent in another culture.

The hypotheses presented in this paper seem likely to require further empirical testing and theoretical refining. At the theoretical level they may provide some insight into meaningful cross-cultural differences in role development and suggest the beginning of a linking up between the process of socialization and the process of acculturation. Socialization involves learning to differentiate. Acculturation requires both increase in



differentiation and also the forgetting of certain previously learned differentiations. At the practical level the hypotheses may prove useful in making the construction of training instruments more rapid and efficient; they may indeed provide the notions required for relating general training principles to the specific concrete content of cross-cultural training.

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FOOTNOTES

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2. On leave from the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research.