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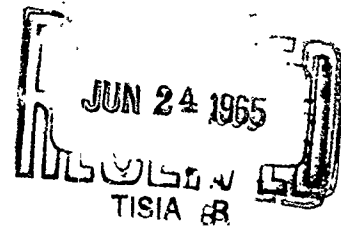
Examples of Cross-Cultural Problems Encountered by Americans Working Overseas: An Instructor's Handbook

by

Robert J. Foster

HumRRO Division No. 7 (Language and Area Training)

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HumRRO

The George Washington University
HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH OFFICE
operating under contract with
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

May 1965

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**Examples of Cross-Cultural Problems
Encountered by Americans Working Overseas:
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**HumRRO Division No. 7 (Language and Area Training)
Alexandria, Virginia**

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PREFACE

... Once upon a time there was a great flood, and involved in this flood were two creatures, a monkey and a fish. The monkey, being agile and experienced, was lucky enough to scramble up a tree and escape the raging waters. As he looked down from his safe perch, he saw the poor fish struggling against the swift current. With the very best of intentions, he reached down and lifted the fish from the water. The result was inevitable. *An Oriental fable cited by D. Adams, 1960, p. 22.*

"As a Navy Wife," one girl told us with pride, "you're never abroad. You're always just in the Navy." [italics added] *H. Cleveland, G.J. Mangone, and J.C. Adams, 1960, p. 61.*

These two anecdotes go a long way toward saying all that has been written as to why American efforts in other nations sometimes result in misunderstanding or failure. It is hoped that the anecdotes or illustrations contained in this handbook will help in alerting the American to the importance of the cultural curtain in overseas effectiveness.

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**Examples of Cross-Cultural Problems
Encountered by Americans Working Overseas:
An Instructor's Handbook**

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is a collection of summary accounts of events that illustrate some of the problems frequently encountered by Americans working overseas, particularly those providing technical assistance in developing countries. It is intended primarily as a source book for instructors in area training programs who are searching for appropriate true-life examples that will give their classroom presentation more impact and meaning. The illustrations were taken from published and unpublished sources—case studies, anthropology texts, interviews, and so forth.

Living and working in a new environment with different rules and unfamiliar ways of thinking is a difficult and emotionally demanding task. It is not surprising that investigators who have undertaken to evaluate the performance and problems of Americans overseas have concluded that it is usually the human problems associated with working in a different culture that are likely to be critical in the success or failure of their assignments.¹

There is evidence that those who are least effective in their relationships with national counterparts and who demonstrate little insight into their overseas experience are the ones who claim no difficulties in their personal relationships and who tend to minimize the importance of the cross-cultural dimensions. Consequently, despite the importance of the human factor, it is not surprising that it is often difficult to make the trainee aware of the importance of the cross-cultural aspect of his work. If he is a technician, he is especially likely to be concerned with the adequacy of his technical proficiency, even though his technical specialization frequently exceeds the demands of the job. He may be curious about facts and figures on the country, its customs, climate, geography, and so forth, but any attempt to give the trainee a perspective that will help him deal with the social-psychological aspects of his work is likely to be viewed as too abstract, too remote, or even too simpleminded.

The rationalization, "After all people are really pretty much the same everywhere once you get to know them and goodness knows I get along with people," is a frequent and tempting one.

Using examples similar to situations that trainees can anticipate helps to stimulate audience interest, and bridges the gap between the concrete and the abstract. In general, the examples in this handbook

¹For an analysis of problems encountered by Americans overseas, see Cleveland, Mangone, and Adams, *The Overseas Americans*; Montgomery, "Crossing the Culture Bars: An Approach to the Training of American Technicians for Overseas Assignments"; Foster, *Traditional Cultures: And the Impact of Technological Change*; and Fayerweather, *The Executive Overseas*.

are units of interaction (people of two cultures in face-to-face contact) rather than straightforward descriptions of the values or ideas of another culture that contrast with our own. In this way the illustrations bring cross-cultural problems to the personal-emotional level, which is more likely to hold meaning for the trainee.

Because successes frequently go unnoticed and are rather undramatic for teaching purposes, most of the examples are mistakes made by Americans overseas. Most of these mistakes seem obvious in retrospect and might be dismissed as stupidity or the result of an occasional oversight. Nevertheless, these errors occurred, and studies indicate that, far from being atypical, they have played a significant role in our overseas efforts. A sounder explanation is that the American unconsciously assumes that all people think, feel, and see things the same way (that is, as he and other Americans do) even though he may have discussed and even complained about differences. It is the simplicity of the mistakes illustrated by these examples that makes them all the more intriguing and, if used effectively, more dramatic for training.

The illustrations selected for this handbook are intended to help the instructor challenge the trainee's complacency and get across to him the basic concepts that appear to be particularly critical to effective communication and understanding. The basic goal of such training is to create an awareness in the trainee that both he and his indigenous co-workers act on assumptions that they only partially recognize; that these assumptions are critical factors in his work accomplishment; and that what seems to him to be good, moral, or natural is dependent on his cultural background. This concept, of course, does not mean that all values or assumptions are equally effective in fighting a war or getting a road built, or that any American should change his values when he is in Rome. It does mean, however, that his effectiveness will be maximized when he becomes aware of his own assumptions, feelings, and attitudes, and when he attempts to understand the indigenous people's feelings and point of view rather than passing judgment upon them in terms of his own values.

The illustrations in this handbook are classified according to the typology of cross-cultural problems indicated in the Contents. The categories are not intended to be a systematic classification of conceptually independent categories. Many of the categories are only alternative ways of looking at the same phenomena. "The Assumption That Our Way Is the Natural Way," for example, overlaps almost all the other categories, and most examples of the "The Resolution of Cross-Cultural Problems" represent positive illustrations of the flexibility-rigidity dimension under "Role Definition and Adaptability." Since illustrations in isolation lose some of their meaning, their sources have been indicated for easy reference to the original author's accompanying comments.

The illustrations are also cross-indexed with the geographic area, technical specialty, and the value assumptions involved. Through this cross-classification it is hoped that the instructor can find the best examples to illustrate the point he is trying to communicate. It should

be stressed, however, that these illustrations are not intended to be conveyers of information about a given country or about problems a particular type of technician can expect to encounter. As previously explained, the handbook is intended to help in modifying attitudes rather than providing information *per se*. In no sense should the illustrations be interpreted as being a representative sample of the probable occurrence of any problem event or value conflict.

Attention should also be called to two other dangers in the use of these illustrations. One is that overemphasis on cultural barriers could cause the overseasman to become immobilized because he perceives these differences as insurmountable. While it is necessary for one to be aware of obstacles in order to be able to deal effectively with them, it is equally important that he come to perceive cultural differences as potential vehicles in the accomplishment of his mission. (See section 6.00 - 6.99 for illustrations which should help on this point.) The second danger is that these illustrations are perceived as the type most frequently found overseas. Because they were selected for their likely teaching value, they tend to be somewhat dramatic and sometimes rather amusing. Effectiveness in a cross-cultural situation is likely to be built on an accumulation of many minute acts such as those which reveal indifference, attitudes of superiority, prejudices, and so forth, which isolated from each other have little significance.

The section containing the examples has been printed on card stock with lines around each numbered illustration to permit the removal of all or individual cards as selected by the instructor for use in classroom presentations.

Two recent books that are excellent sources of such examples are recommended reading for trainees, especially those whose work will require them to influence counterparts in non-Western cultures to adopt new ideas or techniques.¹ They are: Foster, Traditional Cultures: And the Impact of Technological Change, and Arensberg and Niehoff, Introducing Social Change: A Manual for Americans Overseas.

CATEGORIES

The Assumption That Our Way Is the Natural Way

The story in the Preface of the monkey and the fish summarizes the essence of this category. It is perhaps a universal tendency to unconsciously assume that others want the same things and think in the same way as we do, and this is especially likely to be true when we are in anxiety provoking and poorly defined situations such as those encountered overseas. It is this tendency (together with the corollary

¹The term "non-Western" is used loosely to exclude the areas of North America, Europe, and Australia. Latin America, while geographically "Western," is better grouped for this discussion as non-Western, since Latin values, like those of the East, tend to be in contrast to American values.

assumption that if there is a difference it is the other person who is misguided, strange, or ignorant) that underlies much of the misunderstanding and lack of cooperation between nations and individuals. Every illustration in this handbook could be included in this section. Those listed have been selected because they best illustrate this tendency.

How easily this ethnocentric perspective can creep into our thinking, language, and behavior is illustrated by this quotation taken from an area study outline written for and used in a training program designed to prepare Americans for an overseas assignment: "In all events particular attention should be given to those areas within a country where the local inhabitants have *peculiarities* and are at considerable variance in one or more ways from the *normal, rational* way of life."¹ [italics added]

The first group of illustrations contains examples in which the innovator has assumed that the techniques, methods, and programs that were learned in his professional training and experience may be transferred without modification to other societies. Too often the technician perceives and conceptualizes technical problems overseas in terms of familiar programs or blueprint solutions (American style) rather than in terms of underlying problems that need to be analyzed and solved for the particular environment in which the problem occurs. The second group of illustrations includes instances in which less tangible factors such as differences in values, motivation, and perception are the cause of cultural blinders.

A good discussion of the first type of assumption—that techniques and methods may be transferred from one country to another without modification—can be found in Foster, Traditional Cultures: And the Impact of Technological Change, pp. 178-187. J.D. Montgomery's article, "Crossing the Culture Bars," is suggested as background reading for the second category. In The Silent Language, E.T. Hall demonstrates how important and how subtle these assumptions can be.

For illustrations of this category, numbered 1.00 - 1.99, the reader is referred to the examples section of this report.

Cultural Resistance to Innovation

One of the chief functions of United States technical assistance personnel in the developing nations is that of influencing indigenous people, either directly or through local officials, to adopt new ideas, philosophies, techniques, or equipment. Bringing about change is not an easy task even in the United States, where change and progress are a way of life. In non-Western societies where tradition, fatalism, and spiritual values dominate, the task is much more difficult. The failure of the innovator to recognize the cultural differences reflected in the attitudes, behavior, and institutions of the recipients has been a major factor in the lack of success of many of our efforts overseas.

Examples of cultural factors in the innovation process have been classified under the following headings: (1) preferences, (2) habits of

¹Cited by A.J. Kraemer and E.C. Stewart, 1964, p. 15.

posture and movements, (3) values and goals, (4) social and power structure, and (5) religious beliefs.

In the first two categories, the failure to adopt an innovation may be the result either of a well-established preference for certain dress, foods, and so forth, or habitual body positions or movements that the recipient sees no reason to modify, even though an alternative is "obviously better" to the American.

In the third classification, the contrast is more fundamental: differences in the desirability of goals and the priority that should be given to them. Such differences reflect basic values and assumptions about the nature of man and the world. Directly or indirectly, these value differences underlie every example in this handbook. The present section contains only those examples that most clearly illustrate these value contrasts.

It is useful to think about values and basic assumptions as residing within the individual. From another perspective, however, they can be viewed as part of the social and power structure in which the individual lives: the expectations of others, the system of reward and punishment, and all those forces imposed on him by his group and society rather than by internalized values that he himself holds. An indigenous counterpart or recipient, for example, may be ready intellectually to accept an innovation but not be willing to act accordingly, since the rewards and punishments operating within his group or society discourage such action.

Beliefs, especially religious ones, are also expressions of basic values, but the illustrations have been classified separately because of the frequency with which these beliefs are in conflict with innovation.

For illustrations of this category, numbered 2.00 - 2.99, the reader is referred to the examples section of this report. Chapters 4 through 7 of Traditional Cultures, by G.M. Foster, and "The Factor of Culture," by Margaret Mead, contain excellent discussions of the barriers to planned change in non-Western societies.

"Non-Cultural" Resistance to Innovation

The problems of introducing change are sometimes only indirectly the result of the cultural aspects of human motivation. Examples in this section point to the need to keep in mind technical, educational, economic, and related differences that can be easily overlooked by an innovator in a new environment.

For example, the first classification—climatic, geographic, and related factors—refers to those instances where an innovation was not adopted because these factors, which proved to be critical in retrospect, were ignored by the innovator.

Likewise, the availability of technical resources, such as repair parts or the degree of education and scientific know-how (second and third classifications), needs to be considered. A tractor may be willingly accepted but it will be useless in the long run if there are no facilities for repair and no replacement parts; a project may be ineffective because the recipients lack the scientific sophistication to understand

the reasons for a procedure, such as understanding germs as a cause of disease.

The last set of examples, those involving economic consequences, might outwardly appear attributable to differences in values, but from the viewpoint of the recipient it is simply a matter of arithmetic. When all factors were considered, the old way was cheaper; the innovator had not reviewed all relevant factors in his analysis because they were not applicable in his own society.

For illustrations of this category, numbered 3.00 - 3.99, the reader is referred to the examples section of this report.

Unanticipated Consequences of Planned Change

Almost all the illustrations in this handbook may be regarded as examples of unforeseen results arising from cross-cultural ignorance or indifference. This section contains only the type of illustration in which the unexpected outcome is beyond or apart from the failure to achieve the immediate goal. The lawlessness growing out of prohibition or the social problems of the aged that arise from increased medical knowledge and changing technology are well-known examples from our own recent history. Even though the successful innovation of any idea or technique invariably leads to unintended changes, an attempt to anticipate some of the short-term consequences is a feasible goal.

For illustrations of this category, numbered 4.00 - 4.99, the reader is referred to the examples section of this report. For a discussion of unforeseen results of innovation see Foster, Traditional Cultures, pp. 79-86, or Sharp, "Steel Axes for Stone-Age Australians."

Problems in Communication and Perception

Misunderstanding and mistakes resulting from cultural differences are not only apparent in a people's resistance to change but also occur in the communication process itself. The illustrations given in this section overlap those from "Cultural Resistance to Innovation" except that they are here limited primarily to personal misunderstandings in a face-to-face relationship in a cross-cultural context. Five overlapping classifications have been designated: (1) stereotypes, (2) language, (3) education and knowledge, (4) values and beliefs, and (5) social system and role expectation.

In many cases, misunderstanding is due to pre-existing images held by either member of two different cultural groups. Americans going overseas must accept and deal with the fact that many non-Westerners have a rather distorted view of Americans, based on such sources as gangster movies, propaganda, emotional reactions to a colonial past, or atypical firsthand contact with a limited number of Americans. While the illustrations in this section are primarily concerned with stereotypes of non-Westerners, Americans should also guard against the unfortunate but natural tendency to assume that all people of the host country are alike.

Language also presents a problem beyond the obvious one of learning a new vocabulary. Words represent ideas and attitudes

associated with those ideas. Frequently the same idea is not present in another culture, or the ideas may have very different meanings and implications. Consequently, words in one language do not always have equivalent words in another, making an accurate translation almost impossible. Campa's "Language Barriers in Intercultural Relations" discusses some of these problems.

Some problems in communication and perception may not be a direct consequence of contrasting values or perspectives; see the examples in the third section. The American may unthinkingly assume that the indigenous people have equivalent exposure to Western procedures, equipment, and knowledge—a generalization that the communicator knows to be inaccurate but one that he nevertheless acts upon. The oversight is usually apparent in retrospect.

The last two classifications refer to problems arising from a basic difference in the way of viewing life and the world. They are similar to comparable areas in the category "Cultural Resistance to Innovation."

For illustrations of this category, numbered 5.00 - 5.99, the reader is referred to the examples section of this report.

The Resolution of Cross-Cultural Problems

While differences in culture are usually barriers to communication and innovation, an alert and adaptable innovator who understands the motivations of the people with whom he is working can often use these differences to advantage. The first section contains illustrations in which the innovator adapts or modifies the innovation so that it fits more readily into existing cultural patterns.

Another technique, illustrated in the second section, is to redefine the innovation in such a way that it will be seen in a more favorable light by the recipients. One way of doing this is to present the innovation so that it appeals to other motives as well as to the motive for which the innovation is intended. A people may initially see little value in a tool as a means of increasing output, but it might appeal to motives such as curiosity or play. For a further discussion of these and other factors that can be used to gain acceptance of innovation, see Chapter 8 of Foster's Traditional Cultures.

The third section provides illustrations of another technique that is probably universally effective in one form or another; that is, to get the active participation of the recipients in decision-making activities. This factor is likely to be particularly important overseas, where the American innovator is usually in the role of an adviser-consultant with the job of guiding a project to completion without the authority to which he is accustomed in the United States. Only a few examples of the effective use of participation are provided, but of all rules of technical assistance, recipient involvement in the decision-making process appears to be the most critical. Other examples and a full discussion on gaining acceptance through participation can be found in Batten, Communities and Their Development, Chapters 4, 5, 12, Goodenough, Cooperation in Change, Chapters 2, 15, and articles in Community

Development Review, a periodical published by the Agency for International Development.

For illustrations of this category, numbered 6.00 - 6.99, the reader is referred to the examples section of this report.

Role Definition and Adaptability

The way in which the American overseas perceives or defines his mission is likely to be a critical factor in determining the success of his efforts. While the examples used to illustrate this point do not, in a sense, represent cross-cultural problems, the definition of his mission becomes particularly significant because of the cross-cultural considerations. Within the United States, the expectancies and demands of one's work, acquired through professional training geared to the American environment, are fairly constant from one company or job to another. As the illustrations demonstrate, however, the American cannot make such assumptions in his work overseas.

The overseas situation frequently calls for a different perception of one's purpose. No longer is it paramount simply to do a competent technical job. For maximum effectiveness the American usually needs to be an adviser and teacher rather than a doer, to set up administrative and support capabilities he takes for granted in the United States, and to be a public relations representative for the United States image. Several such instances of seeing one's mission in a restricted perspective are given in the first classification, "Defining the Job Too Narrowly." Consult Kraemer and Stewart, Cross-Cultural Problems of U.S. Army Personnel in Laos and Their Implications for Area Training, pp. 4-7, and Cleveland, Mangone, and Adams, The Overseas Americans, Chapter 9, for different approaches to this problem.

A special category of defining the job too narrowly is the failure to build institutions that will ensure the continuity of one's accomplishments after the assignment has been completed. The frequency with which this factor is discussed in the literature on social-economic development overseas testifies to its critical significance. A few examples of the failure to build institutions are included in Examples 7.00 - 7.99. For a good discussion of the issue, see The Overseas Americans, pp. 150-167.

Considering the extensive contrasts between the United States and developing countries, it should be apparent that effectiveness overseas demands an unusual degree of flexibility on the part of the innovator or technician. This can be inferred from almost any of the previous examples, but several that best illustrate the flexibility-rigidity dimension are listed in Examples 7.00 - 7.99. Typical of these examples is the capacity—or its absence—to examine various alternatives, to learn from experience, to question one's own assumptions, and to think in terms of the unique approach required by particular problems rather than depending on blueprint solutions.

Inflexibility is a function of situational factors as well as the individual personality and experience. Behavior resulting from the new

and unstructured nature of cross-cultural work, typified by anxiousness, confusion, rigidity, defensiveness, and so forth, has been called "culture shock." For a discussion of this phenomenon, the following sources are suggested: Oberg, "Culture Shock and the Problem of Adjustment to New Cultural Environment," Foster, Traditional Cultures, pp. 187-194, or The Overseas Americans, Chapters 3 and 4.

For illustrations of this category, numbered 7.00 - 7.99, the reader is referred to the examples section of this report.

**INDICES
AND
LITERATURE CITED**

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INDEX OF TECHNICAL SPECIALTIES

Illustrations that are concerned with efforts in the following technical areas have been indexed for the reader, who may see some advantage in selecting illustrations for specialized audiences.

Public Health and Medicine: 1.00, 1.01, 2.13, 2.20, 2.24, 2.25, 2.32, 2.34, 2.51, 2.56, 2.58, 2.59, 2.82, 2.85, 3.01, 3.04, 3.42, 4.00, 4.07, 5.03, 5.30, 5.31, 5.33, 5.34, 5.37, 5.52, 6.00, 6.01, 6.02, 6.03, 6.28, 6.29, 6.30, 6.32, 6.41, 7.31, 7.32.

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry: 1.02, 1.03, 1.04, 1.05, 2.00, 2.02, 2.21, 2.22, 2.26, 2.28, 2.31, 2.54, 2.60, 2.61, 2.80, 2.81, 2.83, 2.84, 3.00, 3.02, 3.03, 3.20, 3.21, 3.41, 3.60, 3.61, 3.62, 3.63, 4.01, 4.02, 4.04, 4.05, 4.06, 4.08, 5.35, 5.36, 6.05, 6.06, 6.07, 6.20, 6.21, 6.23, 6.24, 6.25, 6.26, 6.31, 7.00, 7.02.

Community Development: 2.50, 2.55, 2.59, 5.15.

Construction and Engineering: 1.21, 1.23, 2.10, 2.14, 2.29, 2.30, 2.37, 2.52, 2.57, 3.40, 4.06, 6.04, 6.40, 7.30.

Education: 2.27, 2.35, 2.86, 2.87, 5.32, 5.81, 7.33.

Fishing: 2.53.

Business: 1.20, 5.55, 5.56, 5.57, 5.60, 5.61, 5.83, 5.85.

Manufacturing: 2.11, 2.12.

Mass Communication: 6.22.

Military Assistance: 1.25, 1.26, 1.27, 2.37, 5.04, 5.92, 7.01.

INDEX OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The following list will enable the reader to locate illustrations by the geographic location in which the incident occurred. While illustrations are classified by geography, the broad physical areas were also selected to correspond somewhat to cultural divisions.

United States and Canada (usually American Indians): 1.03, 2.02, 2.32, 2.81, 2.83, 3.04, 3.62, 4.07, 5.02, 5.15, 5.36, 5.54, 6.02, 6.23, 7.02.

Central America and Mexico: 1.02, 2.11, 2.14, 2.20, 2.24, 2.56, 2.80, 3.20, 5.21, 5.34, 5.83, 6.30.

South America: 1.00, 1.01, 1.04, 1.20, 1.22, 2.00, 2.24, 2.26, 2.31, 2.50, 2.51, 2.53, 2.57, 2.60, 3.42, 4.05, 5.13, 5.33, 5.80, 5.86, 6.01, 6.04, 6.24, 6.29, 6.40, 7.32.

West Indies: 2.10, 2.21, 4.02, 4.06, 5.64.

Sub-Saharan Africa: 1.21, 2.27, 2.33, 2.35, 2.85, 2.86, 3.03, 4.01, 4.05, 4.09, 5.30, 5.32, 5.50, 6.00, 6.05, 6.27, 6.31, 6.41, 7.00.

Europe and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: 2.23, 5.10, 5.12, 5.82.

Southeast Asia and India: 1.24, 1.25, 1.26, 1.27, 2.28, 2.29, 2.30, 2.37, 2.54, 2.55, 2.59, 2.84, 2.87, 3.02, 3.40, 3.41, 3.61, 3.63, 4.00, 5.01, 5.04, 5.36, 5.37, 5.58, 5.63, 5.85, 5.92, 6.03, 6.07, 6.20, 6.21, 6.25, 6.26, 6.28, 6.42, 7.01, 7.30, 7.31.

Far East: 2.52, 2.58, 2.80, 5.03, 5.11, 5.19, 5.20, 5.51, 5.56, 5.59, 5.60, 5.61, 5.81.

Middle East and North Africa: 1.05, 1.23, 2.12, 2.22, 2.25, 2.34, 2.82, 3.01, 3.21, 3.60, 4.08, 5.04, 5.16, 5.17, 5.35, 5.52, 5.57, 5.84, 6.06, 6.22, 7.33.

South Pacific Islands: 2.01, 2.13, 2.36, 2.61, 4.03, 4.04, 5.00, 5.18, 5.31, 5.53, 5.55, 5.62, 5.89, 5.90, 5.91.

INDEX OF AMERICAN VALUES CRITICAL TO EFFECTIVENESS OVERSEAS

The nature of the cross-cultural problems encountered by Americans overseas can be viewed as a conflict between fundamental values held by two groups of people. The misunderstandings on problems occur because members of each group assume their own values, especially those that tend to be acted upon unconsciously, are correct and natural. Most of the examples presented in this handbook could probably be analyzed within this theoretical framework even though the exact nature of the underlying values would sometimes be obscure.

A classification of American values that frequently contrast with those of non-Westerners is given below. An index of the examples that best illustrate cross-cultural problems arising from value differences is also provided for the reader who may want to organize his training effort around this approach. The fact that there are individual differences among Americans and among non-Westerners should not obscure the helpful perspective provided by the contrast of overall or modal value differences.

The classification system used is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it always theoretically consistent. It represents only an attempt to roughly classify some American value configurations that are likely to be underlying factors in the problems and misunderstandings encountered by United States personnel in the developing nations. An attempt has been made to select categories representing personal or psychological dimensions, since it is at this level of analysis that the individual can best understand the assumptions under which he works and the problems these value differences can cause. The categories, of course, overlap, and it could be debated whether a given example belongs in a category other than the one in which it has been classified. For a fuller discussion of values held by Americans, the following books are suggested: Kluckhohn, Mirror for Man, Chapter 9; Williams, American Society, Chapter 11; Morison, The American Style, chapter by Kluckhohn; Arensberg and Niehoff, Introducing Social Change: A Manual for Americans Overseas, Chapter 6; Fayerweather, Management of International Operations, Chapter 2.

1. Control of Environment. Different ways in which people unconsciously look at the world can be placed along a continuum. At one end, man is master; at the other, man accepts the world as he finds it. Fatalism and the view that man works with nature rather than attempting to conquer it is typical of the thought of many non-Western people. In contrast, Americans usually conceive of nature as something to be conquered and made over to suit man's needs. Activity is good, and any sign of reluctance to get things done is interpreted as laziness or indifference.

2. Progress. Change is an inevitable part of life, but societies differ in their attitudes toward it. Non-Western people tend to seek guidance from tradition. Americans are more inclined to make decisions in terms of an anticipated future and to view change and material progress as unquestionably desirable. This dimension of thought overlaps the control-acceptance attitude described above because, for the American, achievement and progress are optimistically held to be the inevitable results of effort and mastery of self and nature.

3. Materialism. Americans typically seek tangible results that can be measured. Many non-Western people are more likely to find satisfaction in aesthetic or spiritual values, which involve the inner experience of man. The American delight in gadgetry is indicative of a tendency to make evaluations in materialistic terms and to stress material comfort and convenience. It is not unusual for Americans to judge other nations by the presence or quality of their plumbing or refrigerators.

It is no accident that the American attitude stresses control, progress, and materialism, the three interact with one another to constitute the dominant behavior pattern of American society.

4. Personal Success. Social status is a key dimension in understanding human motivation. The members of a traditional society are likely to regard their role as fixed and not to be questioned. In contrast, an American's self-esteem is closely tied to his personal success and "natural" desire to get ahead. The competitiveness of American life is a by-product. This need for self-mastery, personal achievement, and success is the personalized version of the general American emphasis on progress and mastery of the physical and social environment.

5. Autonomy. In American culture, where individual responsibility is stressed, it is assumed that the locus of decision resides within the individual. In non-Western cultures decisions are more likely to be made by a group or someone in authority. The difference between American culture and others is one of degree, but within a hierarchical organization the frequency with which the individual should by culture standards take action on his own initiative or seek authorization from others varies greatly, depending upon whether he is a member of a Western or non-Western society.

6. Puritanism. The persevering influence of the Puritan ethic—asceticism, responsibility, impersonal service to others—is in sharp contrast to the relaxed, spontaneous, personalized behavior of non-Western people. Non-Western people do not understand the American's

sharp separation of work and play or, in another sphere, his impartial sense of duty and service to others. This motivational complex underlies the previously discussed values, especially American optimism about effort and the results it yields. It is also interwoven with the American moralistic attitude and great awareness of time.

7. Moralistic Orientation. The characteristic missionary spirit of Americans, to win over other people to their way of thinking, and the tendency to evaluate conduct in universal impersonal terms, is a direct manifestation of a strong moralistic attitude. Americans, more than most people, tend to make clear-cut ethical distinctions that affect all equally and impersonally. People in non-Western nations tend to have less urge to convert others or to make impersonal moralistic judgments.

However, the contrast between American and non-Western morality usually reflects differences in the content rather than the strength of moral convictions. What appears to be lack of standards of honesty, for example, is more likely to be a different concept as to what behaviors are considered dishonest.

8. Humanitarianism. Interwoven with the American's moralistic and egalitarian outlook is a motivation of generosity and compassion, which is particularly noticeable in his supportive attitude and action toward the underdog. In developing nations this motivation is also present, but it is in a more paternalistic, more personal, less organized form. However, the strength of this concern for others outside one's own group is undoubtedly greater among Americans. It is easy to understand how the realities of limited resources and the harshness and cheapness of life in developing nations could dampen compassion for the unfortunate. Nevertheless, this lack of concern with those outside one's family or clan is an aspect of other cultures of which Americans are inclined to be critical and which they are often unable to accept.

9. Time Orientation. Americans are generally very time-conscious, treating time as a material thing ("time is money") that should be actively mastered, or manipulated to best advantage, out of a sense of duty and responsibility (note the interrelationship with other American values). Non-Western people usually measure time on a completely different scale, regarding it as a phenomenon to be passively accepted and, perhaps, enjoyed.

10. Scientific Orientation. The Western world has adopted empirically-based scientific reasoning as the unquestioned way of understanding the physical world. The people of other nations are not necessarily as ready to accept scientific explanations as the most rational or to recognize the need for careful disciplined analysis. Having had less experience with the fruits of scientific knowledge, they are more likely to be guided in their behavior by mysticism, authority, or tradition. A scientific basis to rationality is, of course, closely interrelated with the mastery-fatalism dimension (control of environment) discussed above. It is also linked with the lack of educational opportunity.

11. Interpersonal Behavior. Cross-cultural misunderstandings often result from a difference in the rules of interpersonal relationship with regard to such things as etiquette, gestures, mannerisms, and demeanor. This category reflects various other values that are manifested primarily in direct person-to-person interaction. Perhaps the most frequent cause of difficulty is the contrast between the American's openness and friendliness on brief acquaintance, and the formality and face-saving manner of many other peoples, especially those of Oriental culture.

Control of Environment: 1.25, 2.34, 2.37, 2.81, 2.82, 2.83, 2.84, 5.35, 5.52, 5.63, 5.84, 6.21, 6.25.

Progress: 1.01, 1.05, 1.21, 1.26, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.21, 2.20, 2.33, 2.34, 2.51, 2.54, 2.59, 2.61, 3.04, 3.20, 3.41, 4.01, 4.08, 6.41.

Materialism: 1.21, 2.21, 2.23, 6.25, 6.26.

Personal Success: 1.27, 2.28, 2.52, 2.53, 4.01, 6.04.

Autonomy: 1.20, 2.25, 2.55, 2.58.

Puritanism: 1.26, 2.13, 2.36, 2.51, 5.04, 5.63, 5.83, 5.84, 6.06.

Moralistic Orientation: 2.29, 5.05, 5.50, 5.51, 5.56, 5.59, 6.20.

Humanitarianism: 2.20, 2.24, 6.03.

Time Orientation: 1.25, 2.22, 2.32, 2.37, 5.17, 5.34, 5.35, 5.53, 5.54, 5.55, 5.58, 5.60, 5.61, 5.63, 5.84, 5.86, 6.06.

Scientific Orientation: 1.05, 1.23, 2.31, 2.34, 2.80, 2.81, 2.82, 2.84, 3.42, 5.35, 6.01, 6.32.

Interpersonal Behavior: 1.22, 2.22, 2.27, 2.28, 5.55, 5.56, 5.57, 5.60, 5.61, 5.62, 5.81, 5.82, 5.83, 5.85, 5.87, 5.88, 5.91, 5.92.

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EXAMPLES

1.00 - 1.99 The Assumption That Our Way Is the Natural Way

1.00 - 1.19 Methods

1.00

... Several years ago a coffee planter, interested in the welfare of his employees, built a latrine for each house according to the standard American model. He was upset when his employees refused to use them. Finally an old man offered a suggestion. "Patrón, don't you realize that here we are squatters?" The planter ripped out the seats, replaced them with a perforated slab floor, and was gratified to find that public acceptance was much greater. He had learned what has had to be learned independently, time after time, in many parts of the world: latrines with raised seats, for psychological or physiological reasons, seem to cause constipation among people who customarily defecate in a squatting position. **G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 89.**

1.01

As a part of the health program at Cornell University's Hacienda Vicos Peruvian project, an American color film teaching the transmission of typhus by lice was shown to the Indian workers and their families. The film was previewed by health personnel, who felt it would be understood by the local people, who had been plagued by lice all their lives. Selected members of the Indian community received special instructions about lice and how they transmit disease, in the hope that they could further explain the problem to their fellows. At the showing the physician explained, through an interpreter, the principal facts of transmission.

A week later members of the audience were asked questions to see how effective the health education project had been. It became apparent that the message had not gotten across and that the louse as a vector was not understood. First, the viewers said they had lice but, they had never seen giant lice like those shown on the screen so they didn't see the connection. Second, they said they had never seen sick people like those shown in the film, who had a curious and unpleasant white and rosy color. Perhaps, they speculated, this was a disease that afflicted

(Continued)

1.02

There is in one town where I have lived a farmer whose great success is the result of vast training and experience.... A visiting agricultural expert from the States had heard about this man and his farm, and asked me to introduce him and serve as interpreter. First we toured the farm, which visibly impressed the visiting expert. Then we went back to town to talk with the farmer.

The first question out of the visitor's mouth was, "Why don't you try some of the ever-bearing varieties we grow in California?" The answer: They had been tried, but because of climatic differences between California and the tropics, had not done well. "Well, then, why don't you use such-and-such a fertilizer?" That, too, had been tried and found wanting. This sort of exchange went on for two hours, during which I found myself growing more and more ill at ease. Why couldn't the visiting expert recognize the expertise of the farmer he was interviewing? Why couldn't the conversation be an exchange of information instead of a lecture in miniature? Why didn't the visitor ascertain, before presuming to give advice, that the local farmer's yield per acre was greater than the "standard" the visitor was

(Continued)

1.03

A clear-cut example of a failure of this sort occurred on the Papago Indian Reservation of Arizona between 1939 and 1949. A system of impounding rain water in a low place or pocket (*bolsa*) and then dust mulching it so it would not lose much moisture through evaporation was being successfully used in Sonora, Mexico. A Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) well driller on the Papago Reservation heard about it, and transmitted the information to the superintendent of the reservation. After inspecting the system as operated in Mexico, it was decided to introduce it to the Papago. The driller and superintendent worked hard on the project and developed a fair amount of enthusiasm among the Indians. A number of the *bolsas* were constructed and for the first few years good crops were obtained. But then the bad years came one after another. The Indians progressively abandoned the project until 1949, when the last loyal follower planted his last crop.

A number of mistakes had been made in the manner of obtaining the participation of the Indians and in the actual construction of the fields. But the main failure was the fact that the climatic conditions of Sonora, Mexico, several hundred miles

(Continued)

1.01

other kinds of people, but again they saw no connection with their own problems. Finally, since they were not familiar with movies, they did not perceive the episodes in the film as a continuum, but rather as a great many odd scenes with no visible relationship. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 138-139.

1.03

further south and several hundred feet lower in altitude, were not the same as those on the Papago Reservation. The frosts and rains came at the wrong time for getting a good crop on the reservation. Also, there was less rain. Some adjustments might have been possible, such as a change in the type of crops, but they were never suggested. The innovators kept trying to do as was done in the Sonora fields. Thus, the whole idea was abandoned after ten years of experimentation C. Arensburg and A.H. Niehoff, 1964, p. 73.

1.02

bragging about back home, with quality at least as good? D.H. Redler, 1962, pp. 71-72.

1.04

If the innovator fails to get the participation of the people with whom he is working and proceeds to operate without consideration of the unique character of the situation or needs of the people, the results can be anti-climatic. For example, a returned Peace Corps Volunteer reported an instance in which an American official in a rural area of Chile was promoting the raising of chickens. He showed one of the local men how to build a chicken coop according to exact American specifications and standards. After the American official left, the campesino moved out of his own house and into the chicken coop. *From an interview, related by Charnel Anderson.*

1.00 - 1.19 Methods

For additional examples that best illustrate the assumption that familiar methods are universally appropriate, see 2.12, 2.14, 2.32, 3.01, 3.21, 4.05, 4.06, 4.09, 5.30, 5.31, 5.37, and 7.02.

1.05

To correct overgrazing of land by Somali cattle farmers, a range management pilot project covering a 30 by 32 mile area was initiated by AID. Following the American system, the agent built fences and 11 water catches in an area and set up restrictions on the number of people and cattle permitted to use the land. Following the completion of the water catches, however, the model range was overrun with cattle. Long established tradition gave access to water to all nomads, and no concept of land tenure existed. The people view grazing land as being open to everyone. Neither they nor the government officials understood scientific range management. They saw the water catches as government "wells" that would supply water in the dry season, and complained that there was not sufficient grass to support all the livestock to be watered there.

In addition, the building of water catches in a restricted area, where they would benefit only those in the vicinity, brought about tribal feuding and accusations of favoritism. Demands were made for additional "wells" in other areas. Mutilated dikes, cut fences, and overgrazed land reduced the model range to a model failure. *Summarized from F. Mahony, 1961, pp. 34-39.*

1.20 - 1.39 Values and Goals

1.20

Confused by the complexities of the local patron system under which workers who were in debt to these patrons were under their thumbs, the Americans paid off all the workers' debts and bailed them out of bondage so they could deal with them directly. But with everybody out of debt was there dancing in the streets? Not at all. The workers all quit and got themselves back into debt again. Why? Because in a land where there is no social security and no old age pension, a man's greatest security lies in being in debt to the right kind of patron who will naturally protect his investment by getting jobs for his debtors. To be out of debt is to have no one to help you. It is to be an actor without an agent, a plumber without a union card.

P.M. Gluck, 1957, pp. 165-166.

1.21

In many of Latin America's villages women gather on a stream bank to wash clothes under conditions that are anything but comfortable. But the pleasures of working in the company of others and of conversation and joking compensate for hardship. The Latin American pattern is duplicated in other parts of the world.

Dwight D. Eisenhower is reported as the source for an African example: In welcoming the American Council on Education's convention to Washington, the President made a succinct point with a personal anecdote: "I have never forgotten my shock, once, when I saw a very modern-looking village deserted in a far corner of Africa. It has been deserted because the builders put running water into all the houses. The women rebelled because there was now taken away from them their only excuse for social contact with their own kind, at the village well. I had been guilty of the very great error of putting into their minds and hearts the same aspirations that I had. And it simply wasn't so."

G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 96.

¹Time, The Weekly News Magazine, no. 15, 1962, p. 23.

1.20

1.22

In Latin America, although university students take an active interest in politics, tradition decrees that a politician should avoid political subjects when speaking on university grounds. A Latin American politician commented to anthropologist Allan Holmberg that neither he nor his fellow politicians would have dared attempt a political speech on the grounds of the University of San Marcos in Peru—as did Vice-President Nixon.

To complicate matters further, the student body of San Marcos, anticipating the visit, had voted that Mr. Nixon would not be welcome. The University Rector had issued no invitation, presumably because he expected what did, in fact, happen.

As a final touch, Mr. Nixon's interpreter was a man in full military uniform. In Latin American countries, some of which had recently overthrown military dictators, the symbolism of the military uniform could hardly contribute to a cordial atmosphere. Latin Americans need no reminder that the United States is a great military power.

Mr. Nixon's efforts were planned in the best traditions of our own culture:

(Continued)

1.23

From an interview in the Middle East:

The villagers are good Moslems. . . . We had an engineer here who designed houses. Of course, he put latrines in them. He didn't consult the local people at all on this point. When they finally went up for occupancy, nobody would take them. He couldn't figure out why, so we had an investigation. The whole thing turned out to be because the latrines faced the wrong way. People had their families facing Mecca. So we had to tear out the latrines and turn them around.

H. Cleveland, G.J. Mangione, and J.C. Adams, 1960, p. 161.

1.22

He hoped to improve relations through a direct, frank, and face-to-face discussion with students--the future leaders of their country. Unfortunately, this approach did not fit in at all with the culture of the host country. . . . *E.T. Hall and W.F. Whyte, 1960, p. 9.*

1.24

... The American Women's Association [in Saigon], over 250 strong, engaged in a number of charitable activities on their own initiative. They were especially attentive to orphanages and hospitals. One of their benevolences was an elaborate project for the hand artisans among the American wives: to make some 300 cloth dolls vaguely resembling cats, filled with beans. (The culture-sensitive American women did not want to offend the Vietnamese by using rice, a much cheaper commodity but one in somewhat short supply as food.) These were presented to orphanages for use as Christmas gifts, with the understanding that any surplus could be sold in a self-help fund-raising scheme. Tours of inspection during the ensuing weeks revealed that while none of the beanbags had entered the Saigon marketplace, neither had any reached the hands of the Vietnamese orphans. Upon inquiry it developed that the dolls, each the product of several hours of painstaking work, had been slit open and the beans removed, cooked, and eaten, while the decorated cloth was either discarded or used to make rather small and odd-looking handbags. The project was not, in short, an economic success: the generous club-women had

(Continued)

1.25

[The understandable impatience of Americans towards others' passive attitude and lack of action is illustrated by this advisor's response in which he assumes that the appropriate Lao motive should be the same that he and his countrymen would have.]

... I went over there with such an ... illusion. I expected really to be able to accomplish something and ... I have accomplished a portion of our mission but not as much as I would have liked to. I believe that if—my God—the man's going to be in the Army, there is a war going on, let's go out and fight. And I can't understand, I can't get it through my thick head why this man will not fight. His country is being overrun by Communists, his home is in danger, his family is in danger, his own life is in danger, and he won't fight. Well, where do you begin?

A.J. Kraemer and E.C. Stewart, 1964, p. 5.

1.26

[The adviser frequently defines his job as one of giving advice rather than one of finding the means through which advice is most likely to be accepted. Note how the following quotation implies that the counterpart should have the same values and demonstrate the same leadership responsibilities as an American officer.]

I would explain the problem to the [local] Battalion Commander. He would say, okay, everybody out in training. Maybe for a week I would have everybody out. Then it would slowly dwindle down until I had the old hard core there; but they got to the point where I didn't think it was necessary for me to have to keep stressing little points like this one. He is a man who is a lieutenant colonel and if he hasn't got enough interest in it, it's not my problem. All I'm there for is to advise him. If he doesn't take my advice, well ...

A.J. Kraemer and E.C. Stewart, 1964, p. 12.

1.27

One of the major problems of United States personnel was motivating the Lao. The men interviewed were aware of the lack of drive for military success among the Lao, yet one team sergeant was convinced that if a Lao had confidence in his ability to do his job this would give him the necessary incentive. Like people of other cultures, the Americans were guided by their own beliefs about human behavior: You profit from mistakes, competition is stimulating, personal achievement is a desirable goal. The differing attitude of the Lao is well illustrated by the observation of one returnee [even though he recognized the Lao's deep concern over face-saving]:

Watching them play a game, volleyball, to us it's a game. I know when our teams compete, whether it's baseball or basketball, anything—we'd be serious, playing it because we like to win. With them, they wouldn't be; they would team up and have teams going, but they did not desire to win; they just wanted to play. I don't know what the reason for this would be; but they just didn't give a hoot whether they won or not.

A.J. Kraemer and E.C. Stewart, 1964, p. 11.

1.24

1.24

been looking at Vietnamese orphans, but seeing American children.
J.D. Montgomery, 1961, p. 546.

1.20 - 1.39 Values and Goals

For additional examples that best illustrate our tendency to assume that others hold the same values and goals that Americans do, see 2.26, 2.27, 2.30, 2.34, 2.50, 2.52, 4.01, 5.00, 5.32, 5.51, 5.54, 5.62, 5.80, 5.82, 5.86, 5.90, 7.30, and 7.32.

2.00 - 2.99 Cultural Resistance to Innovation

2.00 - 2.09 Differences in Preferences

2.00

In the tropical lowlands of one Andean country, improved varieties of mosaic-resistant sugar cane have all but replaced the "criollo" varieties since their introduction some ten years ago. The newer varieties demonstrated their usefulness so successfully in the form of higher yields and greater profits that they diffused from one farm to another with a minimum of extension support and promotion. In only two or three small valleys have the older criollo varieties persisted and in these cases because mosaic disease was never a problem, apparently as a result of certain prevailing dry winds. Here the farmers see no advantage to the newer varieties and prefer their criollo in the belief that it is easier to refine. *C.J. Erasmus, 1959, pp. 387-388.*

2.01

This situation grades into those where actual physical comfort is involved in accepting or rejecting something new. The Palauans find sitting on chairs uncomfortable, just as I found sitting cross-legged on the floor tiring. Each of us returned to our accustomed posture with relief. Many of the older Yakima people still sleep on the floors of their dwellings. They say that beds are unsteady and that mattresses are too soft, yielding, and enveloping. They feel that they are suffocating, especially on feather mattresses of the variety that was known to them when they first became acquainted with our beds. Palauan canoes are being abandoned and replaced by rowboats because the canoes are very narrow and cramp their passengers. . . . *H.G. Barnett, 1953, p. 365.*

2.02

Some years ago, in 1946, an agricultural extension worker introduced a new type of hybrid maize into a community of Spanish American farmers in New Mexico. He was already well known and liked. He was able to demonstrate that the new seed yielded three times as much as the seed the farmers normally planted, and he was certain that he was doing right in persuading them to grow it. They followed his advice, but within three years they had nearly all gone back to growing their old low-yielding variety.

This sounds almost incredible, but it can be explained quite simply. The farmers ate the maize they grew. They ground it into flour and with the flour their wives made tortillas—the flat round cakes that formed the staple of their diet. But the new type of maize gave a flavour to the cakes the people did not like. The people valued the high yield but did not like the price they had to pay in taste, and the innovation failed because the agency had overlooked the need to test for taste as well as yield before the seed was given to the farmers. *T.R. Batten, 1957, pp. 10-11.*

2.00 - 2.09 Differences in Preferences

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in preferences, see 2.31 and 3.61.

2.10 - 2.19 Differences in Habits of Posture and Movements

2.10

... An American sanitary engineer once told me of a problem he had solved in Haiti. His work gang of Haitian laborers had been supplied with standard long-handled American shovels to dig a drainage ditch. The work went badly; the laborers seemed incredibly clumsy with their shovels, and frequently the handles got in the way, and inadvertently they knocked each other on the head. The sanitary engineer sensed the cause of the difficulty. Haitians customarily use short-handled tools which they grasp near the blade, bending over in a position that would be most uncomfortable for an American worker. The engineer cut the last two feet off each shovel handle and work progressed satisfactorily. *Traditional motor patterns were now unhampered by excess handle. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 165.*

2.11

In the 1930's the Mexican Government, desiring to improve the quality of pottery made in the country and to increase the income of certain villages, established trade schools in which master potters taught more modern techniques, including the use of the wheel. Research some years later revealed that in Michoacán villages, where vertical-halves molds were used and where few rotating or circulatory hand motions were customary, the wheel was not adopted. Apparently traditional motor patterns of adult potters were so rigid that they could not or would not take the time to master a radically different technique. But in those villages using the second type of mold—the upturned bowl—in which rotary and circulatory motions were involved, the wheel was often accepted. Old motor patterns were speeded up, but basically new forms did not have to be learned. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 86.*

2.12

On his arrival in Pakistan, a technician who was to introduce American methods and equipment in a machine shop found his workman drilling in a squatting position. A comfortable position, as taught in American schools, would be to be seated in front of the drill press. This technician was very distressed by the position taken by the Pakistani. The first thing he tried to do was to get the Pakistani off the floor by having a bench built. It took ten efforts by the technician to get the man off of the floor and onto the bench, but he finally made it. Now the Pakistani squatted on top of the bench so that he could still work in the traditional position. So far as actual comfort was concerned, he was using the same position that he had been using before. Now, however, he was in a more dangerous position, because if he moved while on the bench he could fall 30 inches to the floor. It probably would have been best to simply delineate an area on the floor or build a very low platform where the man could have continued to work in a squatting position but which could be kept clean and neat as a workman's bench is supposed to be kept in American terms. *From an interview, related by Arthur Niehoff.*

2.13

To have to change customary motor patterns is both difficult and tiring. As part of a community development program in the Cook Islands, a raised cooking stove was developed so food would be protected from dirt and animals and women wouldn't have to stoop continually in doing their work. The raised stove generally was rejected. The complaint: it was so terribly uncomfortable to have to stand on one's feet while cooking. Dube tells how an Indian village well was cleaned, bricked, and provided with a waist-high protective wall to reduce the danger of contamination. At first the villagers' enthusiasm was great, but shortly their interest waned. The high protective parapet required the use of pulleys (an innovation), thus necessitating a change in the traditional bending posture for drawing water. The women found the new set of motor patterns more exhausting than the old one." *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 88.*

2.14

He [N. Thompson] also described how, to the astonishment of American and British railway construction gang foreman, Mexican peons, when furnished with modern wheelbarrows, removed the wheel and lifted the barrow proper to their backs, supporting and carrying it with a forehead tumpeline! The Mexican, since the time of the building of great prehistoric pyramids, has moved earth by carrying it in a basket supported on the back in this fashion. Even today the tourist in Mexico City may see earth from the foundations of new skyscrapers being carried out of the ground in this fashion. The knack of handling a wheelbarrow is not something an adult picks up easily, so the willing railway workers, not wishing to displease their masters by rejecting their help, solved the problem by changing the tool to conform to their motor patterns. *G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 164-165.*

2.10 - 2.19 Differences in Habits of Posture and Movements

For additional examples that also illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in habits of posture and movements, see 1.00, 2.01, and 2.33.

2.14

2.20 - 2.49 Differences in Values and Goals

2.20

In Tzintzuntzan, Mexico, a government-operated public health clinic is beginning to attract patients, particularly for pre- and postnatal services and for the dressing of injuries and other similar ailments. Service is either free or offered at a nominal cost, depending on type. The cultural, social, and psychological barriers which are involved are, little by little, being overcome. In addition, a variety of private medical services are available 10 miles away in the town of Patzcuaro. Frequent bus service permits increasing use of these services. But many people who are convinced, or nearly convinced, of the value of medical care, hesitate to take the plunge because of the cost, or the fear of the cost, which is unknown and unpredictable. An infant falls ill and does not respond to folk medical care. This presents a dilemma. The parents know that the town physicians sometimes have cured children when local curers failed. But the cost is certain to be high by their standards: perhaps 50 pesos, perhaps 200 pesos. There are other small children who are not yet economically contributing members of the family. They require food, clothing, and many other things. Their well-being, and that of other members

(Continued)

2.21

Erasmus describes a similar experience in Haiti. A group of small landowners were provided with irrigation water on a block of about 50 acres. They harvested a much improved rice crop and were delighted with the results. Next an attempt was made to improve the land still further by contour leveling across property boundaries, but this was unsuccessful. "The owners, already satisfied with their increased production, could not see how leveling would result in sufficient further increase to justify the price they would be required to pay. . . . *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 134.*

2.20

of the family, may be jeopardized if the parents undertake an unknown and potentially costly treatment for the critically ill infant, who perhaps, because of age, is hardly yet considered to be a real member of the family. The social cost of trying to save the tiny infant is weighed against the total family welfare, and it may be deemed too great to be justified. Furthermore, in addition to money costs, the parents will lose much productive time by the bus rides, long waits in the doctor's office, and perhaps the necessity to remain for several days or longer in a hospital.

G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 61.

2.22

In our system, there are severe penalties for not completing work on time and important rewards for holding to schedules. One's integrity and reputation are at stake.

You can imagine the fundamental conflicts that arise when we attempt to do business with people who are just as strongly oriented away from time schedules as we are toward them.

The Middle Eastern peoples are a case in point. Not only is our idea of time schedules no part of Arab life but the mere mention of a deadline to an Arab is like waving a red flag in front of a bull. In his culture, your emphasis on a deadline has the emotional effect on him that his backing you into a corner and threatening you with a club would have on you.

One effect of this conflict of unconscious habit patterns is that hundreds of American-owned radio sets are lying on the shelves of Arab radio repair shops, untouched. The Americans made the serious cross-cultural error of asking to have the repair completed by a certain time.

(Continued)

2.23

Apparent economic irrationality is no more limited to folk and peasant peoples than is the fear of losing face or dignity, and comparative values may go just as far in explaining behavior among Westerners as among peasants. In 1953 the British love of birds constituted a considerable threat to increased egg production, an increase badly needed in view of food rationing. The uproar was set off when the Ministry of Agriculture encouraged chicken farmers to adopt the battery system in which hens are placed in cages just big enough to hold one roosting bird. Enclosed in this cage with a light burning eighteen hours a day to encourage overtime, a hen spends the rest of its life of about nine months eating, sleeping, and laying eggs. Battery hens average about 20 percent more eggs than free-roaming barnyard fowl. Although the battery system was partially responsible for an increase in egg production that ended egg rationing, many Britishers objected strenuously, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals demanded an end to the system, even though this meant a loss of 150 million eggs a year. The Ministry won the battle, but obviously many Britishers were willing to forego badly needed food rather than be guilty of possible cruelty to hens. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 77.

2.22

2.24

When powdered milk was first distributed in Chilean health centers, it was given gratis because of the poverty of mothers who attended maternal and child health clinics. But few mothers would use the milk; they suspected it was of poor quality or downright harmful. A free gift, in their experience, was suspect. Subsequently a token charge was made for milk; the mothers then perceived that in the eyes of clinic personnel the milk had value, and shortly the supply could not keep up with the demand. Similarly, in a new health center in San Juan Zacatepequez, Guatemala, no charge was made for visits. Patronage was poor and suspicion of the purpose of the center was high. Subsequently a flat charge of 20 centavos was adopted for all patients, regardless of the nature of their visit or its real cost. Health center personnel believe that this act of giving value to services rendered was very important in developing the present high utilization of center facilities. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 128-129.

2.25

... A Moslem worker in a machine shop badly injured his right hand in a lathe. The American shop foreman tried in vain to persuade the worker to go to the modern hospital where skilled medical help was available. Instead, the worker fled into the desert. Several days later he returned, with tribal permission for the Western-trained surgeon to repair the hand. By then, gangrene had set in, and although the hand was saved, it was badly crippled, a particularly grave problem for a man who, for ritual reasons, may do certain classes of things only with the right hand. The worker filed charges against the company, and the unfortunate shop foreman languished in jail for a number of months. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 107.

2.22

How do you cope with this? How does the Arab get another Arab to do anything? Every culture has its own ways of bringing pressure to get results. The usual Arab way is one which Americans avoid as "bad manners." It is needling. An Arab businessman whose car broke down explained it this way:

"First, I go to the garage and tell the mechanic what is wrong with my car. I wouldn't want to give him the idea that I didn't know. After that, I leave the car and walk around the block. When I come back to the garage, I ask him if he has started to work yet. On my way home for lunch I stop in and ask him how things are going. When I go back to the office I stop by again. In the evening, I return and peer over his shoulder for awhile. If I didn't keep this up, he'd be off working on someone else's car."

If you haven't been needled by an Arab, you just haven't been needled. E. T.

Hall and W.F. Whyte, 1960, p. 9.

2.26

In another Latin American republic, a government-sponsored agency, designed to look after the welfare of farmers growing a cash export crop of importance to the national economy, instituted a program of aiding farmers to build new homes and improve farm structures that were necessary for properly processing the crop. The agency found that it received many more requests for the processing structures than for the homes, although the cost of both types of units was being borne largely by the agency. The farmers were required to pay a small percentage of the total construction costs, and a majority of them preferred to invest in the labor-saving devices. Frequently the field men of the program scolded the farmers for thinking only of their own convenience and never of the cramped and unsanitary quarters of their families. Again we find an example where the needs felt by the people were not entirely in accord with those felt by the innovators. Farmers accustomed to living under housing conditions which the innovators considered undesirable did not necessarily share this view. The processing structures, however, were already known to the farmers who were aware of their labor-saving advantages. . . .

C.J. Erasmus, 1959, p. 391.

2.27

The school day ended. Tired Miss Larson took her classroom problems home with her and shared her concerns with friends at an informal cocktail party, shared her frustrations over teaching in the Ethiopian government school: "For three years I've tried to get those dear, little girls to behave like normal human beings, to have some pride, to hold up their heads, look me in the face, and answer a question in a voice I can hear without straining. They're so bright; they learn as fast as the children back home, but they're hopeless, absolutely hopeless. They just can't seem to learn to behave with human dignity. For all the good I've done here, I might as well have stayed home in Iowa and continued to teach there."

The school day ended. Kebedetch walked stiffly home. The strange steel she had forced into her neck-muscles seemed to have spread throughout her body. She felt rigid, brave, and frightened. Entering the gojo, [small house or hut] Kebedetch was greeted warmly. Father asked the usual, daily question. "What did you learn in school today?"

Kebedetch threw back her head, looked her father in the eye, and proclaimed in a loud, clear voice, "Ethiopia is composed of twelve provinces plus the federated state of Eritrea." . . .

(Continued)

2.26

2.28

. . . Dube notes that the desire to build up the reputation of one's village is often instrumental in causing acceptance of projects. "A village which built a new school, constructed a public building, or paved all its lanes could earn a reputation in the vicinity for being 'progressive.' Competition between individuals, families, kin-groups, castes, and villages was also at the back of many programmes."¹

But competition is not a sure incentive to greater effort. Dube describes a cattle show in which substantial and useful prizes created interest and in which the judging was entirely fair. Still, many people were disappointed. "Some felt that all villages entering cattle in the show should have been rewarded in some way or the other for their cooperation: a village would not lose face if even one of its residents got a prize. In one case it was found that the leaders of the village which had secured a large number of prizes were half apologetic, for their very success was viewed by others as a mark of selfishness."² The same results were noted in crop

¹S.C. Dube, 1958, p. 83.

²Ibid.

(Continued)

2.29

Technicians also sometimes fail to distinguish between technical excellence and cultural values, as the following vignette shows:

In my country (Iran) village public baths are pools of warm water. These pools transmit disease, and shower baths would be much more sanitary. Now without spending my time arguing about the goodness or badness of, or attacking or defending the ideas and behavior of my countrymen, you should know that they don't like to see themselves and others as naked as their innocent ancestors used to be in the jungle, and they will never regress, even for a few minutes in a public bath, to the way of living of prehistoric times.

Because of this strong feeling men always wear something in public baths to prevent the lower part of their bodies from being seen by others. An American sanitary engineer built a public shower bath, in an Iranian Village, but he didn't separate the stalls with partitions. I told him the design would not be acceptable because men would be ashamed to take off their clothes in the presence of others. He told me that they would have to accept it because people are created alike and there is nothing to be ashamed of. Although

(Continued)

2.27

Mamma and Pappa talked late that night. What had happened to Kebedetch? She was no longer behaving as a normal human being. "Did you notice how she threw back her head like a man?" asked Pappa; "what has happened to her shyness as a woman?" "And her voice," added Mamma, "how happy I am that our parents were not present to hear a daughter of ours speak with the voice of a foreigner."

"She showed no modesty; she seemed to feel no pride. If she were normal, she would be ashamed to raise her head like that, being a girl-child, and to speak so loud as that," Pappa added with a deep sigh.

"Kebedetch has learned so much," said Mamma; "she knows more than I, and this has given me great joy. But if her learnings are making of her a strange, ungentle, beast-like person, I do not want her to learn more; she is my only daughter."

Pappa pondered. Finally he shook his head and spoke. "You are right, Mebrat, our daughter must not return to school. The new education is good, but only the strongest can survive. I had hoped Kebedetch could learn and remain normal and gentle, could become a woman of dignity. This frightening behavior of hers tonight has convinced me. She has lost her sense of pride, lost her sense of shame, lost her dignity. She must never return to the school. We shall try to help her find herself again." *E. Lord, 1963, p. 139.*

2.29

perhaps he was right in his philosophy the villagers did not accept his doctrine and the new bath house was little used. Moreover, they joked about the bath and the new ideology of human equality!

G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 180-181.

2.28

competitions. Winners were not stimulated to maintain their lead the following year. In one instance a winner said he did not want to be selfish and that others were now entitled to win. Dube found little evidence that anyone adopted new practices or took extra care of his crops in order to win a prize. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 155.*

2.30

Thus in Kurukshetra, the monthly journal of Indian Community Projects, there is a description of a visit by a group of university students to help the villagers in a project area. In one village the project was the building of a girl's school, but hardly any villagers would work. The Assistant Project Officer asked the headman why the villagers did not come to work, since they wanted the school. "We do not want a girl's school," said the headman. "What is the use of educating girls? Who would bring our midday meal to the fields if the girls went to school?"

T.R. Batten, 1957, p. 39.

2.31

Several years ago the ministry of agriculture in a South American republic sponsored a program to introduce the planting of soybeans in many rural areas. Today, the only place where this crop is planted on any scale is near a city where it is manufactured into vegetable oil. The object of this program was to induce the rural population to improve their diet. Soybeans, considered more nutritious, were to be produced solely for family consumption. The farmers not only found the new food distasteful but discovered that no one cared to buy it, and the movement quickly collapsed. In this case the appeal was made to a better health rather than a greater profit motive, but for the farmers the improvement was not empirically verifiable. Symptoms of malnutrition are often ascribed by the folk to supernatural and other causes which bear little or no resemblance to the medical explanations of the innovators. Therefore, in such cases no feeling of need for a new practice may arise to offset the disagreeableness of changing long-established food habits.

C.J. Erasmus, 1959, p. 390.

2.32

A high incidence of congenital hip dislocation—1,090 per 100,000 as compared to 3.8 in New York City—afflicts the Navaho Indians. The condition can be treated successfully by nonsurgical means during the first couple of years of life, and surgically during the next several years. But at later ages "freezing" the hip, which eliminates motion, is the only way to prevent probable painful arthritis beginning at the age of 40 or 45. This is the accepted treatment in American culture, and when medical workers discovered the high Navaho incidence, they assumed this was the answer to the problem among Indians. This was not so. The condition was not considered to be really serious, and perhaps it was actually a blessing, since fate, having dealt this minor deformity, was thought less likely to strike a family with greater ill fortune. Among the Navaho, congenital hip is not a barrier to marrying and having children. But, for a Navaho, a frozen hip is a serious problem: he cannot sit comfortably on the ground or on a sheepskin to eat with his family, and he cannot ride horseback. These handicaps more than offset the thought of disability twenty or thirty years in the future, disabilities which may not come anyway.

(Continued)

2.33

For example, J.H. Driberg relates how he tried to introduce the Canadian double-bladed paddle to a tribe of fishermen in Uganda a good many years ago. He was able to show that it was a better paddle than their own in the sense that it could propel their canoes more quickly, but the tribesmen would not use it, and Driberg tells us why.

For them, he says, their paddles were not just tools for moving boats. They were linked with religion and with magic. They were made from wood prescribed by ritual and charmed by spells to bring good luck in catching fish and to protect their owners from hippopotami and crocodiles. No reasonable fisherman would dream of using a paddle which lacked these all-important qualities, and the Canadian paddle for them, far from being a superior tool, was a much inferior one. Moreover as Driberg points out, it did not fit in with the tribal technique of paddling using which the people had learnt in childhood. For them it was actually clumsier than their own. . . . T.R. Batten, 1957, pp. 12-13.

2.30

2.32

"From the viewpoint of the Navaho . . . the sole contribution of modern medicine to the question of congenital hip disease was to transform something that was no real handicap, and was almost a blessing, into something that represented a very serious handicap indeed."¹ G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 124.

¹W. McDermott, et al., 1960, p. 281.

2.34

... Afif Tannous, a Lebanese-American sociologist, tells of a case of the Arab villagers who refused to let outsiders clean up a water hole contaminated with typhoid and install a pump. The reader may wonder what there was about having a nice clean water supply that violated the formal norms of Arab villagers. Strange as it seems to us, Arab villagers like the water they drink. It has a nice strong taste which it gets from the camels. Water with them is thought to be almost sacred. If the men of a given village are strong or brave or fertile or smart it is because of the water they drink. In some parts of the Arab world it is considered sissy to drink clean water. The villagers saw no relation between disease and the water that made their men strong. Babies died because God willed it, and who were they to go tampering with the will of God? This story underlines the necessity of understanding and accepting the formal systems of other peoples first in order to work effectively within them. *E. T. Hall, 1959, pp. 101-102.*

2.35

Jackson describes an illuminating example in Nigeria. During World War II, an adult literacy campaign was very successful, but interest nearly vanished at the end of hostilities. People did not want to read and write for the sheer joy of intellectual mastery; they wanted to communicate with their young men who were away as soldiers. When the soldiers returned, there was much less felt need for literacy. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 168.*

2.34

2.36

... We remember, for example, the way in which some administrative personnel referred to Truk's people as hopelessly lazy because they used to lie down on the job of cutting grass around the administrative headquarters area with bush knives. Much of the grass cutting was made-work. They were on a payroll, and if there was nothing else for them to do at the moment, the standing order was that they be kept busy cutting grass. These workers were the same men who in their own villages often put in long hard hours of labor on jobs that were important to them. They were not generically lazy, but could see no point in expending a lot of energy doing something that, as far as they could see, made not a particle of difference to anyone. *W.H. Goodenough, 1963, p. 485.*

2.37

A former U.S. Army adviser in Viet-Nam reports an interesting illustration of cultural differences in the attitude toward time. While visiting a construction site, the adviser noticed that the young lieutenant on the job had put up a bulletin board with a construction schedule on it with dates, and so forth, exactly as he had been taught in the United States engineering school. He also observed that the lieutenant was mixing his mortar in a batch-box by hand. The ensuing conversation went something like this: Adviser: "Why don't you use your concrete mixer? You have in your battalion a small 16-S mixer." R: "Oh, yes." Adviser: "You know how to use it?" R: "Oh yes, I learned it at your school." Adviser: "Well, if you know how to use it and you've got one available, why don't you use it?" R: "Well, I'm a day ahead of schedule now, mixing by hand, so why should I use the mixer?" From an interview, related by Jack Danielson.

2.20 - 2.49 Differences in Values and Goals

For additional examples that also illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in values and goals, see 1.24, 1.27, 2.82, 4.01, 6.03, 6.04, 6.06, and 625.

2.50 - 2.79 Differences in Social System and Power Structure

2.50

Recently when Brazilian architects, working as members of a community development project in the State of Minas Gerais, tried to design an economical "improved" kitchen which gave more usable floor space with less over-all area, thus saving construction costs, they encountered an unexpected social problem. The architects proposed putting the raised cooking hearth in a corner, so good use could be made of wall space, and so the central room area would remain uncluttered. But housewives resisted the new design. This is a rather cold area, and there are few social contacts for women. So when visitors came, they gather in the kitchen, to drink coffee and talk with the housewife as she prepares meals. With the new kitchen design, the housewife had to keep her back to her guests most of the time, an action both rude and socially ungratifying. The architects were forced to accept a larger kitchen in which the raised hearth projected from the wall, in such fashion that the housewife could stand behind it and work facing her guests. Economical architectural planning was not synonymous with good social planning. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 98.*

2.51

Oberg and Fios have analyzed a community development project in a small Brazilian village and have shown how social and, particularly, economic factors have affected adversely the generally sound planning. To illustrate, a latrine program was instituted as the keystone of environmental sanitation. Slabs for the pits were cast and given free to villagers, who then had to dig the hole and erect the shelter. Few people, however, took advantage of this aid, and most of the latrines eventually were installed by project workers. Analysis revealed the reasons for this puzzling lack of interest. A census was taken, which showed that the village was highly unstable in terms of social organization. Half the inhabitants had lived there for less than five years and did not really consider themselves permanent members of the community. After saving a little money they hoped to migrate to other parts of the country where better opportunities might exist. Consequently they felt little attachment to the village, no stake in its future, and had no interest in making capital improvements in something they didn't expect long to enjoy. Many people lived rent-free in their shacks, simply bearing for them for absent owners.

2.50

(Continued)

Since they might be evicted at a moment's notice, they saw little advantage in working on property that, by virtue of improvement, would be more attractive to the owners or to someone who might pay rent. The owners themselves, since they were away and since they received no income, had no incentive to make improvements in their homes. So the failure of this program lay not so much in the inability of the people to understand and appreciate the hygienic advantages of latrines as in social and economic factors that the planners had not understood.

G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 62-63.

2.52

Alexander Leighton's excellent book, *The Governing of Men*, also provides a penetrating example of how a misunderstanding about formal systems of leadership stalled a government program with the Japanese internees during the war. Once this was corrected, these same systems were used quite successfully. The American mistake was to select construction foremen according to their qualifications—a natural error, considering the great emphasis we put on technical competence. The Japanese, who had suffered insult, the loss of their possessions, and forcible imprisonment without losing their patience, finally went on strike when this happened. They were outraged that the Americans had completely disregarded the social hierarchy which figures so importantly in Japanese society. The solution to this problem lay in allowing the internees to choose their own leaders from among those who had the proper status. It mattered little that these honored old men spoke no English and knew less about engineering. They promptly picked young engineers as their advisers. E.T. Hall, 1959, p. 102.

2.53

An American fisheries expert once told me of an experience in Peru. The Peruvian developmental unit to which he was adviser was interested in modernizing coastal fishing techniques by motorizing launches, increasing the size of nets, and establishing a low-interest credit system. A promising young fisherman living in a north coast port was offered such aid. Rather to the surprise of members of the mission he did not jump at the chance, but asked time to think it over. The next morning he declined. When asked his reason he replied that if he made more money it would simply mean that he would have more relatives to take care of; it was doubtful that he would be any better off, for he would have greatly increased responsibilities. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 92.

2.54

Fear of loss of face can threaten agricultural programs also. One phase of the Indian agricultural program includes selling improved seed to farmers at moderate cost. Curiously, the best and most progressive farmers often are the most resistant to this aid. In one village the wealthy and able farmers neither purchased nor used this seed. "It has long been thought a disgrace and a sign of failure or poor management to be forced to borrow or buy seed. The village farmer takes special pride in being able to raise enough food to maintain his family and in having enough left over to use as seed."¹ The able farmer does not wish to be cast in the role of the incompetent agriculturalist. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 70-71.

¹M.E. Opler and R.D. Singh, 1952, p. 7.

2.55

A similar situation was found in the Indian Community Development Programme. In theory the traditional "boss-subordinate" relationship within the Indian government was expected to yield to a new concept of democratic teamwork. In practice this did not work out. As Dube describes a particular project, the higher officials were unable to view their role other than as that of inspecting officers, and they continued to supervise and appraise the work of their subordinates in the traditional fashion, thus lending a distinct authoritarian tone to their administration. Furthermore, because of their higher status, many resented any views that departed from or questioned their own policies and work. Although in theory subordinates were expected to express themselves freely, in practice they realized it only exasperated their superiors. Since promotion depended on the goodwill of these officers, the underlings found it desirable to adopt an attitude of compliance and agreement. Consequently, communication was largely one way, and subordinates received and executed orders from their official superiors, without making the suggestions that, from experience, they certainly were entitled to make.

G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 117.

2.52

2.56

Factionalism is not an Indian monopoly; it appears to be panhuman. R.N. Adams found the same picture in Guatemala. There, a village social worker, a member of a nutritional research program, found shortly after going to work that the people in one section of a village resented her activities more than those in the other and "as she made more friends in one barrio (section of the community), she became simultaneously less acceptable to the other." Adams, an anthropologist, studied the social structure of the village and found that the two halves, the barrios, were rather different in customs, religion, economic level, and degree of progressiveness. This pre-existing schism was unwittingly intensified by the presence of an outsider who, quite by accident, made a majority of her friends in only one of the two barrios. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 103-104.

2.57

... In 1947 the Peruvian government decided to drill several wells in order to supply the farmers of the Viru valley with water for household use and irrigation as well as for use in a sewage system. Although there was considerable need for water, especially in the dry season, and although many inhabitants of the valley had complained vociferously about the scanty water supply, the project had to be abandoned after only one technically successful well had been drilled, primarily because of lack of favorable response from the very people whom it was intended to benefit. As in many such instances several factors were responsible for the failure of the project. But the overriding reasons seem to have been the opposition of many persons in the valley whose informally held prestige was violated by the procedures used and the fact that the first well had actually been drilled on the land of a large landowner against whom there was considerable hostility on the part of several other large and many small landowners. B. Hoeselitz, 1957, p. 410.

2.58

Dr. Y.S. Kim pointed out to me a similar situation in his country, Korea. If, for example, a young wife is found to have active tuberculosis requiring hospitalization, the physician must first explain the problem to her parents-in-law who occupy the position of authority in the family; her husband does not have the right to make the decision. Or, if a mother finds her child has malaria, she must first ask her parents-in-law's permission to take the child to a modern health center. If they say no, she is reduced to patronizing an herb doctor. Marriott describes an identical example in the Indian village in which he worked. The father and father's brother of a Brahman girl ill with malaria begged the doctor for quinine, and enough was supplied for a full course of treatment. Three days later he discovered that none of it had been used. "An old widowed aunt who ruled the women of that family had voiced objections, and the whole matter of western treatment was dropped." G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 106-107.

2.59

Role conflict, stemming from traditional caste patterns, may also hinder innovation. Dube describes how a village level worker of the Community Development Programme was able to persuade villagers of the desirability of constructing compost pits outside the settlement. In general he had the cooperation of people, who both for aesthetic and hygienic reasons felt it best to deposit manure outside the village, and they willingly dug a number of pits. But, even though the village council passed resolutions making it obligatory for villagers to use the pits, under pain of fine, many were not utilized. The reason, Dube found, was that tradition dictates that women must clean the house and cattle shed, depositing dung and refuse privately on or near the property. Even women of the highest castes can do this, since they are not publicly visible, but it would be improper for them to be seen carrying such loads through the streets to compost pits on the outskirts of the village. And since this activity culturally is defined as women's work, no man would wish to do so. . . . G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 117-118.

2.56

2.60

When a technical assistance project in a certain country attempted to contour level rice fields across ownership boundaries in order to facilitate irrigation and flood control in a pilot area, it was faced with the problem of obtaining the permission and collaboration of all the small landowners within the area. However, the technicians neglected to unite the various landowners concerned, to explain the project to them, and to seek their cooperative support. The project was carried out as if it were a type of change which could be effected on an individual or family basis. One farmer was induced to permit the contouring, then another, and so on. Because of the severe land fragmentation problem, the owners of neighboring plots were not necessarily neighbors in so far as the residence patterns were concerned. Even when a farmer and several of the friends who lived near him were convinced of the benefits of contouring, their plots within the area were found to be widely separated. As planting time approached, the project officials felt obliged to rush the job through, and so began contouring the individual and widely separated plots as functionally separate units. As the work progressed, other landowners began

(Continued)

2.61

During the Second World War, the Japanese tried to induce Palauan men (from a South Pacific island) to follow their example and engage in the cultivation of rice. The idea was that the identification of a Palauan with his Japanese counterpart would be agreeable, but rice cultivation in the Palauan mind was identified with taro cultivation. This common identification made the acceptance of the custom impossible, because only women cultivate taro and men make a point of having nothing to do with this activity.

Palauans have refused to eat corn in recent years although the American authorities have encouraged its acceptance. The natives associate the food with the natives of Guam whom they consider inferior. Summarized from H.G. Barnett, 1953, p. 344.

2.50 - 2.79 Differences in Social System and Power Structure

For additional examples that also illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in the social system and power structure, see 1.05, 1.20, 1.21, 1.23, 2.20, 2.30, 3.20, 5.55, 6.29, 6.40, and 6.41.

2.63

signing up. Eventually, nearly all gave permission to contour their land and agreed to pay the costs. But the sequence of requests was such that practically all contouring had to be done within, rather than across, ownership boundaries. Inasmuch as nearly all the farmers eventually collaborated, there is reason to believe that with the proper inducement they could have been encouraged to do so before the work began. As a result, one of the major objectives of the project, to contour according to the topography rather than ownership boundaries, was lost. C.J. Erasmus, 1959, pp. 394-395.

2.80 - 2.99 Differences in Beliefs

2.80

In the Lake Pátzcuaro region of Mexico the UNESCO-sponsored CREFAL fundamental education program has been successful in introducing chicken farming in a number of villages. The local people have kept chickens for centuries, and the White Leghorns have generally been recognized as superior birds. Here the fit between values, social forms, and economic possibilities has been good, and the program has been gratifying in results. Contrast this with a similar case in China several years ago: White Leghorns, from the standpoint of the poultryman the best bird for the area, were introduced as in Mexico. But the innovator was unaware of a tabu against raising and eating white birds, and consequently little progress was made. *G.M. Foster, 1952, p. 153.*

2.82

Confidence must also include the conviction that the problem at hand is solvable not only in terms of human capabilities but also as a general principle. Often people are sure that their misery is divinely ordained and hence they feel that alleviation is impossible. In an Arab village, for example, where the incidence of trachoma was very high, a medical officer and his colleagues were surprised that people did not respond to a simple program of treatment: "They had had trachoma for generations and accepted it as normal. One day, in the course of a general meeting, the writer asked one of the leading elders what he thought of the health situation in the village. He felt it was time. The medical officer pointed to the swollen eyelids of most of those who were present. The elder did not see anything wrong there. Finally, when a man who was completely blind in one eye was brought forward, the general remark of the audience was "This is from Allah."¹ *W. Doeb, 1960, p. 100.*

¹A.I. Tannous, 1945, pp. 94-95.

2.81

... The Taos are a very independent people who carefully guard all their culture from the white man. They even make a secret of how to say "Thank you" in Taos. This makes it exceedingly difficult for the governmental representatives whose job it is to work with them. According to Evans [former superintendent of the Northern Pueblo Agency], there had been some difficulty finding an agricultural extension agent who could work with the Taos. Finally a young man was chosen who liked the Taos and who was careful to approach them slowly. Everything went along very well, and it seemed that he was, indeed, the right man for a very ticklish job. When spring arrived, however, Evans was visited in Albuquerque by the agriculturist, who was wearing a very long face. Evans asked, "What's the matter? You look depressed." His visitor replied, "As a matter of fact, I am. I don't know what's wrong. The Indians don't like me any more. They won't do any of the things I tell them." Evans promised to find out what he could. The next time there was a council meeting at Taos he took one of the older Indians aside and asked him what was wrong between the tribe and the young man. His friend looked

(Continued)

2.80

2.83

The old man answered the students' questions: How many sheep and goats and horses did he own now? How many before? Didn't he think that the erosion on Navaho lands was bad? (Yes, he did.) Wasn't it true that erosion came from overgrazing? The grandson began to interpret. But "Dada," the old man said, "No." He knew that English word, "overgrazing." But erosion is not caused by the number of sheep the people put on their land; it is the Navaho gods who control the weather. If they send too much rain, the soil washes away; but now the gods were angry and were holding the rain back; and the grass simply could not grow. "You white men told us we would have more grass if we let you take our sheep. But just look around you; we have less grass now than ever." *R. Sumner and J. Adair, 1959, p. 84.*

him in the eye and said, "John, he just doesn't know certain things! You know, John—think. . . ."

Suddenly Evans understood. In the spring the Taos believe that Mother Earth is pregnant. To protect the surface of the earth they do not drive their wagons to town, they take all the shoes off their horses, they refuse to wear hard-soled shoes themselves. Our agriculturist had been trying to institute a program of early-spring plowing. *E. T. Hall, 1959, pp. 102-103.*

2.84

"S... said a plague of locusts occurred in a section of India inhabited by Jains, a fanatical religious sect, which does not believe in killing any kind of life. When the government sent exterminators to get rid of the locusts, the Jains stoned them out of the country.

"Then," he said, "the locusts came to an irrigation ditch separating the fields they had destroyed from still untouched fields. The Jains heard some poor locusts were falling in the ditch and being killed. They spread branches across the ditch so the locusts could travel to the next field destroy it and cause more people to starve to death in famine." *P.M. Glick, 1957, pp. 143-144; from the Billings Gazette, January 13, 1953.*

2.85

The administrative complexities involved in building a company town across cultural lines was illustrated by a story from the NPA report on the Firestone rubber plantation in Liberia. When the company hospital opened, strict sanitation requirements forbade the entry of husbands into the delivery rooms with their wives. Very few wives seemed to be using the modern hospital, and the hospital staff heard that they were ordered by their husbands to stay away. Checking further, the company found that "according to tribal belief and custom, the wife was thought always to cry for help to the child's actual father during the pangs of birth, and if the name uttered was different from that of the husband the latter could collect a substantial fine from the former. As soon as husbands were permitted in the delivery room, the number of wives allowed to come to the hospital increased significantly."

H. Cleveland, G.J. Mangone and J.C. Adams, 1960, p. 161.

2.86

The American technical advisor to a newly-opened Ethiopian trades school expressed concern over the fact that most of the students wanted to study electricity, practically no youth was interested in learning such trades as plumbing, bricklaying, etc. There is a belief, reportedly stretching back to the days of Queen Sheba, that manual laborers in general, and iron or metal workers in particular, can turn themselves into hyenas at night. Is this a factor which must be taken into consideration when planning a manual arts training program or a trade school? *E. Lord, 1963, p. 145.*

2.87

... For example, it is reported that the Girl Scout manuals which were recently sent from the United States to a school in Indonesia were thrown away unused. The people to whom they were sent are Mohammedans, and they explained that as Moslems they found it abominable to have human beings equated with bears, beavers, and wolves, and to have girls urged to name themselves after animals.

D. Lee, 1959, p. 121.

2.84

2.80 - 2.99 Differences in Beliefs

For additional examples that illustrate the problem arising from cross-cultural differences in beliefs, see 6.05, 6.21, and 6.31.

3.00 - 3.99 "Non-Cultural" Resistance to Innovation

3.00 - 3.19 Differences in Climate and Geography

3.00

... Sometimes, we merely regard a practice as wrong, or as based on ignorance and move in to help without considering the whole picture. So progressive Turkish farmers were persuaded by Western-educated Village Institute workers to remove from their fields the stones which served to keep the moisture in through the long dry weeks of the summer; as a result their crops withered, while those of the conservative farmers prospered. *D. Lee, 1959, p. 122.*

3.02

A chicken program suffered from the same kind of difficulties. Leghorns and Rhode Island Red roosters were put into village flocks to raise a more productive mixed breed. They, like the hogs, just did not get a diet of high enough quality to breed well or to remain healthy. Epidemic diseases, to which the local chickens were more resistant, wiped out many. Some American chickens survived, but even these got no chance to prove their usefulness. They rarely were able to mate with the local hens because they were no match for the game cocks that served as roosters in the local flocks. The chicken expert tried to get around this difficulty by demanding that a villager get rid of all his local roosters before he could put some American ones in the flock. This worked for one generation. Then the sons of the American roosters and the Lao hens took over. Being half village chicken, they were tougher fighters than their fathers and kept the latter from mating. In this manner, each generation became inferior in size and egg producing ability, but superior in fighting. *C. Arensburg and A.H. Niehoff, 1964, p. 77.*

3.01

The kinds of mistakes the program-oriented specialist makes are illustrated by the following examples. In the early 1950's in Iran American public health technicians insisted, in the face of visible evidence to the contrary, that defecation in the open air would produce flies (dry atmosphere quickly dries fecal matter and flies do not breed). The program approach to this health problem, which logically had to exist, was the latrine which, when installed in numbers, became a fly breeder and villages previously free became infested. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 180.*

3.03

One of the costliest of such failures was that of the Kanywa Experiment in East Africa for growing groundnuts (peanuts) on a large scale. A large amount of capital and 3,210,000 acres of land were used in this scheme for producing fats needed after World War II. It was based on a nine-week survey which did not provide sufficient information on soils, rainfall, or crop yields. A number of factors entered into the final failure, including lack of the necessary machinery and the inability of the local people to learn the use of machines rapidly enough; but the primary "cause" was that there was not enough rain, a fact which had not been learned through the brief survey. *C. Arensburg and A.H. Niehoff, 1964, p. 74.*

3.04

Most culture change involves a social cost. However logical and desirable an innovation may appear to the scientifically trained technical specialist, some of its secondary and tertiary consequences may be highly undesirable from the standpoint of the people affected, and apparent advantages must be weighed against possible disadvantages. Dr. Hazel I. Blair has told me of two dilemmas she faced while working with the Eskimo of Alaska. Echinococcus disease (the cystic larval stage of a small tapeworm) is prevalent on St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea. It is transmitted through sled dogs, and effective control of the disease means extermination of the dogs. But what substitute is there for the traditional means of transportation? Again, says Dr. Blair, "an interesting decision the doctor may have to make in areas where people subsist almost entirely on fish is whether it is better to have fish tapeworms from eating raw fish or to run the risk of a vitamin deficiency by cooking the fish." Also, in fuel-short areas, how is the cooking to be done? Obviously, a straightforward, single-minded answer to these questions may do as much harm as good. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 80.

3.00 - 3.19 Differences in Climate and Geography

For an additional example that also illustrates the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in climate and geography, see 1.03.

3.04

3.20 - 3.39 Differences in Technological Resources

3.20

Juan made his living primarily by farming a few acres of land flood-irrigated with sheet runoff from heavy rains. From two shallow wells he also hand-irrigated his orchard and a small vegetable garden. Not long after I had last seen him in 1949, he got the idea of irrigating a larger area with well water by means of a gasoline-powered pump. By working several months as a ranch hand on a nearby farm, he had saved up enough money to buy a secondhand pump from a Mexican in Navojco. But the venture failed, for when the pump stopped running Juan did not know how to repair it. Discouraged at the prospect of depending on the Mexican mechanics in the river towns, imagining himself having to make frequent trips into town carrying the pump by horse-drawn cart to have it repaired, he began to feel that he had been taken advantage of by the Mexican who had sold it to him. He was further disheartened by the fact that the fuel cost more than he had expected.

The artifact in this case was a gasoline-powered water pump, but Juan had not completely absorbed its behavioral context into his own behavior patterns. He only partially understood its use, and knew next to nothing about its maintenance.

(Continued)

3.21

... M.L. Wilson, formerly Director of Extension for the United States Department of Agriculture, quotes the comment of a Cornell graduate in Lebanon on his American agricultural education: "Much of it was good, but a lot of it I can't use here at home. I was taught to measure crops, for example, with devices designed for your large mechanized farms. But here in Lebanon such units of measure are impractical; no farm produces sufficient quantities." R. Bunker and J. Adair, 1959, p. 50.

3.20

To the extent that the behavioral context of the pump was unknown to Juan, it was for him simply a man-made artifact much like the charm stone is for the archeologist. And, so in Juan's hands, the pump became a useless and to some extent inexplicable object, a mass of rusting metal perched beside a well. C.J. Erasmus, 1961, pp. 7-8 and 104.

3.40 - 3.59 Differences in Educational and Scientific Knowledge

3.40

Similar oversights can occur on small village-level projects. In India, water is stored for use in the dry season by digging ponds (tanks) on the edge of the villages to hold water until the rains come again. In the pilot project of Etawah in North India, some effort had been made to dig more ponds and deepen the ones already in existence. Albert Meyer, the project organizer, reports that in one instance he came to a village where the local development officer had done an excellent job in building up the enthusiasm of the people; at the time of inspection, there were about 80 people working on one such pond. Unfortunately, they had already dug about two feet below the clay layer and into the underlying sand. The pond was useless since the clay layer had served as a sealer; any water that came into it after the deepening would flow right on through. C. Arensberg and A.H. Niehoff, 1963, p. 74.

3.41

An American-directed animal husbandry program in Laos ran into a similar problem. The advisers introduced highly bred American hogs into some villages in an effort to upbreed the stock. The animals were handsome compared to the swaybacked native stock and there was no doubt that with proper handling of these imports the local villages would get much more pork for their labor. However, the American hogs failed simply because the Lao were accustomed to the most simple methods of stock handling that man has devised. They let their hogs fend for themselves, wandering around the village and picking up scraps wherever they could. They protected them from wild animals, but gave them nothing to eat regularly. It was a kind of symbiotic relationship rather than a highly specialized animal breeding industry as it is in the West. This offhand treatment spelled failure for the project. The American hogs became undernourished and died; and they had little chance to mate with the local sows because the half-wild village boars were much more aggressive. This particular hog program was abandoned. C. Arensberg and A.H. Niehoff, 1963, p. 76.

3.42

A public health program of a different kind will now be considered. In an Andean community of northern Ecuador, a water purification system was installed in the hope that the new water supply would reduce the incidence of infectious diseases carried by contaminated drinking water. I found in talking with the people in the poorer sections of town that they were enthusiastic about the new plant, not because they considered it an effective health measure, but simply because of the convenience of having water that was not muddy. Previously it had been necessary to let the water stand in buckets until the sediment settled, but now it could be used straight from the tap. As in most of Ecuador, they ascribed to such folk causes as evil eye, malevolent air, and fright sickness the very maladies which might be caused by polluted drinking water. Native curers still maintained active practices in the magical treatment of these ailments.

Since few houses had indoor plumbing, public hydrants were located at regular intervals throughout the town, and housewives and children went several times a day to fill buckets for their household needs. The hydrants were not turned off tightly, and large puddles formed around the bases. Although the puddles were

(Continued)

3.40 - 3.59 Differences in Educational and Scientific Knowledge

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in education and scientific knowledge, see 1.05 and 5.32.

contaminated by animals, the buckets were set in the mud while being filled then carried home into an unsanitary kitchen. The whole purpose of the purification plant was being counteracted by many sources of pollution.

It is not surprising, under these conditions, that the people failed to associate any beneficial effects with the water purification system. Since they did not understand or accept the germ theory of disease, they did not take the necessary precautions to keep the water pure. Inasmuch as the water continued to be contaminated, there was little likelihood of a reduction in the incidence of ailments caused by impure water. And since there was no spectacular decrease in disease, the people saw no connection between preventing illness and the use of purified water. C.J. Erasmus, 1961, pp. 27-28.

3.60 - 3.79 Differences in Economic Consequence

3.60

In recent years, as a part of the United States technical aid program, attempts have been made to introduce the native American bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) into the Helmand Valley. This crop often proves to be an inexpensive and effective way to introduce needed protein into a diet marked by meat deficiency, and it appeared to be a logical step in Afghanistan. Although the local people like the new food, and it grew well, resistance ran high. It was then discovered that shortage of fuel places a premium on quick-cooking dishes; the bean was uneconomic in this sense. Subsequently, the black-eyed pea, which has high nutritive value but cooks in much less time, has been rather successful. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 83.*

3.62

... They told the Navahos they would have to reduce their livestock, that the sheep were destroying the land, eating down to the roots of the grass so that the land washed away. The officials promised that each Navaho would be paid, the old man said, paid for every one of his sheep and goats that was taken away.

Wasn't that all right, then? one student asked. If the Navahos were paid for their sheep, then they didn't lose anything, wasn't that all right?

But the old man said No. He explained that the Navahos depend on their sheep for a living. He said that mutton is their food, and that from the wool of Navaho sheep the women can make rugs. With money, he said, a Navaho can buy goods in town once; but the ewes give birth to new lambs every year. The traders know, he said; what they let a Navaho family buy depends on the size of that family's flock. *R. Bunker and J. Adair, 1959, p. 83.*

3.61

India provides many examples of the same kind. Thus the people of Madhopur rejected a higher-yielding variety of maize because they found that it took so long to ripen that they could no longer double-crop the land where it was sown. The people of a western district of Uttar Pradesh had many good reasons for rejecting improved varieties of wheat. The Government would not allow them to plant it mixed with other grains—a custom they valued because it insured them against the complete crop failure when the season was bad for wheat; and it had the further disadvantage that they were expected to repay the borrowed seed by a fixed date regardless of the harvest weather. Nor were these disadvantages the only ones: "The new wheat, when made into bread, tastes flat, and is not nearly so good as the native wheat, mixed as it is with the other grains. The women find it difficult to grind the big and tough grains of the new wheat and its dough is hard to knead and bake. The straw is not good for fodder, or for thatching, or for fuel. So great is the cultivator's need for every bit of economic good that can be extracted from the crop that he rightly feels that even small alterations in his precarious over-developed

(Continued)

3.60

3.63

An agricultural program in India was initiated to introduce improved stock and upbreed poultry quality. The focus of the program was a rural complex of 67 villages with a combined population of 60,000. Under the prevailing village conditions the poultry lived in a semi-wild state, foraging off the land for their subsistence. While both the bird and eggs were small, the harsh conditions produced an extremely resilient strain of fowl that were quite resistant to disease and required negligible time, effort and money for their upkeep. These conditions, however, were in direct contrast with the conditions that were necessitated by the introduction of the higher quality pure breed poultry, which required more care, more expensive feeding, inoculations, fencing, and housing. Although there was fairly wide acceptance of the project in earlier stages, the villagers simply could not visualize a justifiable profit in raising the higher quality fowl once they realized the extra cost and effort involved. *Summarized from T.M. Fraser, 1963, pp. 98-100.*

technology may lead to a catastrophe. Using the new seed may rightly seem to many a villager to be a greater gamble than is worth taking."¹ T.R. Batten, 1957, pp. 11-12.

¹D.G. Mandelbaum, 1953, p. 6.

3.60 - 3.79 Differences in Economic Consequence

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in economic consequence, see 1.04, 2.20, 2.51, 4.00, 4.02, and 4.08.

4.00 - 4.99 Unanticipated Consequences of Planned Change

4.00

In village India, cooking is traditionally done over an open dung fire in the kitchen. There is no chimney, and there are few windows, so the room fills with choking smoke which gradually filters through the thatch roof. Cooking is unpleasant under such conditions, and respiratory and eye ailments are common. The Community Development Programme has recognized this situation as a serious threat to health, and has developed an inexpensive pottery stove, a "smokeless chula," which maximizes the efficiency of fuel and draws smoke off through a chimney. It is sold at very low cost to villagers. Yet the smokeless chula has had limited success. In much of India wood-boring white ants infest roofs and if they are not suppressed they ruin a roof in a very short time. The continual presence of smoke in the roof accomplishes this end. If smoke is eliminated roofs must be replaced far more often, and the expense is greater than farmers are able to support. So the problem of introducing the smokeless chula—at least in many areas—lies not in the villager's addiction to smoke-irritated eyes, nor in his love of tradition, nor in his inability to understand the cooking advantages of the

(Continued)

4.01

... Another example is the introduction of immunization of cattle against diseases carried by the tsetse fly in East Africa. Here was a people which maintained long relations with cattle, living in a region which abounds in suitable pastures. If cattle strains could be improved and the health of cattle made more secure, if, in other words, longer-lived and better cattle and, as an end result, more cattle could be produced, the region, it was thought, could become another Argentina, and supply the meat-hungry parts of the world with beef. There was no resistance on the part of the people of East Africa against the vaccination of cattle. Cattle was wealth and they understood that vaccination of cattle would improve their chances of becoming and remaining wealthy. But with one or two exceptions the improvement of the health and strains of cattle did not lead to a marketable surplus of beef, but rather to the economically undesirable effects of partial overgrazing. For the value system of the East Africans places emphasis on the number of heads owned by a person rather than on the returns he can gain by marketing them. *B. Hoeslitz, 1957, pp. 412-413.*

4.00

4.02

After much cajoling by agricultural extension personnel, peasants at another Haitian project reluctantly agreed to pay for having their land leveled and outfitted by machinery, on the promise that irrigation would be facilitated and their yields would be larger. But the preparations did not proceed according to schedule, and the peasants were told they would have to postpone planting until the contouring job was done. For farmers operating close to a subsistence level, this was disastrous news. When, as here, the behavior of the innovators becomes unpredictable, the subjects may grow completely immune to all further attempts to change their practices. Moreover, the bad name of the project is likely to spread and make further expansion increasingly difficult. *C.J. Erasmus, 1961, p. 82.*

4.03

The way in which values were undermined can perhaps best be illustrated by the events following the replacement of stone axes by steel axes. The stone ax had been the traditional work implement of the tribe, it was an outward sign of the importance of the male as well as a mark of seniority. No woman could own an ax; she had to borrow one, normally from her husband or father. As the most important tool, it also played a part in trading relationships and feasts. The missionaries made no allowance for these factors and distributed the more efficient steel axes indiscriminately to men and women, old or young: the female recipients regarded the new axes as their own, although within the value-system of the tribe they had been unable to "own" the stone ax. An old man, who would previously always have been respectfully asked to lend his ax, was often forced to recognize the greater efficiency of the steel ax, by borrowing one from a younger man or even a woman: concepts of status and prestige became completely confused. In addition feasts that were held largely to acquire ax heads lost their main purpose and were infrequently held. At the time the study of the tribe was made these and other changes

(Continued)

4.03

were leading to complete social breakdown. In other areas where contact with the white man had been more extensive, "... native behavior and native sentiments are simply dead. Apathy reigns. The aboriginal has passed beyond the reach of any outsider who might wish to do him well or ill." *R. Theobald, 1961, pp. 24-25.*

4.00

new stove, nor in the direct cost of the stove itself. He has simply added up the total cost and found that the disadvantages of the new stove outweigh the advantages. In this case the critical area of resistance has nothing to do with cooking at all. *G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 80-81.*

4.04

The potato and the pig, for instance, when introduced among the Maori of New Zealand radically altered the economic structure. They reduced the amount of labour put in on other crops, and on fowling; they altered the production balance between men and women, they gave commoners a chance of earning relatively higher incomes and elevating themselves in the social scale; they even helped to change the scheme of ritual by reducing the amount of economic magic demanded. Together with other factors, such as the musket, they were the basis for important structural changes in Maori society. *R. Firth, 1951, p. 85; also in T.S. Epstein, 1962, p. 317.*

4.06

In Haiti, Taylor had pointed out still another example of unforeseen consequences of cultural innovation. A major dam and irrigation works, which can provide increased food production desperately needed in Haiti, has been built in the Artibonite Valley. But the social costs are high. The present farmers have a low level of living, but they own their small plots of land and have at least a minimum degree of security, as well as equality with their fellows. As the land improves it becomes increasingly attractive as a capital investment for city dwellers. Illiterate peasants, dazzled by what seem like fantastic offers for their land, sell and are quickly reduced to the status of landless proletariat. Although they may continue to work for wages, high land capitalization places a premium on larger units that can be farmed with machinery, reducing the demand for hand labour. So, from the point of view of the Artibonite Valley dwellers this improvement may well turn out to be an unmitigated disaster. *G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 84-85.*

4.05

Two final examples, one from South America and the other from Africa, illustrate how strikingly similar unforeseen consequences may result when all the implications of an innovation have not been thought through. In 1951 a yellow Cuban maize was introduced into the eastern lowlands of Bolivia in the Santa Cruz and Yungas regions. It had many apparent advantages: it grew well in the tropics, matured more rapidly, had more fat content than local varieties, was less subject to insect attack, and produced a higher yield per unit of land. The new maize seemed to be an excellent device to improve the diet of both people and animals, and it was for this reason that it was introduced. It has proved very popular, but not for the reasons anticipated. Its very hardness, desirable from the standpoint of storage, makes it difficult to grind, and people are unwilling to take the time and trouble to haul it to commercial mills in towns. But it makes an excellent commercial alcohol and prices are high. Thus, a seemingly desirable innovation has promoted alcoholism instead of improved diet.

Annette Rosentiel tells how attempts to substitute cassava for millet in

(Continued)

4.04

4.07

The Eskimo village of Kaktovik, 400 miles north of Fairbanks, Alaska, has enjoyed unparalleled prosperity since 1953, when its men were recruited to help build and maintain a DEW Line radar station. These Eskimos have adapted to Western culture more easily than many native peoples, but their diet has suffered. During the summer of 1958, for example, they imported watermelon by air from Seattle, but, over the long run, says Chance, "While there has been an increase in the variety of food consumed, its nutritional quality has definitely deteriorated."¹ Under Japanese rule villagers in the Marshall Islands acquired a great liking for store food, especially polished rice, sugar, biscuits, and white flour, the consumption of which had increased to the point where beriberi—a previously unknown disease—appeared. Conditions improved after World War II, when imported foods were not generally available and people were forced to return to their earlier diet. But Spoehr, who studied the Islands shortly after the war, fears that deficiency diseases will reappear if imported foods are allowed to supplant, instead of supplement, the indigenous diet. *G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 37-38.*

¹N.A. Chance, 1960, p. 1030.

4.05

Northern Rhodesia have had undesirable results. Millet is not a very satisfactory commercial crop in Rhodesia. It is attacked by locusts and is easily affected by changes in the weather. Cassava is easier to grow and more profitable. But the economic basis is not the only one to be considered in attempting a simple substitution. In South Africa millet is essential for beer, which plays a vital role in the social and religious life of the people. Further, however unsatisfactory it may be as a cash crop, it is important in diet. Since it is rich in fat content it is an important substitute for meat and milk, unprocurable because the tsetse fly makes it difficult to raise cattle. Compared to millet, cassava is deficient in fat content, so nutritional standards were lowered by this enforced change. Perhaps worse, with the prohibition of millet beer, drunkenness increased; the natives substituted a concoction called *skokran*, composed of methylated spirits, calcium carbide, molasses, sugar, and other ingredients. The new drink was not satisfactory as a social or ceremonial substitute for the old; it was dangerous; and it aroused great hostility toward the administration. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 85-86.

4.08

... In 1957 I found great resistance to castration of young bulls in the Helmand Valley of Afghanistan. The principal reason was entirely logical from the standpoint of the farmer: fields are tilled with a crude wooden plow fastened to an equally crude yoke which rides on the neck of the pair of oxen. The yoke is held in place by the large hump that develops on the shoulder of the mature animal. If bulls are castrated while young, the proper time if maximum benefits are to derive from the operation, this hump does not develop, and the animal is useless for traction. Dr. Y. Subrahmanyam tells me that among the Koya hill tribes of south-east India he encountered similar resistance, and for the same reason.

G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 82-83.

4.09

It was clear to workers in South Africa, for example, that when infants nursed until they were two or more they exhausted their mothers physically and interfered with their work. Bottle feeding was introduced. Soon the mothers were even more exhausted, because they began to bear children every year. The taboo on intercourse during lactation no longer worked to space their children at intervals of three or four years. . . . D. Lee, 1959, p. 121.

2

4.08

4.00 - 4.99 Unanticipated Consequences of Planned Change

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from unanticipated consequences of planned change, see 1.21, 2.50, 2.56, 3.00, 3.01, 3.04, 3.60, and 7.33.

5.00 - 5.99 Problems in Communication and Perception

5.00 - 5.09 Stereotypes

5.00

... The anthropologist, Malinowski, working with South Sea islanders forty years ago, was asked what kind of magic he used to grow yams in England. This question assumed fallaciously that Malinowski farmed, that when he farmed he naturally grew yams, and that he worked magic over his yams. Our questions must often be as irrelevant when we deal with people in cross-cultural situations, but the assumptions behind them are usually held unconsciously and are therefore hard to eradicate. . . . D. Lee, 1959, p. 126.

5.01

When I sought out my remote village in 1951 and casually settled there, I had not heard anything of the American technical assistance program later called "Point IV." I was astonished at what my villagers told me. I simply said I was a student from America who had come to learn how they lived. They were not only convinced that something like Point IV was sure to happen, but seeing me in a Jeep were further convinced that I was, personally, the first wave of the American Empire. Just as the British had begun their conquest of India by seizing the island of Bombay two hundred years ago, so I had begun my conquest with their village, some told me in all seriousness. The Government of India had called me to solve the problems of change that the Government could not solve by itself; or, conversely, Pandit Nehru had taken a big loan of grain from America, and I was here, in the conventional manner of village grain-leaders, to make a credit-rating of the debtor, perhaps to seize all grain from the coming harvest as repayment. Many villagers predicted what would happen next. Two hundred-three-hundred-five-hundred Americans were already on the way or were in Delhi even now. I would take over the village houses, buy or seize

(Continued)

5.00

5.02

The miles of reservation roads, as the students learned firsthand, were a formidable barrier. And some Navahos in the past had wanted them so. They had dynamited water tanks built for their benefit, and filled wells with fine sand, lest the land be so green as to tempt white Americans to seize it. R. Bunker and J. Adair, 1959, p. 86.

5.03

A reverse discrimination results from the morbid interest of colored peoples everywhere in the treatment of the Negro in America. One Negro doctor who worked in China a decade ago used to complain that he could hardly saunter down the streets of any city without somebody stopping him and pleading: "Tell us about the persecution in America!" H. Cleveland, G.J. Mangone, and J.C. Adams, 1960, p. 37.

5.01

(by virtue of my secret weapons) the best, or all of the village lands. I would then carry on all agricultural work of the village by machines, harvesting the crops and disposing of the grain. Families would cease to exist: everyone would now have to eat at a great cafeteria and sleep only in hotels, as they do in America. Many villagers thought that they might have more food to eat, but just what would the food be? Would it be those strange loaves of English bread? Would they be forced to eat the forbidden beef? All the children would, of course, be taken from their parents and raised apart in schools as in America—this they knew. Would I pay their wages, and how much? Incidentally, I would handle all law suits, dispense criminal justice, abolish all the old Hindu rites and ceremonies, and deliver moral lectures from time to time, for I was—and this phrase summed up matters pretty well for many villagers—I was their Mother and Father. *M. Mariott, 1957, p. 430.*

5.04

A U.S. officer was showing to a group of Lao soldiers a film demonstrating the principles of leadership. The movie was taken in Korea during the war. The attention of the Lao audience was centered on the artillery, jeeps, uniforms, and machine guns. They did not perceive the spirit of determination and discipline stressed in the movie. Instead they believed that only the equipment of the Americans was important, and that, similarly equipped, they could be successful in their fight without outside help.

The hard work, practicality, organizational ability, and desire for achievement associated with American successes in technology are not noticed because people see only the abundance of United States equipment and conveniences. [They understandably fail to perceive these characteristics as being inseparable factors in an advanced technology and a high standard of living.] *A.J. Kramer and E.C. Stewart, 1964, p. 8.*

5.05

Innocent remarks appropriate in one's own culture can have unfortunate repercussions in others. A United States military adviser in Iran remarked facetiously to a counterpart, as he might to a United States finance officer, that with so much money at his disposal he shouldn't have to worry about a certain personal expense. The advisor reported that the Iranian, "not catching the facetiousness with which I made the comment, took offense. Each time I would see him, he would make some reference to this. He explained how bad he felt because I had implied he might use funds for his personal use. He even went through his whole financial setup, telling me about the property he owned, how wealthy his family was, that he was in the Army only because he liked it. Although I explained to him the intent of my remark and how we teased our own finance officers in this way, it was two weeks or so before I was able to regain his favor. Graft had been customary there, but since the government had cracked down on it, local officials were supersensitive on the subject. It was a real booo, no question about it." *From an interview, related by Jack Danielson.*

5.00 - 5.09 Stereotypes

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from stereotypes, see 1.02, 2.36, 5.36, 5.80, and 5.91.

5.04

5.10 - 5.29 Language Incongruity

5.10

Much more serious in its effect on international relations is the case of the oft-quoted Khrushchev remark, "We will bury you." This has usually been interpreted in its active sense, that is as equivalent to "We will destroy you" or "We will conquer you." The present writer once heard it quoted by an eminent American scientist whose version was "We are going to bury you"; and in another instance, it was "We intend to bury you." Actually . . . the translation into "We will bury you" is literally correct, but in the sense that "We will outlive you," or "We will still be alive when you are dead." In other words, it expresses the conviction that Communism will outlast Capitalism, not that the Communists will violently destroy the West. In this case what appears to be a correct translation may be very misleading, and aggravate an hostility that is already serious enough. O. Klineberg, 1964, p. 153.

5.11

In the spring of 1957, on the island of Taiwan, the United States Army was tested and found wanting on the score of cultural empathy. It provided an object lesson for many a future overseas-training program. An American sergeant named Reynolds had killed a Chinese prowler, was court-martialed and acquitted by an American military tribunal. Local Chinese opinion was outraged, and it was not difficult for those most incensed to collect a mob on the street in front of the American Embassy and provoke it into wrecking the embassy and the U.S. Information Service building next door. What was the issue? Under Chinese law, if it is established that a person has killed, he must be adjudged guilty of the killing; only then does the question arise whether he should be penalized heavily for his guilt or whether there are reasons that would persuade the court to award some light damages. Our system is the reverse: if a man kills and sufficiently good reasons are advanced in extenuation, an American court will in effect judge him innocent of the killing. This latter view seems logical to us. It is part of our culture. But it looked upside down to the Chinese and they said so with sticks, stones, and vandalism. . . . H. Cleveland, G.H. Mangone, and J.C. Adams, 1960, pp. 136-137.

5.10

5.12

Pictures were taken of him, and all over the United States of America, Mr. Khrushchev appeared to be making the gesture of a victorious prize fighter. In fact, anyone who knows anything about the conventions within the Soviet bloc or within the socialist camp knows that he was extending the hand of friendship to brotherly peoples. Mr. Khrushchev had a communicative intention; he wanted to show to the American people the friendliness of the Soviet people with the American people, and he did it with this gesture. The Americans interpreted this, understandably, as a hostile gesture. This is the same trip on which Mr. Khrushchev said, "we will bury you," a Russian idiom implying that the Communist system would outlast the Capitalist society but not implying an aggressive act as commonly interpreted by American sources. This is a misinterpretation which has never been corrected in the American popular mind or the American public press. I mention this because it demonstrates in a way some of the difficulties of international communication, and that an expressive intention is not enough to guarantee a receptive or perceptive understanding—at least in the same framework. From an edited speech by Bryant Wedge, Foreign Service Institute, 1963.

5.13

So within a given cultural area you have strikingly different connotations of words, for example, "concha." Is Concha a bad word? Ah, but in Puerto Rico there is the La Concha Hotel. In Puerto Rico, la concha means, of course, the seashell. But in Chili, Paraguay, and Argentina, "la concha" connotes female genitals. So one does not send postcards from La Concha Hotel when visiting Puerto Rico, if one happens to come from those countries. You are wrong, these are not bad words; these are words that are given bad connotations in certain societies, and you have to learn them. Otherwise, you say things that are interpreted peculiarly, even though Americans are given a certain amount of license and nobody expects them to be very bright, especially linguistically. That is fortunate; thank God, we aren't expected to be too bright. Political terms, of course, are particularly vulnerable to this kind of connotative difference. The term "capitalism" is a good case in point. Of course, in Latin America, capitalism means nothing but exploited, rapacious, extractive activity. It means the behavior, in fact, of the Latin American landed upper classes, who by tradition never came

(Continued)

5.13

with the intention of living in Latin America. They came as conquistadors in the first place—came to get their money out of Latin America as fast as they could and put it in Swiss banks to better educate their sons in European schools. They planned that if things got too rough, they would flee back to Europe; meanwhile they would do as well as they could. This is the way they believe to this day.

From an edited speech by Bryant Wedge, Foreign Service Institute, 1963.



5.14

... In the American culture silence is a mark of disapproval or disagreement. For example, if in a conversation you raise a certain subject and the other person says, "By the way, how is your golf?", you know that this is a subject on which he does not agree with you. Similarly, if you make a suggestion to someone and he says, "Well, I don't know about that, but how is your golf?", you can again be sure that he has not bought your suggestion. In many other cultures, including the Latin American and the Russian, the situation would have been completely different. For example in these cultures, if you had suggested something to your commanding general and he had said, "Well, I don't know about that," you would probably think, "This is the chance of a lifetime, the general himself doesn't know, so I will teach him." Elsewhere, in many other cultures, silence indicates approval. *From an edited speech by Edward Glenn, Military Assistance Institute, 1963.*

5.15

... To the Navajo the situation is quite different; colors are ranked just as we rank gold and silver—only more intensely. Not realizing this caused considerable embarrassment to a number of Indian Service employees years ago. In their attempt to bring "democracy" to the Indians these well-meaning souls tried to introduce a system of voting among the Navajo. Unfortunately a great many Navajo were illiterate, so someone conceived of the idea of assigning the various candidates for the tribal council different colors so that the Navajo could go into the booth and check the color he wanted. Since blue is a good color and red bad, the result was to load the dice for some candidates and against the others. Nowadays photographs are used on the ballots. *E. T. Hall, 1959, p. 133.*

5.14

5.16

The Turkish and Arabic Languages, for example, have no word for "curiosity." When they attempted to invent one for translation, they came up with something like "utility." Because of the cultural milieu in which they live, it was impossible to communicate that sense of disinterested pursuit of knowledge for the sake of finding out. *From a newspaper account of an interview with A. Toynebe, Washington Post, February 16, 1964.*

5.17

The Anatolian peasant is singularly incurious about almost everything that does not directly concern his daily life. To the average peasant, anything that happened more than fifty or sixty years ago is "cok eski" (very old), regardless of whether the event took place one hundred or one thousand years earlier. Asked how old his village is, he will answer with exasperating vagueness not unmixed with satisfaction "cok eski." *D. Lerner, 1958, p. 131.*

5.18

In our own work on Truk, for example, for a long time we were baffled by two words that seemed at first to correspond roughly to the English words "love" and "like." But efforts to use them proved this assumption about their meaning to be wrong. It finally turned out that one of them, *togeej*, meant "the positive affect one feels for another person (or animal) because of one's ability to fill the other's need" and the other, *saami*, meant "the positive affect one feels for another person or thing because of the other person's or thing's filling one's own need." A person can properly only *togeej* his children, and because he *togeej* someone in trouble, he helps him; he can *togeej* his sweetheart; and he can only *saami* a beautiful work of art. The words distinguish, in effect, between what we sometimes refer to as "altruistic" and "selfish" love. There are, of course, no real English equivalents, nor are there any real Trukese equivalents for English *like* and *love*.
W.H. Goodenough, 1963, pp. 394-395.

5.19

... In the Chinese language there is no definite article "the." It does not exist. Even to explain its existence requires long paraphrasing and the use of many illustrations. And then one day at Panmunjom, a staff officer, quite without warning or prior consultation, began a long ad lib argument based on the difference between "line" and "the line" with reference to the military demarcation line. The argument was designed to throw the Chinese into utter confusion—it even sounded convincing in English. . . . R.B. Ekvall, 1960, pp. 84-85.

5.20

In combinations and compounds the problem of equivalency becomes even more acute. In Korea hundreds of hours were spent in the "spare parts" staff meeting of the military armistice commission, trying to arrive at a mutually intelligible and narrowly definitive understanding of what was meant by "spare parts," "separate spare parts," "repair spare parts," "replacement spare parts," and "component spare parts." . . .

The basic term "spare part" was represented by two Chinese syllables, each a complete and independent thought unit. The first syllable, *ling*, matching "spare," had much less than the needed 50 per cent semantic content of the English word. It was much more like "individual" than "spare" and was much off center. The second syllable, *chien*, was of equally doubtful precision, being more "piece" than "part." Given such primal nonequivalency of the basic term, subsequent combinations based on that term wandered far afield indeed. Eventually the tables in the meeting place became littered with pieces of equipment and their smallest component parts in the attempt to arrive at visual understanding when words had failed.
R.B. Ekvall, 1960, pp. 80-81.

5.21

Take the case of Juan in a school somewhere in the Southwest. He has a certain amount of "amor propio" which is mistranslated as "pride," and then because it does not mean the same in English, Juan is said to have a "false pride." One day he gets into trouble with Pedro, one of his schoolmates and, there being no word "compromise" in their vocabulary nor in their culture-content, they resort to physical arguments. The teacher insists that Juan "apologize" to Pedro for what he did. "Go on," she insists, "apologize to him." Again Juan doesn't know what to say, because there is no word in Spanish for it, nor does the apologizing custom exist. The teacher is assuming that just as words are linguistically translated, so are cultural patterns. She continues, "Tell him you're sorry." This he refuses to do because he is a product of a realistic culture, loathe to change the realism of the past by the instrumentality of mere words. So he stays after school for being stubborn, disobedient and generally incorrigible. Juan still doesn't know the meaning of "apology," but if he is intellectually curious he may look up the word in Velasquez's dictionary where he will find it mistranslated linguistically as "apologia." Not

5.18

(Continued)

knowing this half dollar word he looks it up in the Academy dictionary where he finds to his amazement the following definition, "Discurso en alabanza de una persona" (an utterance in praise of a person). Now he is mad at the teacher! The following day, he can't find his pencil. When asked by the same teacher if he lost it, he promptly replies that he hasn't. Actually the pencil lost itself from Juan. "Se me perdio" (it lost itself on me). That's it! After school, Juan is walking home and someone asks him if he missed the bus, but by now we know that he was not the active factor in this situation. The bus left him, "me dejo." He is a versatile boy, but don't make the mistake of saying he is "versatil"; this would mean he is superficial and changeable. A.L. Campa, 1951, pp. 43-44.



5.22

... Noon meant meal-time to the American Chairman, but it meant nothing of the sort to the Orientals who insisted on keeping the meetings open all day. A western European speaking on the Declaration of Human Rights said, "Man is of divine origin, endowed by nature with reason and conscience." To which a Buddhist interposed, "All life is of divine origin, not only human life." Sometimes the situations were farcical. A Chinese delegate was listening in English to a discussion when a Russian said, "Gentlemen, let us not behave like a bull in a china shop." The Chinese delegate promptly raised his hand and said, "Mr. Chairman, I should like the Soviet delegate to explain just what China has to do with his objections." A.L. Campa, 1951, pp. 45-46.

5.10 - 5.29 Language incongruity

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from language incongruities, see 5.64, 5.90, and 6.25.

5.30-5.49 Differences in Education and Knowledge

5.30

... A smallpox epidemic was raging among tribal peoples in Northern Rhodesia where Dr. Ross worked, and health teams were sent to vaccinate all people to check the spread of the disease. But the teams had great difficulties. In village after village the natives had simply disappeared. One day a team found a small boy in a village, fortu- nely well on the road to recovery. During the moment while the vaccinating team tried to question the boy they were quietly surrounded by a group of spear-bearing adults. Their leader asked the chief vaccinator what he planned to do with the boy, to which the reply was given that the boy was recovering and was free to go his way. Then the vaccinator started to chastise the adults. "We are your friends, your people are dying, we can stamp out the disease, and we have come to help you. Why do you reject our help?" To which the native leader replied, "Six months ago our cattle were dying of something you called 'hoof and mouth disease.' You came, and you said, 'We are your friends, your cattle are dying, we can stamp out the disease, we have come to help you.' We permitted you to help us, and you killed all of our cattle!" G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 123-124.

5.31

Another story illustrating differing perception has been told for several parts of the world. Possibly some of the stories are apocryphal, but the kernel of the story is true. In one version the U.S. Navy landed on a Pacific island in World War II. The health officer felt that the presence of flies constituted a health problem that, with the assistance of the natives, could be easily conquered. He asked the chief to assemble his people, to whom he gave a health lecture illustrating the horrors of fly-borne diseases with a foot-long model of the common house fly. He believed he had made his point until the chief replied, "I can well understand your preoccupation with flies in America. We have flies here, too, but fortunately they are just little fellows," and he gestured with thumb and forefinger to show their small size and, by implication, lack of menace to health. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 122.

5.32

An American Adviser in Education being driven to a school some distance from Addis Ababa in company with an official of the Ministry of Education, had the following experience: When a flat tire stopped the car, the driver caught a ride to the nearest village for help. While waiting at the side of the road, the American and Ethiopian were greeted by a passing shepherd. Introductions were made. The shepherd, with side-glances at the American, made this plea to the Ethiopian official: Americans were invading his village, cutting the hair from sheep who needed their coats to survive cold weather, putting medicine into sheep which changed the color of their hair, and killing some sheep for no reason at all. The shepherd begged the Ethiopian official to do something about this invasion of destructive Americans. He confided that the people of the area feared that the Americans planned to inject Ethiopians, too, changing their skin color as the color of the sheep had been changed.

A subsequent inquiry revealed that American agricultural technicians had, in fact, been operating in the area. They had directed the killing of inferior

(Continued)

5.33

Social science research in medical programs in Latin America indicates that poor communication between physicians and nurses, on the one hand, and health center clinic patients on the other, sometimes prevents maximum efficiency. In 1952 I attended a "mothers' club" meeting in Temuco, Chile, in which an intelligent and well-trained public health nurse talked to about twenty expectant mothers on the problems of pregnancy. Previously a physician had advised them to walk "three kilometers a day" and the nurse repeated this instruction. I asked, and received permission, to interject a question: "How far is three kilometers?" This precipitated a lively argument. Some mothers said nine blocks, others twenty-seven, and a few eighty-one. No agreement was reached. The mothers had learned their lesson, but in the real sense, there had been no communication, because these instructions were meaningless. These women simply were not trained to think in terms of distance as an educated person would. If this important instruction had been phrased as "walk to the plaza and back," or "to the market and then to the church," or to whatever specific places known to them would give the approximate desired exercise, real communication would have existed. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 137.

5.34

Isabel Kelly noted a similar occurrence in Mexico. In a maternal-and-child-health clinic, the Mexican physician told the mother to nurse her child "every three hours." When the anthropologist asked the mother at what hours she would feed the child, she replied, "At six, seven, eight," and so on. The startled doctor repeated his instructions, but the mother still gave the same answer. Instructions in terms of time as defined by hours were meaningless to this woman. She had no clock, she was unable to tell time, and in her life experience it had never been necessary to grasp the import of time as understood in hours. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 137-138.

5.35

In the Middle East, Americans usually have a difficult time with the Arabs. I remember an American agriculturalist who went to Egypt to teach modern agricultural methods to the Egyptian farmers. At one point in his work he asked his interpreter to ask a farmer how much he expected his field to yield that year. The farmer responded by becoming very excited and angry. In an obvious attempt to soften the reply the interpreter said, "He says he doesn't know." The American realized something had gone wrong, but he had no way of knowing what. Later I learned that the Arabs regard anyone who tries to look into the future as slightly insane. When the American asked him about his future yield, the Egyptian was highly insulted since he thought the American considered him crazy. To the Arab only God knows the future, and it is presumptuous even to talk about it. E.T. Hall, 1959, p. 18.

5.32

5.32

rams in order to increase the quality of the herds. They had inoculated sheep to cure disease or prevent disease. They had sheared sheep to demonstrate improved wool-gathering techniques; they had, by selective breeding and other processes, introduced pure-breeding, with attendant elimination of off-color and off-breed lambs. *E. Lord, 1963, p. 3.*

5.36

... In my experience, and that of others, the peasant is able to believe the most improbable things. R.N. Adams found in Guatemala that blood withdrawn in health surveys was rumored to be a test to see if children were fat enough to be sent to the United States where children were delicacies for the tables of epicureans.

Goswami and Roy found in India that an agricultural program in which land was being cleared and improved gave rise to the rumor that the local people would be cleared out after they had done the work and an American colony would move in. Phillips, describing the Rockefeller Foundation antihookworm campaign in Ceylon many years ago, tells how coolies distrusted medicine in capsule form: a highly successful whispering campaign warned that capsules were time bombs that would explode after months or even years. *G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 49-50.*

5.37

One of the health officials in New York told me that at great expense they had bought a first-class Walt Disney film on hookworm. Then it was sent down for exhibition to a very backward part of the country, where hookworm was very prevalent. It was shown every evening for a month to very enthusiastic audiences. The same people kept coming night after night. It was thought a great success, until someone made an evaluation and found that the people had learned absolutely nothing. They had enjoyed the excitement, the color and the music, but their knowledge of the habits of the hookworm had not increased.

Few of us realize that to look at pictures intelligently is something which needs learning. One old man came out of the polling booth at an election clutching the picture of a tree. When told it was his candidate's symbol he said in a puzzled way, "I thought it was an umbrella." *C.P. Thompson, 1962.*

5.30 - 5.49 Differences in Education and Knowledge

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in education and knowledge, see 1.01, 6.01, and 7.02.

5.50 - 5.79 Differences in Values and Beliefs

5.50

A number of small cross-cultural experiences had to be adjusted to. One example will suffice: the fondling case. Early in my work I noted that each time I paid a visit to the nursery school, the children would rush up to me and unconcernedly fondle and stroke my breasts. I was a little taken aback and curious, but I made no immediate comment to the staff, waiting for the propitious occasion to arise. One day driving home from work with Mrs. Twala we came across a young couple in one of the township's streets. The girl was standing, talking to the young man who held his bicycle with the one hand and was gently fondling her breasts with the other. I made a passing comment to which Mrs. Twala exclaimed: "Don't you know? If we think a person has a nice body we express this by either stroking their breasts or else patting their buttocks." Happily for me this custom remained restricted to the young ones who were still completely uninhibited in their dealings with whites. V. Jurek, 1964, p. 33.

5.51

During the Second World War, some of our top military personnel were against taking prisoners for intelligence work because of the supposed risks involved. Americans still feel themselves Americans and look forward to the time when they will be repatriated. Considering the fanatical attitude of the Japanese, which would drive them to the extremes of committing suicide in order to prevent capture, this attitude might continue after capture. A Japanese prisoner, however, conceived of himself as socially dead. He regarded his relations with his family, his friends, and his country as finished. Many Japanese wished to join the American Army. They willingly wrote propaganda for us, spoke over loud speakers urging their own troops to surrender. Some were even allowed to return to their own lines and brought back valuable information. This attitude was incongruous from our Judaic-Christian tradition of absolute morality. Japanese morality is a situational one. As long as one was in situation A, one publicly observed the rules of the game with fervor. But the minute one was in situation B, the rules of situation A no longer applied. Summarized from W.E. Dougherty, 1958, p. 513.

5.50

5.52

In Egypt death is perceived as Allah's will, and no one can extend life because the Koran says "Wherever you are, death will seek you, even if you are in strongly built castles." This attitude is one of the reasons for high infant mortality in that country. In India the attitude is similar. Corstairs tells how in a village he was called to the bedside of a child dying of diphtheria. Although he saw the case was hopeless, he gave the patient an injection, so the parents would feel that something was being done. When the inevitable happened, he feared the parents' anger, that he would be blamed for the death. To his surprise and great relief, this was not true. "After the first outburst of grief, the family repeated the traditional formula: it was his fate, his day had come; he was a loan from God, to whom he had returned." G.M. Corstairs, 1962, pp. 67-68.

¹G.M. Corstairs, 1955, pp. 114-115.

5.53

A villager arrived all out of breath at the military government headquarters. He said that a murder had been committed in the village and that the murderer was running around loose. Quite naturally the military government officer became alarmed. He was about to dispatch M.P.s to arrest the culprit when he remembered that someone had warned him about acting precipitously when dealing with "natives." A little inquiry turned up the fact that the victim had been "fooling around" with the murderer's wife. Still more inquiry of a routine type, designed to establish the place and date of the crime, revealed that the murder had not occurred a few hours or even days ago, as one might expect, but seventeen years before. The murderer had been running around loose in the village all this time. E.T. Hall, 1959, pp. 36-37.

5.54

As I pointed out, the white civilized Westerner has a shallow view of the future compared to the Oriental. Yet set beside the Navajo Indians of northern Arizona, he seems a model of long-term patience. The Navajo and the European-American have been trying to adjust their concepts of time for almost a hundred years. So far they have not done too well. To the old-time Navajo time is like space—only the here and now is quite real. The future has little reality to it.

An old friend of mine reared with the Navajo expressed it this way: "You know how the Navajo love horses and how much they love to gamble and bet on horse races. Well, if you were to say to a Navajo, 'My friend, you know my quarter horse that won all the races at Flagstaff last Fourth of July?' that Navajo would eagerly say 'yes, yes,' he knew the horse; and if you were to say, 'In the fall I am going to give you that horse,' the Navajo's face would fall and he would turn around and walk away. On the other hand, if you were to say to him, 'Do you see that old bag of bones I just rode up on? That old hay-bellied mare with the knock-knees and pigeon toes, with the bridle that's falling apart and the saddle that's worn out? You

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5.55

An example of how thoroughly these things are taken for granted was reported to me by John Useem, an American social anthropologist, in an illuminating case from the South Pacific. The natives of one of the islands had been having a difficult time getting their white supervisors to hire them in a way consistent with their traditional status system. Through ignorance the supervisors had hired too many of one group and by so doing had disrupted the existing balance of power among the natives. The entire population of the island was seething because of this error. Since the Americans continued in their ignorance and refused to hire according to local practice, the head men of the two factions met one night to discuss an acceptable reallocation of jobs. When they finally arrived at a solution, they went en masse to see the plant manager and woke him up to tell him what had been decided. Unfortunately it was then between two and three o'clock in the morning. They did not know that it is a sign of extreme urgency to wake up Americans at this hour. As one might expect, the American plant manager, who understood neither the local language nor the culture nor what the hullabaloo was all about, thought he had a

(Continued)

5.56

... An American businessman would be most unlikely to question another businessman's word if he were technically qualified and said that his plant could produce 1000 gross of widgets a month. We are "taught" that it is none of our business to inquire too deeply into the details of his production system. This would be prying and might be considered an attempt to steal his operational plans.

Yet this cultural pattern has trapped many an American into believing that when a Japanese manufacturer answered a direct question with the reply that he could produce 1000 gross of widgets, he meant what he said. If the American had been escorted through the factory and saw quite clearly that its capacity was, at the most, perhaps 500 gross of widgets per month, he would be likely to say to himself: "Well, this fellow probably has a brother-in-law who has a factory who can make up the difference. He isn't telling the whole story because he's afraid I might try to make a better deal with the brother-in-law". Besides, what business is it of mine, so long as he meets the schedule?"

The cables begin to burn after the American returns home and only 500 gross

(Continued)

5.57

Despite a host of favorable auspices an American mission in Greece was having great difficulty working out an agreement with Greek officials. Efforts to negotiate met with resistance and suspicion on the part of the Greeks. The Americans were unable to conclude the agreements needed to start new projects. Upon later examination of this exasperating situation two unsuspected reasons were found for the stalemate: First, Americans pride themselves on being outspoken and forthright. These qualities are regarded as a liability by the Greeks. They are taken to indicate a lack of finesse which the Greeks deplore. The American directness immediately prejudiced the Greeks. Second, when the Americans arranged meetings with the Greeks they tried to limit the length of the meetings and to reach agreements on general principles first, delegating the drafting of details to subcommittees. The Greeks regarded this practice as a device to pull the wool over their eyes. The Greek practice is to work out details in front of all concerned and continue meetings for as long as is necessary. The result of this misunderstanding was a series of unproductive meetings with each side deploring the other's behavior.

E. T. Hall, 1959, pp. 15-16.

5.54

5.55

riot on his hands and called out the Marines. It simply never occurred to him that the parts of the day have a different meaning for these people than they have for us. *E.T. Hall, 1959, p. 25.*

5.54

can have that horse, my friend, it's yours. Take it, ride it away now.' Then the Navajo would beam and shake your hand and jump on his new horse and ride away. Of the two, only the immediate gift has reality; a promise of future benefits is not even worth thinking about.' *E.T. Hall, 1959, pp. 32-33.*

5.56

of widgets arrive each month. What the American did not know was that in Japanese culture one avoids the direct question unless the questioner is absolutely certain that the answer will not embarrass the Japanese businessman in any way whatsoever. In Japan for one to admit being unable to perform a given operation or measure up to a given standard means a bitter loss of face. Given a foreigner who is so stupid, ignorant, or insensitive as to ask an embarrassing question, the Japanese is likely to choose what appears to him the lesser of two evils.

Americans caught in this cross-cultural communications trap are apt to feel doubly deceived because the Japanese manufacturer may well be an established and respected member of the business community. *E.T. Hall and W.F. Whyte, 1960, pp. 6-7.*

5.58

While we look to the future, our view of it is limited. The future to us is the foreseeable future, not the future of the South Asian that may involve centuries. Indeed, our perspective is so short as to inhibit the operation of a good many practical projects, such as sixty- and one-hundred-year conservation works requiring public support and public funds. Anyone who has worked in industry or in the government of the United States has heard the following: "Gentlemen, this is for the long term! Five or ten years."

For us a "long time" can be almost anything—ten or twenty years, two or three months, a few weeks, or even a couple of days. The South Asian, however, feels that it is perfectly realistic to think of a "long time" in terms of thousands of years or even an endless period. E.T. Hall, 1959, p. 30.

5.59

Operation Moolah. In April of 1953, there was an offer made of 50,000 dollars to any pilot who would deliver a MIG to the U.N. forces, with a 50,000 dollar bonus for the first to do so. Basic research at Harvard had revealed many areas of the communist mind wide open for attack. To an American, the \$100,000 would be considered a bribe. It would insult him and increase his will to fight. But in Chinese and North Korean society there is nothing immoral about bribery; it is an accepted form of business and political activity.

By capitalizing on the distrust communists have for one another we could paralyze the whole Red Air Force; for eight whole days Red generals dared not allow a single communist flier off the ground. From Korea to Germany, communist generals felt they had to put political reliability ahead of flying ability. Expert flying teams were broken up, training programs upset, poor aviators substituted for skilled ones who were not trusted on patrol flights along the Iron Curtain.

Summarized from W.E. Daugherty, 1958, pp. 417-418.

5.60

A sales engineer in Japan says,

Yes, we do have trouble with them sometimes in regard to time. We'll make an appointment, for instance, to go all the way across the island. Fourteen hours on a train and then when you get there—you'll find that they're not there. I think it's reluctance on the part of our [Japanese employees] to pin those bastards down. Whereas we think we have an appointment at 2:00 sharp, and to them it's actually no appointment at all. We'll call up and say, "Well, we might drop around if it's convenient" and stuff like that, and they make a lot of polite noises and we'll think we have an appointment. We want to be specific and they're not specific.

H. Cleveland, G.J. Mangone, and J.C. Adams, 1960, pp. 31-32.

5.61

... You cannot be in Tokyo many days without being told the story of the New York firm which sent a man out to Japan to set up a contract, and told him it should take about two weeks. After he had been there three months, two vice-presidents of the firm came in and said, "Now we'll take over." After they had been in Tokyo for a month, they saw the point. "You get yourself a house," they told their man, "and we'll send your family out."

From the point of view of the Japanese, the time was not being "wasted"; it was being used to develop the trust on which a viable business deal depends. The lunches, geisha parties, and country weekends that punctuate a sales discussion in Japan are a way of "getting to know you, getting to know all about you," as the teacher sings it in *The King and I*. A Japanese businessman inquired of us in genuine perplexity: "Unless the American with whom I am dealing gets to know me, how does he know whether I mean what I say? For that matter," he added after a moment's pause, "unless I know him rather well, how do I know whether to say what I mean?" *H. Cleveland, G.J. Mangone, and J.C. Adams, 1960, p. 33.*

5.58

5.62

He acted "informally" in the presence of natives, joking and teasing in the American style, shadow boxing, fondling children, being generous to natives in need. One of his ingratiating gestures to indicate he was a "good Joe" was to put his arm around the shoulders of ranking native men while laughingly tousling the hair on their heads. This is the equivalent in our society of opening a man's fly in public as a joke, for in Palau the head is a sensitive zone. *J. Useem, 1952, p. 157; also in W.H. Goodenough, 1963, p. 455.*

5.64

... The Cuban delegate to the Social Committee of the Assembly in Paris, tired of the Chairman's constant interruptions, protested, "Not being all Nordics and Anglo-Saxons, we can not fit into the pattern of brevity, terseness and conciseness which you demand of us, Mr. Chairman. Such patterns befit the Northerners, but we like an orator to be imaginative, emotional, moving..." Another Latin American delegate pleaded that the expression "From the cradle to the grave" be inserted in the Article of the Declaration of Human Rights. A Western European delegate pronounced, "Such phrases have no place in a serious document." "But the Declaration should be beautifully worded," argued another Latin representative. "It's a legal document, not a poem," muttered a pragmatic delegate. The United States delegate whispered an aside, "Why not 'From the womb to the tomb'—it rhymes at least!" *A.L. Campa, 1951, p. 45.*

5.63

The need of Americans to separate work and play clearly is illustrated by an interview between a Peace Corps volunteer and Dr. Arthur Niehoff, a cultural anthropologist. Speaking of the differences between the United States and the Philippines, the volunteer complained that one of the natives took nine hours to do a task that she herself could do in three hours. Niehoff asked what the native would then do with the six hours she could save. The volunteer quickly indicated, "If nothing else, she could relax and rest." As one might suppose, the answer to the next question clearly indicated that the native had been doing plenty of that during the nine-hour effort. *From an interview, related by Arthur Niehoff.*

5.50 - 5.79 Differences in Values and Beliefs

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from cross-cultural differences in values and beliefs, see 2.81, 5.22, 5.30, and 5.34.

5.62

5.80 - 5.99 Differences in Social System and Role Expectations

5.80

Ethnocentrism is so deeply engrained in all of us that even when we are sensitive to the philosophy of cultural relativism we may easily fall victim to evaluating others in terms of our own views. It is Mrs. Pineda, again, who so clearly points out this danger. Her field work in Colombia has included study of the lives of the cattle-raising Guajiro Indians of the Guajira Peninsula.

I remember when once I spoke with an Indian woman of high social class about marriage, and the Indian custom of giving money and cattle to buy the wife. I had not yet come fully to understand the Indian culture, and while the woman spoke of her price I felt terribly sad that a Colombian woman could be sold like a cow. Suddenly she asked, "And you? How much did you cost your husband?" I smugly replied, "Nothing. We aren't sold." Then the picture changed completely. "Oh, what a horrible thing," she said. "Your husband didn't even give a single cow for you? You must not be worth anything." And she lost all respect for me, and would have nothing further to do with me, because no one had given anything for me. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 69.

5.81

In Japan I once interviewed an American scholar who was sent to Japan to teach American history to Japanese university professors. The course was well under way when the American began to doubt if the Japanese understood his lectures. Since he did not speak Japanese, he asked for an interpreter. After a few lectures with the interpreter translating for him, the American asked the group to meet without him and make a report on what they were learning from the course. The next time the American met with the class the interpreter told him that the class understood only about 50 per cent of what had been going on. The American was discouraged and upset. What he didn't know was that he had inadvertently insulted the group by requesting an interpreter. In Japan a sign of an educated man is his ability to speak English. The Japanese professors felt that the American had caused them to lose face by implying that they were uneducated when he requested the interpreter. E.T. Hall, 1959, pp. 16-17.

5.80

5.82

... This was a case of an Air Force officer who was assigned to a radar installation in France, some years ago. He was told by one of his predecessors that he, and especially his wife, would be very lonely. "Your wife will not have very much companionship. The Frenchmen don't want to talk to us, they don't like us, and she will just have to take it." The officer in question arrived in the French town a few weeks, before his wife; he rented a house, and by the time his wife arrived, she was met at the station by the ladies of the town with flowers and so forth. They were exceedingly friendly to her, and this couple made some lasting friendships in that French town.

Now, why was there this tremendous difference between the attitude towards this officer and his wife and the two officers and their families who had preceded them? A series of coincidences. The officer in question was an amateur gardener, and when he rented his house he noticed that his neighbor was putting in the garden. He went over and said to him, "What grows here, where do you buy seeds, where do you buy fertilizer?" and so forth. Now, it is the custom in the American

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5.83

Ralph Hughes was sent to Mexico as general manager of the Kew Company. He was an able, straightforward engineer who had come up through the domestic production organization. When he arrived in Mexico, he found a number of things about the factory operation which he thought could be improved. He had great respect for Mr. Trevino, the production manager, but did not think his approach was good on these points. As was his practice, he told Mr. Trevino exactly what he thought was wrong. He assumed Mr. Trevino might disagree with him and he was prepared to admit he was wrong if Mr. Trevino had a good argument. He was surprised when Mr. Trevino accepted all his criticisms with only a few minor objections. He concluded that Trevino was a very good alert and amenable fellow who was going to be a good man to work with.

Mr. Trevino, meantime, was deeply troubled by this experience, his first significant encounter with the new manager. He came to the conclusion that if Mr. Hughes was displeased with so many aspects of his work, it must be that he did not like him and he was prepared to resign. Fortunately, he talked with Mr. Smith, the

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5.83

sales manager, who was also from the United States but had been in Mexico for several years. Mr. Smith expressed some surprise because he said Mr. Hughes had spoken very highly of Mr. Trevino. That same day Mr. Smith talked with Mr. Hughes, who was equally surprised. Characteristically, Mr. Hughes called Mr. Trevino right in and reported his conversation with Mr. Smith. Then he explained that he considered Mr. Trevino a fine production manager and his criticisms were just his way of doing things. Eventually the two reached a *modus operandi* and were able to work well together. *J. Fayerweather, 1959, pp. 164-165.*

5.82

culture that when a newcomer comes to a community, it is the established members of the community who make him welcome. Welcome Wagon, for example, will pay the first call, will drop in on the lady of the house and ask her whether she needs any help. In the French culture, on the contrary, it is the last arrival who must take the first step. And so, for two tours of service, the Americans and their French neighbors were each waiting for the other to take the initiative. But when it so happened that this officer went over to the fence and asked questions about gardening, the Frenchman, interpreting it as a social call, said, "This is the first American who likes us; we are going to make his wife welcome." And they did. *From a speech by E. Glenn, Military Assistance Institute, 1963, pp. 9-10.*

5.84

... In comparing the United States with Iran and Afghanistan very great differences in the handling of time appear. The American attitude toward appointments is an example. Once while in Tehran I had an opportunity to observe some young Iranians making plans for a party. After plans were made to pick up everyone at appointed times and places everything began to fall apart. People would leave messages that they were unable to take so-and-so or were going somewhere else, knowing full well that the person who had been given the message couldn't possibly deliver it. One girl was left stranded on a street corner, and no one seemed to be concerned about it. One of my informants explained that he himself had had many similar experiences. Once he made eleven appointments to meet a friend. Each time one of them failed to show up. The twelfth time they swore they would both be there, that nothing would interfere. The friend failed to arrive. After waiting for forty-five minutes my informant phoned his friend and found him still at home. The following conversation is an approximation of what took place:

"Is that you, Abdul?" "Yes." "Why aren't you here? I thought we were to

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5.85

Visiting time involves the question of who sets the time for a visit. George Coetho, a social psychologist from India, gives an illustrative case. A U.S. businessman received this invitation from an Indian businessman: "Won't you and your family come and see us? Come anytime." Several weeks later, the Indian repeated the invitation in the same words. Each time the American replied that he would certainly like to drop in—but he never did. The reason is obvious in terms of our culture. Here "come any time" is just an expression of friendliness. You are not really expected to show up unless your host proposes a specific time. In India, on the contrary, the words are meant literally—that the host is putting himself at the disposal of his guest and really expects him to come. It is the essence of politeness to leave it to the guest to set a time at his convenience. If the guest never comes, the Indian naturally assumes that he does not want to come. Such a misunderstanding can lead to a serious rift between men who are trying to do business with each other. E.T. Hall and W.F. Whyte, 1960, pp. 8-9.

5.86

How troublesome differing ways of handling time can be is well illustrated by the case of an American agriculturalist assigned to duty as an attaché of our embassy in a Latin country. After what seemed to him a suitable period he let it be known that he would like to call on the minister who was his counterpart. For various reasons, the suggested time was not suitable; all sorts of cues came back to the effect that the time was not yet ripe to visit the minister. Our friend, however, persisted and forced an appointment which was reluctantly granted. Arriving a little before the hour (the American respect pattern), he waited. The hour came and passed; five minutes—ten minutes—fifteen minutes. At this point he suggested to the secretary that perhaps the minister did not know he was waiting in the outer office. This gave him the feeling he had done something concrete and also helped to overcome the great anxiety that was stirring inside him. Twenty minutes—twenty-five minutes—thirty minutes—forty-five minutes (the insult period)!

He jumped up and told the secretary that he had been "cooling his heels" in an outer office for forty-five minutes and he was "damned sick and tired" of this

(Continued)

5.87

... And we can see why there is trouble over the "handshake." Indians have adopted this custom (as they have so many Western customs) but they endow it with their own meaning. Thus they offer a limp and somewhat reluctant hand, interpreted by the American as "gritless" or "feminine"—whereas the Indian finds the firm Western grip "aggressive." However, when the Indian does not let go at once (an aspect of the gesture that every Western instinctively performs), the American is embarrassed and pulls away abruptly—interpreted as rejection by the Indian.

M.L. Cormack, 1962, p. 79.

5.84

5.84

meet for sure." "Oh, but it was raining," said Abdul with a sort of whining intonation that is very common in Parsi. E.T. Hall, 1959, pp. 39-40.

5.86

type of treatment. This message was relayed to the minister, who said, in effect, "Let him cool his heels." The attache's stay in the country was not a happy one.

The principal source of misunderstanding lay in the fact that in the country in question the five-minute-delay interval was not significant. Forty-five minutes, on the other hand, instead of being at the tail end of the waiting scale, was just barely at the beginning. To suggest to an American's secretary that perhaps her boss didn't know you were there after waiting sixty seconds would seem absurd, as would raising a storm about "cooling your heels" for five minutes. Yet this is precisely the way the minister registered the protestations of the American in his outer office! He felt, as usual, that Americans were being totally unreasonable. E.T. Hall, 1959, pp. 26-27.

5.88

The difference between "friendliness" and friendship is a subtle one that often causes misunderstanding between Americans and Indians. Most Indians at first find Americans warm, friendly, generous, but they are likely to later accuse them of insincerity. In contrast, most Americans at first feel Indians to be cool, difficult or inscrutable and later to be suffocatingly warm and possessive. What the American regards as natural friendliness expected of a host, the Indian (after initial reserve and hesitancy) interprets as an invitation to a deep and lasting friendship with its accompanying obligations. The Indian is likely to express hurt that "he did not give me an A" or "he was not my best friend" and the American complains "he resents my doing anything with anyone else," or "he won't leave me alone."

Summarized from M.L. Cormack, 1962, p. 79.

5.89

5.90

... For example, in many Pacific Islands the standard greeting is "Where are you going?" or "Whence coming?" To westerners this seems like an unwarranted prying into one's personal affairs and also to require lengthy explanations, annoying when one is in a hurry. It is a help to know that the perfectly proper reply is "North!" or "South!" or "Inland!" and that the question has no more significance than the standard American greeting "How are you?" Each expression, the American's and the Islander's, serves the purpose of acknowledging the presence of someone with whom one has cordial relations

W.H. Goodenough, 1963, p. 456.

5.91

We can readily answer this question by citing the complaint of a European resident in New Guinea about the untrustworthiness of his native household servants. He was incensed at how one of them had apparently tried to pull the wool over his eyes. The employee had asked leave to go attend the funeral of his "papa." The leave had been granted. A few months later he had again asked leave to attend the funeral of his "papa." The European immediately assumed that his employee was lying to him, and either must have been very stupid to try to play the same father's funeral trick within the space of a few months or else he must have held a very low opinion of his employer's intelligence. The European's assumptions were, of course, wrong on all counts. The employee had, in fact, a number of people who were "papa" to him, and they had reached an age when they were dying off. . . .

W.H. Goodenough, 1963, p. 506.

5.92

How easy it is to jump to wrong conclusions can be illustrated by the comment of a Naval administrator about the people of Puluwat in the Pacific Islands. During a mass medical check there, he noticed that women were constantly crouching down as they saw men approach and sit down. He learned that they did so because it was forbidden for them to be physically higher than these men. He concluded that the men of Puluwat really "ruled the roost" as far as their women were concerned. In actual fact, however, the only men in whose presence women exhibit this behavior are their brothers (or clan brothers). They would not think of crouching in the presence of their husbands or any other man, except the local chief. . . .

W.H. Goodenough, 1963, p. 507.

... [Many of the American advisers] complained about the interpreters and frequently mentioned that the latter did not seem to give interpretations of the intended meanings in a conversation but insisted on interjecting their own comments. The great majority of the interpreters [in Laos] were from Thailand where, in business matters, men are reluctant to confront each other; they prefer an intermediary who plays an active part in reaching an agreement between the two parties, sparing the feelings of the principals and saving face for all concerned.

If we assume that the Thai interpreters were merely playing the traditional role of Thai go-betweens, rather than that of American interpreters, who render precise meanings of conversations, the reasons for the interpreters' behavior are understandable. It becomes clear why the Thai would refuse to interpret angry words; why they would embellish the language in interpreting from English to Lao; and why, so often, they were eager to have action and decisions determined through them. Their behavior was consonant with the third-party role found in Thai culture, but some Americans viewed it as a demonstration of deficiency and incompetence. The

(Continued)

5.80 - 5.99 Differences in Social System and Role Expectations

For additional examples that illustrate problems arising from cross-cultural differences in social systems and role expectations, see 1.22, 5.04, 5.60, and 5.61.

5.92

frustration experienced by United States personnel in working through interpreters may well have been matched by an equal frustration on the part of the interpreters.

A.J. Kraemer and E.C. Stewart, 1964, p. 12.



6.00 - 6.99 The Resolution of Cross-Cultural Problems

6.00 - 6.19 Adapting Innovation to the Culture

6.00

In the same country, pre-penicillin treatment for yaws not infrequently was accompanied by inflammation where the injection was given because of poor antiseptic measures. This infection came, in the minds of patients, to be a part of the cure, proof that the medicine was in fact doing its job. When the far superior penicillin treatment was introduced, public confidence was lost because there was no accompanying infection. Eventually it became necessary to add an irritant to the penicillin, to produce a mild local reaction following the injection. Then the patients' expectation was met; the reaction was proof that the treatment was valid.

G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 133.

6.01

... Investigation revealed that opposition to blood withdrawal was based on the belief that blood is non-regenerative, that each person has only so much for an entire life, and to the extent that it is lost, the individual is permanently weakened. "One informant told the anthropologist that the villagers simply could not understand why doctors who claimed to know how to make people well went around intentionally taking the blood of little children, thus making them weaker. Weakness made one more susceptible to illness, so that blood-taking was the reverse of what doctors should be doing. This informant concluded that doctors could not know very much about making people well."¹

When the nature of opposition to blood withdrawal was found, steps could be taken to counteract it. In part this involved determining the minimum amount of blood needed for the test and exercising care to make sure that no more than this was taken. In part it meant taking of only a few samples at a time, so that the

¹R.N. Adams, 1955, p. 147.

(Continued)

6.00

6.02

There is no single answer as to how far one should go in catering to folk beliefs. In 1957 lightning struck a palm tree in the yard of a tuberculosis sanatorium in Tucson. Because of the significance of lightning in their religion, Navaho Indian patients were greatly upset, and two left the sanatorium. The culturally sensitive hospital administrator brought a Navaho medicine man with his ceremonial paraphernalia to carry out the "sing" that normally would be done on the Reservation to counteract the danger brought by the lightning. The medicine man's words and songs were piped to all wards on the intercom, so that each Navaho heard the ceremony and his own personal blessing. After this there was no further talk of leaving the hospital, and a health crisis was averted. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 236-237.

6.03

This same problem arose in the Rockefeller antihookworm program in Ceylon in the early years of this century: the very fact that the treatment was free was suspicious. A Moorish physician attached to the program countered this suspicion among his coreligionists with what is certainly one of the most justifiable of all white lies: he told them that Mr. John D. Rockefeller had been very ill with hookworm and had been cured, and out of gratitude to Allah he had given all his money to cure everyone else who had the disease. The account concludes, "May Allah and Mr. Rockefeller forgive this deliberate falsehood, if it should come to their attention." This story illustrates, in addition to the perception of free goods, a very important point with respect to planned culture change: the Moslem physician, familiar with the religious beliefs of his patients, was able to answer their doubts and cast his program in terms that fitted the culturally-determined expectations of the people as to why a man would want to give something for nothing. G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 129.

6.01

psychological impact of a mass bloodletting was avoided. But it also meant capitalizing on folk belief. Since blood was considered to indicate strength or weakness, it followed that the condition of the blood could be used as a measure to determine a person's health and resistance to illness. Accordingly, the workers started to explain how the blood withdrawal in small quantities permitted the doctors to tell about the health of the child and to take necessary steps should the child's blood prove to be sick. This explanation, thoroughly drilled into people, was accepted, and when, after an interval of more than two months, blood was again withdrawn, there was little opposition. G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 230-231.

6.04

The Organization of American States operates the Inter-American Housing Center near Bogotá, Columbia. Young architects and other potential urban planners come from many countries to learn the new science of city and regional planning. First-hand knowledge of materials is believed by the staff to be an important part of the training, and students are asked to mix mortar, lay bricks, and otherwise engage in manual labor. Most Latin Americans, however, have doubts about the dignity of working with one's hands. A professional man uses his mind, not his brawn; hired peons do the menial work. For this reason the work part of the curriculum was not successful in the early stages. Then someone hit upon the idea of supplying white laboratory coats to the students, with their names embroidered over the pocket. In the new and acceptable professional status of laboratory technicians they now happily went about the chores they formerly had resisted. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 72.*

6.06

... A plantation manager in New Guinea once told us that he found it better to set a quota of work for each man for each day than to require his employees to work a given number of hours. As soon as a man filled his quota, he was through for the day. He found that his employees measured work in terms of the amount to be accomplished and not in terms of being busy for a fixed amount of time. By task-orienting the work, he increased production and improved his relations with his employees. No longer was it necessary to police the work to see that the men were not "soldiering" on the job. No longer was the natives' indifference to exact time as measured by a clock a source of irritation. . . . *W.H. Goodenough, 1963, p. 486.*

6.05

There were additional difficulties when it came to the attempt to increase the consumption of milk, particularly among women of childbearing age. These came from a taboo protecting the cattle, which represented perhaps the greatest value to the Zulu. Women, in any reproductive capacity, while pregnant or lactating or lochia or while menstruating, were dangerous to the cattle, and should therefore avoid all contact with them; to consume milk was to come into such contact. To prevent all possibility of error, girls after pubescence were forbidden milk at all times. In addition, people could consume the milk only of the right cattle; these were the cattle owned by the head of the household to whose kinship group they belonged. This meant that if they were away from the appropriate cattle, they could not include milk in their diet.

The team of workers recognized and respected the strength of the religious beliefs that supported these customs. They did not attempt to tamper with them. Instead, they hit upon a simple solution. They introduced powdered milk. Though the nature of this was known, it could not be associated, either symbolically or emotionally, with cattle. *D. Lee, 1959, pp. 123-124.*

6.04

6.07

For years a road had been needed to serve 68 families in a rural Philippine village. Children could not get to school during the rainy season and farmers could not move produce or animals. Road proposals had been made before but they were always rejected because the road would cut through the middle of farm plots, take more land from some than others, and necessitate new surveys for land titles. These complaints were legitimate, and, combined with further obstacles, so exasperated the agent that he gave up promoting the project. However, local leaders persisted and the agent returned with a "crooked road" proposal. The proposed road would run along the edges of property and meant that people on both sides of land boundaries contributed equally without having their land dissected. *Summarized from P.T. Orata, 1954, pp. 12-14.*

6.00 - 6.19 Adapting Innovation to the Culture

For additional examples that illustrate the resolution of cross-cultural problems by adapting the innovation to the culture, see 2.50 and 7.00.

6.20 - 6.39 Redefining the Innovation

6.20

In some recent instances agricultural extension programs in Buddhist countries have encountered problems in pest control: the religious prohibition against taking life in any form is logically incompatible with the direct approach to the problem through insecticides. A convenient rationalization sometimes, but not always, helps people overcome the dilemma posed by apparent logically incompatible goals. I recall the example given in lecture by the late Professor R.H. Lowie, who pointed out that Buddhist fishermen in southeast Asia do a thriving business: they are doing the poor fish a favor by drying them out after their long soaking in water! At times a technical expert will go farther with a reasonable rationalization than with a convincing demonstration. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 79.*

6.21

Building up the fertility of the soil presented a variety of problems. The usual legumes (plants such as alfalfa which enrich rather than deplete the soil) were virtually useless because the ever-present cows always got into the fields sooner or later and ruined the crop. Holmes found that a native weed distasteful to the cattle made a good legume, which could be plowed under while still green to provide green manure. But here some of the farmers objected that taking the life of a plant before it had matured was forbidden by their religion. This difficulty was finally overcome when research revealed that the book of Vedic Laws stated that the first obligation of a farmer was to feed himself, his bullocks, and his family.... *J.B. Bingham, 1954, p. 45.*

6.22

A final example is the familiar story of the introduction of the telephone in Saudi Arabia. According to reports, the king wished to connect the capital with certain other cities, but the tribal chiefs would have none of it. The Koran contained no mention of the telephone, and it must therefore be the work of the devil. The king then pointed out that the devil would be unwilling to transmit the words of the Prophet, and see, the telephone lines carried the sacred words of the Koran perfectly. The chiefs were thus convinced that the telephone was all right for them to use. *S.P. Hayes, Jr., 1952, pp. 213-214.*

6.24

When the Colombian government, in a program to increase fruit production, gave seedling orchard trees to farmers in one province, few of the trees were planted, and many of those planted died for lack of care. The following year the program was repeated, but this time a nominal charge was made for each tree. Demand was brisk, and the trees planted received much better care. The farmers perceived value in trees that cost something, and therefore felt they were worth caring for. *G.M. Foster, 1962, p. 128.*

6.23

A farm extension man, who had gone into overseas work, once told us of his problems during the old days when he was trying to get hybrid corn accepted by Texas farmers. He said, "There was one particular area of fairly well-to-do farmers who just wouldn't listen to me. I talked and talked and no one would try the new seed. Finally I decided that I would have to stick my neck out. I found one farmer who jokingly told me he would plant some of the seed on his farm if I would promise to pay the full difference in profit if the new seed produced less than the old variety. I decided I'd have to do it if I was going to make any headway. The field was in a good spot in the middle of a wide valley, just along a road, and you could see it a long way off. He planted half of it with the old seed and half with the hybrid. Luckily for me there was not much rain that year and the hybrid was a drought-resistant variety. At the end of the summer the patch of hybrid corn was the only bright green spot in the valley. You could see it a mile away. I was in! Not only was the farmer who planted it convinced, but he became my unpaid agent. He invited all his friends to come and look, and would even pick them up in his car.

(Continued)

6.22

6.25

In India one of our Point IV agricultural experts reports that the farmers were recently troubled by thousands of wild antelopes. As the common name for these antelopes was *neilgai* (literally, "blue cows"), and as cows are sacred to Hindus, orthodox Hindus would not kill them, and they became a serious pest. They were really not cows, however, and a government decree was promulgated changing their name from *neilgai* to *neilghora* (literally, "blue horses"). Hindus then felt free to shoot them, and their numbers have been greatly reduced.

Here was an instance where religious beliefs could be disentangled far more easily from an objective economic problem needing solution. *S.P. Hayes, Jr., 1952, p. 2.3.*

6.23

After that, it was no time at all before everyone in the valley was growing hybrid corn." C. Arensberg and A.H. Niehoff, 1963, pp. 84-85.



6.26

However, a profound knowledge of the culture may help the worker to rest his proposed charge upon the basis of the cultural values, and even to enlist these in his work. This has been done by perceptive agents of change. In Ettawa, for instance, when the worker suggested green manuring as a means for greater agricultural production, the leader countered rejecting all improvement: "Our culture teaches us not to be too greedy or anxious for more economic production. Remember that Kabir, the saint poet, prayed to God, 'Give me only so much wealth that my family may meet its average needs, that I may not remain hungry, and that the saints or mendicants may not go away from my door hungry.'" The worker, versed in the principles of Brahmanism, argued convincingly that it was important to increase production, since most villagers found themselves unable to meet these sacred obligations to the family, the religious mendicants, and themselves. *D. Lee, 1959, p. 125.*

6.27

A somewhat similar incident occurred with our children's dance and drama group. All attempts to introduce a traditional African Dance group met with an active resistance, once again voiced in terms of our wish to push them back. The problem was raised at a staff meeting and we agreed on a new approach. It was decided to call it a Folk Dance group and introduce members to the folk dance of different lands. We would start with the music of Sir Roger de Coverley, some Scottish folk dances, square dances, and Eastern European folk dances, as well as African dances. Here we would start with the local Afrikaans Volkspelelijes and lead on to Bantu dances. From the day we first returned to African dances, we never looked back. The group became strictly an African dance group. They were delighted to find that their dances compared most favorably with those of other nations and even admitted that being "theirs" they were far more at home doing them. *V. Jumo, 1964, p. 33.*

6.28

I encountered an unusual example of the effect of the play motif in East Bengal in 1955. In one village to which I was taken nearly 80 percent of the families had built bore-hole latrines, all within the space of several weeks. I asked the American technician how he explained this. He assured me that the health lectures had been carefully worked out and given by his Pakistani associates, that the people had listened with care and been convinced of the desirability of building latrines. Such success had never before occurred in any environmental sanitation program with which I was familiar, and it seemed likely other factors were present. Investigation proved this to be true. In this part of East Pakistan there is a thick covering of rich alluvial soil, which permits the use of an auger for drilling the latrine pit. Four men can core through as much as 20 feet of this soil in an hour or so, and the results are little short of miraculous. It turned out that the villagers were enchanted with this marvelous new tool, and all wanted to try their hand at it. They felt that the concrete perforated slab they had to buy to cap the hole was a small price to pay to enjoy an hour or two with this wonderful new toy. Competition

(Continued)

6.29

The other instance comes from Chile where public health centers, modeled after United States patterns, were introduced beginning in the 1940's. The prenatal mothers' "class" taught by a public health nurse was a part of the introduced pattern. But the new program was only partially successful; expectant mothers balked at being taught in classes like children. Consequently it was decided to represent the classes as short-lived "clubs," which met for the prescribed number of weeks, usually in the homes of mothers. The health center provided tea and cakes, and the meeting thereby became a social affair, in which the discussion of prenatal care was only an incidental event. Since club life is associated with the upper and middle classes, the women from low-income brackets who were health center patients were delighted to be asked to participate in such activities, and the program, as a health measure, has been highly successful. *G.M. Foster, 1962, pp. 72-73.*

6.26

6.28

between groups of men was informally organized, and records were set and broken in rapid succession. For several weeks this was undoubtedly the happiest village in the country. And, at the end of the time, a good job of environmental sanitation had been done—but not for the reason the health team thought! C.M. Foster, 1962, p. 160.

6.30

For example, a public health nurse had been attempting to persuade a group of Mexican immigrant mothers in the United States to abandon their customary diet, and to feed their babies milk. She had been violently condemning their traditional diet, but finally, when she discovered that she was making no progress, she suggested that they feed their babies the water in which their beans were cooked. The babies began to thrive, and when the nurse later pointed out to the mothers the supposed effects of the bean water, they replied: "Oh, but we are feeding them milk now too. We have followed your advice about the milk ever since you stopped calling all of our own food bad." . . . *M. Mead, 1954, p. 293.*

6.31

An agricultural agent was assigned the task of inducing a native village in Angola to switch from their worn-out highland patches to virgin bottomland for farming. The bottomland, however, was taboo because it was the burial ground for children and the belief was that if any man worked the bottomland his wife would die. Although this belief appeared to eliminate any chance of achieving the project goal, the agent was undaunted. Instead of challenging the belief, he subtly gained the people's confidence by initiating simple but effective improvements to existing farming methods in the highland. In addition he successfully undertook bottomland farming on his own. The villagers saw concrete evidence of the benefits they themselves could obtain, and that the agent's wife was in fine health. With clearly demonstrated evidence that the belief was unfounded and that bottomland farming was superior, the program flourished until the Angolese government itself finally adopted the program. *Summarized from F.L.W. Richardson, Jr., 1943, pp. 44-48.*

6.32

Sometimes a transfer of emphasis in introducing an innovation will overcome indifference to it. An example of this occurred in a region where a DDT spraying campaign was under way to rid a community of malarial mosquitoes. This happened in a region where the women are secluded and access to the intimate living and sleeping quarters is not easily obtained. In the absence of any conviction on the part of the villagers that mosquitoes were really the cause of malaria there was no rush to open homes to the well-meaning intruders. It was difficult indeed to get permission to spray the first few houses. As it happened, the spraying of these houses killed the bedbugs, which had been a far greater annoyance in the eyes of the population than the mosquitoes. Therefore the emphasis in the posters and visual aids was shifted from mosquito control to bedbug control with very good dual results and full local co-operation. *M.E. Opler, 1954, pp. 49-50.*

6.20 - 6.39 Redefining the Innovation

For an additional example that illustrates the resolution of cross-cultural problems by redefining the innovation, see 6.04.

6.40 - 6.59 Getting Recipient Participation

6.40

Holmberg provides us with an excellent example of an assistance project which depended upon collective acceptance and which failed even though it was concerned with a need already felt by the people. In a community in the Viru Valley of Peru, villagers had petitioned the Peruvian government for aid in obtaining well water to supplement their river supply during periods of shortage in the dry season. A permanent and reliable water supply was important to these people for household and for irrigation and production needs. Although a well was successfully dug, the entire project failed because the technicians did not consult with leaders of local opinion or seek to involve the people. Antagonisms based on local social and political conditions became so great that it was necessary to withdraw the project. *C.J. Erasmus, 1959, p. 393.*

6.41

A survey of village conditions showed one village to have an extremely high child mortality rate which was traced to one well where the water was so polluted as to account for all sickness. There were no latrines and all rain water washed into the well. The first official reaction was "Fill in the well and build a new one." The advice came, "Don't—the well is older than anyone here—old people have been drinking from it all their lives; they will resent criticism of the well and raise to its support—youngsters may listen if their children are ill—a village schism will result, a disintegration of the community, and nothing will be done—let the well come later—first find something all can agree on."

This "felt need approach" prevailed. Discussion with the village showed an unanimous desire for a road to the nearest highway which was built by voluntary labor under technical direction. Then came enthusiasm for a football ground, then a school. There followed an epidemic of pig cholera and the villagers, by this time confident in the extensor agent, sought his help and vaccinated all their pigs while those of other villages died wholesale. At the next meeting one old man

(Continued)

6.40

6.42

... One of the most successful technical aid ventures in India of which I know has made good use of the *panches* or traditional Indian arbiters and leaders. By bringing them together in camps and giving them special opportunities to obtain information about the project and to observe its workings, the program enhanced the prestige of these leaders and gained for itself spokesmen and powerful champions in the villages. *M.E. Opler, 1952, p. 134.*

6.41

arose. "If pigs can be saved why not our children—half of them die before two years." So the return to the well, but instead of building a new one they, the villagers themselves with technical help, filled in the old well area, raised curbing, fixed drainage, put in laundry facilities that drained elsewhere and there was a healthy well and an unanimous village retaining its unity with increased power to tackle further projects. *H.R.G. Howman, 1962, p. 59.*

7.00 - 7.99 Role Definition and Adaptability

7.00 - 7.29 Defining the Job Too Narrowly

7.00

Lester Snyder of Morgantown, W. Va., an alumnus of West Virginia University, went to Liberia for ICA to train Liberians in the operation and maintenance of farm equipment used in the production of staple crops.

Mr. Snyder quickly discovered that if he were to accomplish that mission, there were other jobs that had to be done, too. It was not enough to train Liberians to drive a 3-ton tracklayer, when intestinal ailments and low vitality among the workers rendered them unable to work and to use the knowledge he gave them. He searched until he found the sources of their illness—drinking water from untreated streams and drainage ditches. With considerable patience and many demonstrations, he finally persuaded the people among whom he worked that they could have good, safe "Snyder's water" simply by boiling their supply.

He taught them how to protect their huts from termites and fire, how to build sanitary latrines, how to lay out a village so that one fire would not wipe out the entire community, and many other things unrelated to what he originally was sent to teach—the use of heavy equipment.

(Continued)

7.01

... Many Americans are afraid of their food, you know, they won't eat with the Viet-Nameese on a bet. We had a story about a senior adviser up north, who went out on a trip with his counterpart, who was a division commander, I guess. The first day at the noon meal this American commander hauled out his own rations and sat there and ate them. The division commander had invited him for lunch, and the American refused you know—and he came in off the trip and he got the word, "I'll see you every Friday between 11 and 12." And for the next 8 or 10 months that's about all that guy saw of his counterpart. ... I think they took this as a personal affront; that he offended them and it's irreparable. Once you've done it, it's done.

From an interview, related by Jack Danielson.

7.02

In the 1930's U.S. Indian Service personnel gained valuable experience concerning the need to explain their programs clearly to the people concerned. In order to halt erosion and to improve the quality of the Indians' livestock, a conservation program was undertaken on the Navajo Indian Reservation in the "four-corners" region of the Southwest. The main project was to numerically reduce the animals to the carrying capacity of the range; the technical aspects of the situation were well understood. Some 400,000 sheep and goats, as well as a number of horses, were bought by the government and destroyed, land conservation projects were undertaken by the CCC sheep-dipping procedures set up, and special grazing rules established.

Erosion of the land was effectively halted; therefore, from a technical point of view, the project was successful. Viewed psychologically, however, the project failed utterly, mainly because the Navajos never really understood what the technicians were trying to accomplish. No one had ever enlightened the Navajos concerning the dangers of range depletion and erosion due to excessive grazing;

(Continued)

7.00 - 7.29 Defining the Job Too Narrowly

For additional examples that illustrate the problems arising from a narrow definition by the technician of his job responsibilities, see 1.26, 5.32, and 7.31.

7.00

At the end of 2 years the people around Gbedien, his station, had greatly improved in health and working habits. Mr. Snyder had also accomplished his main task of training a work corps in the use of farm machinery. *Department of State, 1960, pp. 26-27.*

7.02

therefore, to them, the complicated procedures of destroying animals and allotting pasturage were inexplicable. . . . *C.M. A: enaberg and A.H. Niehoff, 1964, pp. 87-88.*

7.30 - 7.49 Failure to Build Institutions

7.30

The first project was a group of seven wells dug in the town of Paksé in 1956 through the Laotian government's public works department, but with the advice and financial assistance of an American agency. The wells were deep and fairly expensive to construct for most of them had to be drilled by dynamiting through layers of solid rock. They were placed in various neighborhoods in the town where they could serve large groups of people. They were capped with concrete and good pumps put on them.

The people were definitely aware of the need for good water and there was a great demand for wells. Without them, water had to be carried from the Mekong River or be bought from water carriers. Since no one was assigned responsibility for these wells, they were consequently regarded as "government" wells. By 1958 all had broken down. The American regional agricultural advisor repaired them all in that year, but still did not bother about the problem of designating responsibility for them. Before he left the country a year later some had broken down again and in 1960 all of them were once more out of order. C. Arensberg and A.H. Niehoff, 1963, p. 91.

7.31

On one occasion I brought an Indian villager to a medical dispensary established by American missionaries. The American doctor in charge diagnosed the case as malaria, and prescribed a course of atabrine. . . . The only direction the patient had to do with when to take the pills. On talking the matter over with this villager, I learned that he had no idea that mosquitoes had anything to do with malaria. He owned a mosquito net but used it only when the mosquitoes became too annoying and not out of fear of contracting this disease. This man was certainly "aided" by the services at this American clinic; in fact, he was cured temporarily by the treatment. But few will hold that this kind of technical aid is enough. The person helped remained unconscious of his problem and unable to prevent a repetition of his sickness. Needless to say, he could communicate nothing useful about the matter to others. . . . It is obvious that malaria and this kind of treatment could exist side by side for hundreds of years. C.E. Thurber, 1961.

7.30

7.32

In a similar case, the Coffee Federation of Colombia, as part of the hygiene program previously mentioned, installed a number of rural water distribution systems. To save small coffee farmers the chore of going long distances to springs and to prevent the use of contaminated sources of water, the Coffee Federation built a great number of small reservoirs, each to provide water for ten to two hundred and fifty small farm homes, and piped the water directly to each farmer's house. These programs were extremely popular with coffee farmers, who were only too glad to share part of the construction cost. Yet when the Coffee Federation left it up to committees composed of water-users of a single reservoir system to maintain these systems, inadequate maintenance invariably resulted. This was just as true of systems serving fewer than fifty houses as it was of the larger ones. But the Coffee Federation found the farmers perfectly willing to pay a monthly water bill for the service of permanent caretakers.

These cases illustrate a misconception very common among technicians in underdeveloped areas that people are "naturally" cooperative or that they will

(Continued)

7.33

In Iran, for example, the American aid program has put a good deal of effort into establishing vocational secondary schools. But after a young Iranian spends three or four years at a boarding school that is clean and well-managed, learning enough about the world to realize how much he does not have, he is often sent back to his village rather than on into a national agricultural-development program. Returning home, the young man is disgusted at the ignorance of his parents and the squalor of their condition; the inevitable reaction sets in and he goes off to a big city, there to join the army of unemployed or underemployed white-collar workers--for even by serving as the lowliest government clerk he can make more than he could earn by staying on his parents' land. The absence of an adequate program of agricultural development makes excellent local schools less relevant to the national welfare than their sponsors intended. H. Cleveland, G.J. Mangione, and J.C. Adams, 1960, pp. 166-167.

7.32

automatically take collective action if they are only shown the need for it. . . .
C.J. Erasmus, 1961, pp. 88-89.



7.30 - 7.49 Failure to Build Institutions

For an additional example that illustrates the failure of innovations because necessary social institutions were not started with the innovation, see 3.42.

7.50 - 7.69 Personal Inflexibility

7.50 - 7.69 Personal Inflexibility

For examples that best illustrate personal inflexibility of the technician, see 1.02, 1.03, 1.25, 2.29, 2.60, 3.01, 3.60, 6.00, 6.02, 6.03, 6.04, 6.24, 7.01, and 7.30.