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Varieties of culture shock for international teachers to consider: A literature review

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Abstract: *This paper examines contextual information critical to teachers who go overseas to work in international schools. When teachers move abroad to work, they become sojourners between cultures. Rich learning and growth awaits sojourners, but so do obstacles, one of which is how to successfully acclimatize to the new cultural environment. This process has numerous monikers; perhaps the most comprehensive one is sojourner adjustment, departing from the original concept of culture shock, which was initially considered an occupational and even a psychiatric malady. Today, our understanding of culture shock has changed significantly, from an anomalous pathological event to a ubiquitous process that is challenging and often painful, yet that also results in valuable growth opportunities. Therefore, before examining sojourning teachers' needs, what supports are helpful, and what contributes to their thriving in international teaching positions, an understanding of sojourner adjustment is helpful. Literature on sojourner adjustment for K-12 teachers in the international arena exists, but not in abundance. This literature review therefore looks broadly at literature on a variety of sojourner experiences as they pertain to cultural adaptation. Finally, literature on sojourner adjustment offers an instructive lens for understanding certain complex hurdles that international teachers face. However, it would be even more helpful to look at sojourner adjustment in combination with other lenses, such as risk-taking, the role of trust, and organizational dynamics that can affect sojourner adjustment. Although these additional lenses are not addressed in the present literature review, they are certainly recommended.*

Keywords: acculturation, international teachers, ——international schools, sojourner adjustment, culture shock

Popular and pragmatic understandings of the effects of globalisation, such as the increasing demands for education by a vast middle-class population (Song, Cavusgil, Li, & Luo, 2016) as well the view that English is the international language of trade and business

(Xu, 2013) are creating a promising market in international education. With more Asian students entering western universities (Austin & Shen, 2016) it follows that Asian students will need access programs, such as international matriculation programs. The emergence, steady rise, and projected continual growth of international education hubs (ICEF, 2014) are creating a significant demand for Western-trained teachers overseas (Hayden, 2011), which is predicted to increase for the next 8 to 10 years (ICEF, 2016; Morrison, 2016).

Many newly certified teachers are already looking overseas to launch their careers. With the increased demand in face of poor prospects locally, it is possible that more teachers will look beyond their borders to find teaching work. Working overseas in an international school may invoke great adventure fantasies. Indeed, many international schools are well poised to offer a rich personal experience for those with high curiosity and wanderlust. Furthermore, the international education circuit offers great professional opportunities for ambitious teachers. However, beyond the historic landmarks, temples, mountains and palm trees, there also exist adjustment challenges that bring unique leadership opportunities for principals in international schools (Hayden, 2004).

Accepting a teaching position overseas involves many risks. Regardless of the teacher's background—whether she is a new teacher or a seasoned one; whether he has prior experience working overseas, or not—the decision to pack up one's life and move to another country represents a courageous leap of faith on the part of the teacher. It is likewise a leap of faith for the recruiter, who hires a stranger based on a 30-minute interview, sometimes online, and then trusts that this person can navigate all of the hurdles that come with an overseas position. According to one recruiter at an overseas recruiting fair, the teachers who are the most desirable to recruiters are those who have an obvious risk-taking gene (P. Nanos, personal communication, January 27, 2018). This is based on the belief that risk-takers have greater capacity to deal with the unexpected and remain resilient.

Research is necessary to further understand the challenges that sojourning teacher face or will face. A list of questions is offered to help guide further inquiry. First, what exactly do teachers need in order to thrive in an international teaching position? Second, what can we learn from teachers who are already overseas, and the leaders who are responsible for them? Third, are there specific structural supports, such as orientation and new teacher induction programs, that are used to help teachers thrive in their new teaching environment, and in their new home? What about collegial and leadership supports? Finally, are the leaders in international schools aware of the specific needs of their international teachers? Exploring these questions could lead to greater understanding of these phenomena as well as to generate further pertinent research paths.

In order to best approach these questions, and to gain a preliminary understanding of this terrain, this review of literature on culture and acculturation is offered. The word

culture can mean a lot. I look at some common versions of culture, as they pertain to teaching internationally. I start by providing the specific context for this literature review, and then look at literature on culture shock, because all teachers who go overseas will face some manifestation of it (Roskell, 2013). The development of cultural competencies may be of benefit to teachers personally as well as professionally. Risk-taking and resilience are important constructs to examine when pondering the above questions, although they are outside of the scope of this literature review.

Context

Many of the concepts explored in this paper have a wide variety of understandings, as well as nuanced differences. My interest is specific to K-12 teachers' needs and adaptations in the international sphere. While there is some literature that focuses on K-12 teachers, much of the extant literature is more broadly focused, for example, upon the experiences of international students, oversees volunteers, or business expatriates. For this reason, some logical extensions are used to develop preliminary understandings.

K-12 International Teaching

International schools are like "atolls in a coral sea. They have links, but different ways of life – different cultures" (Allen, 2004, p. 131). Metaphorically, international teaching consists of numerous common elements (i.e. teaching and learning that allows students to gain access to Western universities), creating a distinct ecosystem (i.e. the organizational, local, and intersectional cultures) functioning within a larger one (i.e. the host country). Therefore, the school and societal cultures in which teachers immerse themselves can be vastly diverse. International education is a broad, umbrella term encompassing many realms of education, that "are so disparate and disjointed that many researchers who have been working within one specific approach may be largely unaware of research in another realm of education." (Dolby & Rahman, 2008, p. 677). This is the case in the field of research, as well as in practice.

Definitions of International, Overseas, and Nationalized Schools

Schools that provide an international education of some sort and are located overseas may be referred to as international schools, overseas schools, or nationalized schools. These three distinct terms reflect their development and usage, and yet this terminology is inconsistently used in practice. This may be due to the definition of international schools, which has changed dramatically since the 1950s (Heyward, 2002), as the educational landscape has changed. Other factors, such as marketing of programming,

might affect usage. This presents some procedural but not insurmountable challenges in the pursuit of literature on international schools.

International schools are schools that provide an education to an international student body. These may be boarding or day schools, but the student body comprises a somewhat cosmopolitan mix of expatriate children, as well as children from one or more countries, including the host country. Overseas schools are designed for a population of children whose parents are all stationed overseas, with enough children to warrant a school to serve their needs. The most common example of overseas schools would be those designed for the children of military families posted overseas. The school program of overseas schools is based on that of the home country. Nationalized schools are ones that offer a global or a western education to local students of a particular country. Many nationalized schools are found in China, where the large majority of staff and students are Chinese, but the curriculum may offer a Western-based component, so as to aid the entry to higher education in Western-based educational institutions.

While these differences might appear minuscule upon first glance, the lived experiences of teachers in these different contexts are sure to be quite different. Hoppe (2007) wrote a succinct summary of The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research (Hofstede, 2006). The GLOBE research looked at 1000 organizations in 62 societies. They looked at various dimensions of organizational life, such as "Power Distance (related to the problem of inequality), Uncertainty avoidance (related to the problem of dealing with the unknown and unfamiliar), Individualism-Collectivism (related to the problem of interpersonal ties) and Masculinity-Femininity (related to emotional gender roles)" (Hofstede, 2006, p. 883). Countries were clustered (i.e. Latin American, Confucian, Anglo, etc.). Key organizational cultural differences were noted. For example, the Germanic, Anglo, and Nordic clusters scored higher in Participative leadership styles, while Middle Eastern, Confucian, SE Asian, Latin American, and Eastern European scored higher in Self or Group Protective leadership styles (Hoppe, 2007). The GLOBE data may have significant implications for Canadian teacher acculturation while abroad, who may be expecting an international school with a name such as Canadian International School to have organizational characteristics that they are accustomed to when this may not be the case.

Ward, Bochner and Furnam (2005) provided detailed cultural information in their instruments for predicting acculturation. Teachers who plan to teach overseas would be wise to consult these and other data on organizational and societal cultures prior to signing contracts. Varieties of culture shock presents themselves in all three of the above contexts. The distinction between the types of schools, populations, and programming ought to be

considered in acculturation research for increased understanding of the phenomena experienced.

Review of Literature

There is much to be learned from teachers who have already launched their teaching careers overseas. To date, there is very little research available for K-12 international teaching (Halicioglu, 2015; Ingersoll, 2014), especially in areas of retention, leadership, and acculturation. Ward (2013) conducted cross-cultural research for four decades and has contributed generously to the body of knowledge on culture shock. She co-wrote a comprehensive text entitled The Psychology of Culture Shock (Ward, Bochner, & Furnam, 2005), which included a comprehensive review of empirical research on this topic. Ward and her colleagues cover research on many sojourners' experiences, such as students, immigrants, refugees, and international workers. They also analysed recent developments in methods, instruments, and variables that could help to predict successful sojourner adjustment (Church, 1982). The text also considered many helpful theoretical frameworks to understand this topic. Surprisingly, while research on sojourning students in included in this text, research on K-12 teachers is not, other than teachers' effects upon sojourning students. This further indicates that acculturation research specific to teacher sojourners is critically needed. In the extant literature, broader acculturation studies, including immigrants and international students (Searle & Ward, 1990), have examined variables such as personality traits (Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004); identity styles (Berzonsky, 2011); instruments to predict adaptability, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003); and skills (i.e., cross-cultural competence; see Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013). However, findings are inconsistent, illustrating deep complexity, and pointing to the need for more focused research.

From the small body of existing literature in this area, along with logical connections to other areas of research, it seems evident that a closer look at culture, what it is, what its effects are, and what opportunities it offers could reveal insights into the previously-stated questions. Furthermore, some specific context-relevant intersections provide insights as to where research ought to be focussed for K-12 international teaching.

International Teachers are Sojourners

The term sojourner has been used for decades (Brein & David, 1971; Church, 1982; Furnham & Bochner, 1986) to describe those who spend temporary amounts of time in another country or culture, for primary reasons other than tourism. When teachers move abroad to teach, they become sojourners (Searle & Ward, 1990), which refers to a status of "temporary between-society culture travelers" (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2005, p. 6).

While one might be inclined to dismiss the personal happenings from infiltrating one's career, it is imprudent to do so in this context, because international teachers have voluntarily removed themselves from that which is known and predictable to them, including their support systems.

The Orbits of Culture

Culture is an aspect of all human behaviour that involves groups. Culture is multifaceted, complex, and nuanced. It can refer to many similar yet distinct things. Northouse (2016) defined culture as "the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people. It is these shared qualities of a group that make them unique. Culture is dynamic and transmitted to others." (p. 428). Because culture is in an iterative relationship with groups, it is inclined to change. A response to a particular aspect of culture may lead to a change in that culture. Thus, one cannot assume that culture is fixed. Because each person belongs to a constellation of cultures and these are all dynamic, the possible iterations are endless.

Joslin (2002) provided a helpful heuristic of the spheres of various cultures affecting international teachers. Her heuristic illustrates culture metaphorically, suggestive of our solar system, except that instead of the energy emanating out, as with the sun, losing impact toward the outer reaches of the system, in this diagram, the impacts flow in toward the subject (the individual). In this system, which I understand as the orbits of culture, the individual and their cultural heritage is in the centre, as the subject, and the effects of the various orbits upon the individual are most impactful when they are close. Thus, the individual's cultural heritage has the greatest impact upon the individual in terms of their sense of identity. The individual's cultural heritage is a composite of many cultural factors.

It is interesting to note that in this heuristic, the international school culture and school's organizational culture are closer to the individual than the societal culture in which the teacher lives, suggesting that the organizational culture of the school will have a greater impact upon the international teacher than the culture of the country that she is living in. If this is the case, then one might expect an international school with a supportive organizational culture to be able to mitigate societal cultures that an international teacher discovers to be undesirable, or incompatible with their individual world-view.

Organizational culture. *Culture forms the superglue that bonds an organization, unites people, and helps an enterprise accomplish desired ends* (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 248).

Reflecting upon Joslin's heuristic mentioned above, the two cultural orbits closest to the international teacher are the international school culture and the school organizational culture. This suggests that we can—and should—learn more about these cultures in order

to better support new teachers, especially in the international context. The simplest definition of organizational culture may be "the way we do things here" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p.4). Organizational culture refers to the specific culture that embodies a particular organization. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), "[a]n organization's culture is revealed and communicated through its symbols" (p. 248), which include but are not limited to its myths, vision, values, heroes, heroines, stories, fairy tales, rituals, ceremonies, metaphors, and methods of play. An organization's culture may have immediately visible features, but may also be difficult to fully understand because some of the elements of the culture are covert (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Societal culture. National-societal culture, "provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres" (Kymlicka, 1995, as cited in Soutphommasane, 2005, p. 404). The notion of national, or societal culture is accompanied by a caveat: national and societal cultures are constantly in flux with the effects of globalisation and cosmopolitanism. As such, they provide general, but not fixed indicators of meaning. For example, many people relocate from the country with which they identify their culture. In some cases, people emigrate to a country with a vastly different societal culture; in other cases, people flee to another country. Regardless of the reasons, the world is a transient place, and methods of acculturation in a new societal culture have varying degrees of effectiveness (Ward, 2013).

The Effects of Culture: The Many Facets of Culture Shock

The term culture shock is understood in common, everyday discourse. The term has also precipitated the development of a substantive lexicon to understand this dynamic and complex phenomenon. According to Roskell (2013), all teachers who move overseas will experience culture shock. But what does this really mean? Most people have seen an iteration of the cultural iceberg image (i.e. Shanghai American School, 2017) with the majority of the iceberg hidden from view, floating along, just waiting to collide with something. From a cultural standpoint, this metaphor helps to illustrate the elusiveness of culture, but it does little beyond this point. Culture shock, however ubiquitous, is a limited notion, because it implies that the person experiencing it will be shocked. In fact, there are many manifestations of culture shock; hence the need for a wider lexicon. I begin by examining the term culture shock, and then proceed to other terms that are useful for this inquiry.

Culture shock. Oberg (1954) coined the term culture shock in the 1950s (Davidson, 2009). His seminal work (1960) referred to below began an important discussion on an apparently ubiquitous experience when one spends time in another culture. Oberg framed culture shock as an occupational disease that befalls those who are "suddenly transplanted abroad" (p. 177). According to Oberg, these transplanted people—sojourners—are "[i]ndividuals [who] differ greatly in the degree in which culture shock affects them" (p. 178). Oberg postulated four stages of culture shock. These are:

1. Euphorie, the honeymoon stage, "which may last from a few days or weeks to six months, depending on circumstances" (p. 178), and is generally associated with a pleasant fascination with the new culture.

2. Regression stage, in which the "home [cultural identity of the sojourner] environment suddenly assumes a tremendous importance" (p. 177). In contrast, the sojourner develops "a hostile and aggressive attitude towards the host country. This hostility evidently grows out of the genuine difficulty which the visitor experiences in the process of adjustment" (p. 178). Oberg claimed that the "second stage of culture shock is in a sense a crisis in the disease. If you overcome it, you stay; if not, you leave before you reach the stage of a nervous breakdown" (p. 179).

3. Anpassung, the adjustment stage, which may begin with the sojourner "still [having] difficulties but he [sic] takes a 'this is my cross and I have to bear it' attitude." It is interesting to note that Oberg observed sojourners taking "a superior attitude toward the people of the host country," such as shifting from criticizing the host country to joking about the host country, which raises concerns about potentially sabotaging one's cultural competencies, although Oberg also noted that the sojourner may reach a point where he "cracks jokes about his or her own difficulties" (p. 179).

4. Erholung, the recovery stage, which is also referred to as adjustment: "The visitor now accepts the customs of the country as just another way of living. You operate within the new milieu without a feeling of anxiety although there are moments of strain" (p. 179).

Since Oberg's seminal work, a fifth stage has been added, which is reverse culture shock. This will be discussed shortly.

Since Oberg (1954) coined the term culture shock, many other terms have been developed to either expand upon his seminal piece (1960), or in refutation of his concept. More than 50 years later, this term is still used in the literature as well as in common parlance, suggesting the influence of Oberg's initial discovery of this phenomenon.

Culture fatigue. Guthrie (1966) framed the negative effects upon military personnel as culture fatigue. Like Oberg, Guthrie studied this phenomenon as a malady that afflicted some sojourners. While his work is quite dated, Guthrie found that despite culture shock—culture fatigue—being a common phenomenon, it was not well documented, perhaps linked to accompanying experiences of shame:

> In spite of the fact that many unfortunate episodes have been attributed to this process [culture shock] it has not been the object of field study. Discussing the matter with returned personnel is not very productive since respondents seem unwilling or unable to recall their difficulties although they insist that other Americans were having difficulties. (p. 39)

Guthrie explained that this type of data is difficult to collect because it "would involve a quasi-psychiatric evaluation of people in the field at a time when they were under the stress of an unsatisfactory adjustment" (p. 39). He concluded that "[i]n the absence of incidence data and other documentation we are obliged to offer a description of culture fatigue based on observations and scattered anecdotal accounts from the literature" (p. 39). Fifty years later, literature on culture shock is still somewhat elusive. Fortunately, this phenomenon now appears in the literature as normative, and not as a psychiatric malady (Oberg, 1960).

Acculturative stress. Berry (1970) developed the concept of acculturative stress in response to Oberg's (1960) work. The body of work on acculturation, which interested Berry, initially explored adverse effects of colonialism. His 1970 study involved Australian Aboriginal people. Berry (1970) used marginality theory in his study, and found that those who rejected assimilation experienced heightened marginality. More recently, the field of acculturation addresses the experiences of immigrants, and "how ethnocultural groups relate to each other, and change, as a result of their attempts to live together in culturally plural societies" (Berry, 2006, p. 287).

Berry's work adds to the body of knowledge on acculturation and culture shock in a number of ways. First, Berry (2006) maintained that "[n]ot all groups and individuals undergo acculturation in the same way" (p. 289). He also challenged some assumptions held in Canada regarding ethnic tolerance and called for careful policy examination and programmatic research (Berry, 1984). Second, the shifts in Berry's work in acculturative stress, which focusses initially on the sociocultural hardships of assimilation, and then later on the sociocultural stresses experienced by culturally diverse populations in plural societies, reflect the changing sociocultural dynamics of today's social reality, which calls for an increasing adoption of pluralism. Third, this shift provides an opportunity to reframe the concept from a malady to a growth opportunity, despite the inherent challenges and stresses that are noted throughout the literature, regardless of the stance each scholar has

taken. Finally, Berry (1970; 2001) examined variables of power and dominant cultures and marginality. In doing so, one is compelled to acknowledge that the concepts of neutrality and assimilation privilege certain populations, while denying the need for cultural identity from other populations. The inequitable privileging of some populations has been one of the foci of scholars of the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) movements (i.e. Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995) which will be discussed later in this article.

Cultural distance. Cultural distance is the notion that "the greater the dissimilarity between two cultures, the more pronounced this emotional reaction [culture shock]" (Mumford, 2000, pp. 74-75). A number of studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s (i.e. Babiker, Cox, & Miller, 1980; Furnham & Bochner, 1982; Searle & Ward, 1990) explored the experiences of sojourners and their malaise in relation to the cultural distance that they experienced. Findings included "the degree of difficulty experienced by sojourners was directly related to the disparity between their culture of origin and the host society" (Mumford, 2000, p. 75). Searle and Ward (1990) concluded that some aspects of adaptation—or maladaptation—were predictable, while others were not. These findings, although instructive, are like finding pieces of a puzzle; there are yet more pieces to discover before a comprehensive understanding can be achieved. During this same time period, some tools were created to facilitate our understanding of culture shock. One of these was the Cultural Distance Index (Babiker et al., 1980), which was developed to measure cultural distance variables of overseas students. These variables included `dress, language, food, religion, leisure, family structure and climate" (p. 76). Another was the Culture Shock Questionnaire (Mumford & Babiker, 1998), which looked at "six aspects of culture shock as delineated by Taft (1977), redrafted in the form of questions" (p. 76). Again, while these tools may be informative to international teacher culture shock, they were designed for international students and overseas volunteers respectively. More research aimed specifically at the experiences of international teachers is needed.

Cultural confusion. Decades later, the expression culture shock is still widely understood and used, despite some fundamental limitations. Oberg's (1960) work is frequently cited, supported, critiqued, and extended. Oberg's basic concepts of the journey from difficulty to acceptance continue to be accepted, even with those who critique his work for some fundamental limitations. One problem with Oberg's vision of culture shock is that it is too narrowly-framed. Hottola (2004) found the term to be dated and the use of the term to have negative implications for non-industrialized countries. Hottola's focus was more on tourism than on longer-term visitors, such as sojourners. This is a remarkable difference

in the sense that tourists may easily move out of areas that are too culturally shocking, or confusing, to use Hottola's term, whereas sojourning professionals have contracts to honour. Nonetheless, he noted some concerns about the use of the term and concepts of culture shock, including the U-curve progression of culture shock, which starts at a high with euphoria, then sinks to disillusionment, then hits bottom with hostility, then starts to climb back up with adaptation, and reaches the final stage with assimilation (Hottola, 2004, p. 448). Hottola cited several scholars as challenging the above U-curve, including Hofstede (1980; 1993), and Ward et al. (2001). Further, he argued that possibly as few as 10% of sojourners experience the U-curve. Hottola (2004) proposed an ecological approach to deal with the complexities of this issue:

> Being human is an embodied experience. The ecological part of the adaptation process may consist of either positive or negative features, or be relatively neutral (as it often is) when the difference between the original and the new environment is small. (p. 451)

Hottola provided convincing arguments that "the U-curve cannot be regarded as a comprehensive explanation of intercultural adaptation in tourism. First, it is an idealized description of reality" (p. 450). As such, Hottola proposed the term culture confusion instead. When one thinks of shock, one expects an experience that brings about instant and serious effect. In fact, Oberg (1960) had discovered and initiated a discussion of a phenomenon that is extremely complex with equally complex manifestations. Today, the U-curve would likely be challenged as dated because assimilation is no longer a desired goal, as it "has waned since the 1960s" (Peach, 2005, p. 3). Adaptation, concepts used by Berry (1999) and Ward (2013) are framed as processes leading to positive outcomes, which holds more promise than the deficit-approach of Oberg. In contrast to assimilation, with adaptation, one chooses what aspects one's original identity to keep (Berry, 2001), which is better aligned with the values in pluralism, whereas with assimilation, mainstream culture is prioritized over individual identity. (Peach, 2005). It is the position of this paper that culture shock will be more useful framed as a personal growth opportunity (P. Adler, 1975), rather than as a disease. This is where understanding the work of acculturation can benefit present and future sojourners

Reverse culture shock. In response to Oberg's seminal work on culture shock (1960), a number of scholars began exploring reverse culture shock, which is experienced when sojourners return to their home culture after a period of time away. The symptoms are similar to previously described ones regarding culture shock, acculturative stress, and culture fatigue. N. Adler (1981), who studied 200 professional sojourners, found that reverse culture shock was worse than the initial culture shock. Xia (2009) similarly drew

this conclusion. Just as Berry (2006) noted that acculturative stress is experienced differently among people, so too are the methods for managing acculturation, which are inconsistent in their effect (Xia, 2009). It is however, somewhat surprising that sojourners, who had managed to effectively acculturate abroad, would have more difficulty re-integrating. In N. Adler's study (1981), some participants found that while they improved their intercultural capacities, they were either lacking in or perceived to be lacking in technical skills, such as skills so specific to the organization that they were tacit. Further, some of the participants believed their expertise gained abroad was not valued back home. The study found organizational evidence of embedment (p. 351) upon return, which is a xenophobic response to different ways of doing things. Since N. Adler's study, however, the professional landscape has changed significantly in Canada, as well as other Western nations, with an increase on multiculturalism (Berry, 1984). Chiu et al. (2013) listed 24 cross-cultural competencies, such as "the ability to deal with unfamiliar situations, different social customs, communication misunderstandings" (p. 843) that North American sojourners need for successful overseas adaptation. These happen to contain competencies that are ubiquitous in professional postings today, suggesting that the cross-cultural competencies developed overseas are seen as desirable in the domestic job market, which is more diverse today.

Culture unrest. More recently, Moufakkir (2013), who critiques Oberg's work as inadequate, proposed the term culture unrest. He rationalized this term because, "culture shock is negotiated at home before the overseas trip begins" (p. 324). The notion of culture shock beginning prior to the trip has implications for the whole understanding of culture shock, which has largely been viewed as a ubiquitous but random side-effect for the sojourner after arrival. Moufakkir advised sojourners to embark on self-reflection in advance, in order to "assess its effect on destination perception and intention to visit." He presented this term as an encompassing one: "[i]t is an umbrella concept that shelters such sociological terms as culture fatigue, tension, dissonance, discomfort or clash" (p. 324). If Moufakkir is correct, then school leadership could play an instrumental role in assisting sojourners to prepare for their unrest and subsequent adaptation prior to arriving in the host country. Teachers who were anticipating a sojourning experience, were recently advised at an overseas recruiting fair to take it upon themselves to do their research on the host country prior to accepting a contract and again prior to departing for the country, as well as to learn about culture shock (S. Potts, personal communication, January 26, 2018). Further, as sojourners often do not anticipate an experience of reverse culture shock upon returning (N. Adler, 1981), which would prepare sojourners for the readjustment phase upon coming home.

Culture learning and teachers at intersections of sojourning. There is a sector of the travel and hospitality industry that caters to tourists looking for culture learning. This sector may be labeled ecotourism, which may be understood as "travel to enjoy the world's amazing diversity of natural life and human culture without causing damage to either" (Ward et al., 2005, p. 132). Backpackers are mostly culture learners, and yet backpacking is also a culture in its own right (Cohen, 2011). Many international teachers engage in backpacking during their school breaks, and so this cultural orbit could perhaps be added to Joslin's teacher relocationheuristic referenced earlier.

The international teacher's experience is not sheathed from other culture experiences while living abroad, and there is considerable diversity in the international school circuit. I offer the following points for consideration:

1. While it is likely that most international teachers are motivated to pursue this professional avenue in order to benefit from culture learning, it cannot be assumed that all teachers are interested in culture learning.
2. International teaching assignments are generally much more structured than ecotourism and backpacking. They have average initial contracts of two years. While culture learners may sign up for an ecotour that has a set length, it is more likely that culture learners engage in their travel in short spurts of time, covering many locations.
3. Some international teaching assignments don't pay enough for teachers to engage in wide tourism.
4. Teachers on two-year contracts within one culture are likely to benefit from deeper culture learning than ecotourism and backpacking can offer.

Cross-cultural adaptation: Sojourner adjustment. Ward and Kennedy produced interesting research in the 1990s. Like Moufakkir (2013), they found Oberg's (1960) work on culture shock too limiting. They recommended alternate constructs, which they referred to as adaptation, or adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Additionally, they noted two distinct types of cross-cultural adaptation:

1. Psychological, which relates to "psychological well-being or satisfaction" (p. 222).
2. Sociocultural, which relates to "social skills, the ability to 'fit in' or negotiate aspects of the host culture. Psychological adjustment, then, is interwoven with stress and coping processes, whereas sociocultural adaptation is predicated on culture learning" (p. 222).

By framing research in this area thus, researchers are able to "include both the social and affective   components   of   the   sojourn   experience…[which]   permits

adjustment/maladjustment to be examined as an outcome of the transition experience" (Ward & Searle, 1991, p. 210).

Searle and Ward conducted two studies on student sojourners (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Searle, 1991). They found psychological and sociocultural adjustment to be significantly related, thus affirming the cross-cultural adaptation phenomenon on a macro level. However, when it came to the more nuanced aspects of their study, such as examining certain personality traits, like extraversion, they did not find significant predictors. Thus, once again, we are left with some missing puzzle pieces in this complex enigma. It is also important to note that their studies were conducted on students, and not teachers. Furthermore, these studies are over 20 years old. Current studies that are specifically geared toward teachers are therefore called for.

Ward et al. (2005) noted that views on cross-cultural adjustment have been re-visioned a lot in the decades since Oberg's seminal work in 1960. They developed an acculturation framework, which is constantly being refined as new research sheds light on this issue. Their framework is informed by the work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), as well as Berry (1994), includes many variables, such as social, political, economic, and cultural factors in both the society of origin and society of settlement (Ward et al., 2005, p. 44), to a variety of stresses, such as life changes and intercultural contact (p. 44), responses, such as affective, behavioural, and cognitive (p. 44) and outcomes. This framework augments Joslin's (2002) cultural orbits heuristic, which was education-specific. Thus, the work of Ward and colleagues is instructive in research on K-12 teachers abroad.

Cultural Competencies Matter

Some teacher candidates in contemporary teacher training programs in Canada learn about cultural competencies, and how these translate into more effective and equitable teaching practices. Gay's (2000) seminal work on CRT has led to broad scholarship on the topic. Gay called for teachers to be culturally responsive because of "the ideas about why it is important to make classroom instruction more consistent with the cultural orientations of ethnically diverse students" (p. 31). Gay's work has largely targeted children in the United States who find themselves at the intersection of being visible minorities and of low socioeconomic status. However, her imperative for CRT has universal applications, and presents a potentially critical intersection for international teachers. For example, in the context of a particular project, she describes some objectives of CRT:
- Developing cultural knowledge and self-study
- Contextualizing academic learning in the lived experiences of diverse students
- Using community cultural resources and students' prior social experiences as conduits for classroom teaching

- Honoring the cultural heritages and experiences of ethnically, racially, and socially diverse students
- Teaching academic and cultural competencies simultaneously
- Students and teachers being genuine partners in the learning process
  (Gay, 2000, p. 182)

Ladson-Billings has contributed generously to the conversation about CRT with her wide body of research on CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995). While the work of both Gay and Ladson-Billings is grounded in critical theory, Ladson-Billings made an unlikely choice for her field, which was to adopt a strengths-based approach: "Instead of asking what was wrong with African American learners, I dared to ask what was right with these students and what happened in the classrooms of teachers who seemed to experience pedagogical success with them" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 74). Ladson-Billings (2007) also examined achievement gaps along racial lines in the United States. While her work, and that of the many scholars of CRT and CRP (i.e. Banks, 1998; Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Delpit, 1995; Howard, 1999) is aimed at the specific challenges in equity and education in the United States, CRT and CRP are important constructs for international teachers to understand. They will certainly be teaching students whose culture is somewhat of a mystery to the teachers.

Finally, teachers who develop their own cultural competencies can expect to be able to personally benefit from these as they navigate their own cultural hurdles while in the process of their sojourner adjustment.

Conclusion

This literature review does not answer all of the questions about teacher needs, supports, thriving, and current experiences in international teaching positions. It does, however, provide a helpful perspective regarding a ubiquitous hurdle that sojourners will have to navigate. Teachers, being sojourners, would be better prepared if they understood the psychological and social stresses they will undergo in order to be able to thrive. Much of the literature on sojourner experiences is not about teachers, and so logical extensions had to be afforded in the absence of teacher-specific literature. Therefore, more literature is needed in this area. Understanding the effects of culture shock and sojourner adjustment will help to inform the above questions, but more literature is also needed in other areas, such as on resilience, new teacher supports, and other pertinent research intersections, such as whether risk-taking affects resilience, and the role of trust to teacher thriving in an overseas environment.

It is worthwhile to note that the most commonly used term to discuss this phenomenon—culture shock—is the original term, which was used to refer to a pathology.

However, since more recent inquiry into this phenomenon is alternatively viewed as an intercultural adaptation process through which sojourning teachers develop their own intercultural communicative competence in tandem with those of their students—the successful navigation of acculturation is thus a profound learning opportunity (Alptekin, 2002; Heyward, 2002). Hofstede (1993), who studied and published widely on organizational culture in a global context, likened the sojourner to Alice in Wonderland (p. 81), who willingly enters the rabbit hole, not knowing what they she will find, but curious nonetheless, and experiences a great many wonderful and terrible things. This vivid metaphor, even if hyperbolic or surreal, offers great hope for sojourners in terms of positive growth opportunities. Hofstede even extended his argument to suggest that the sojourner's experience with culture shock may be forward thinking from a policy and organizational standpoint:

> He or she will meet strange beings, customs, ways of organizing or disorganizing and theories that are clearly stupid, oldfashioned or even immoral—yet they may work, ar at least they may not fail more frequently than corresponding theories do at home. Then, after the first culture shock, the traveller to Wonderland will feel enlightened, and may be able to take his or her experiences home and use them advantageously. All great ideas in science, politics and management have travelled from one country to another, and been enriched by foreign influences. (p. 93)

The more hopeful shift in terms of understanding culture shock brings us to the terms acculturative stress (Berry, 2006) and sojourner adjustment (Church, 1982; Ward et al, 2004), which are more useful in understanding the experiences of today's international teachers. When this kind of sojourner adjustment is successful, multiple stakeholder groups including students, teachers, leaders, and the entire organization win.

Looking ahead to other research trajectories that support the inquiry interests of this literature review, one might ask, what of that comment by an international teacher recruiter about a risk-taking gene? Is there such a thing? And if so, is this a benefit for international teachers? Does it develop resilience? Does successful risk management build resilience or is resilience a prerequisite for risk management? (Christensen & Mikklesen, 2008). These questions might be better extended by a comprehensive literature review.

Looking at the role of trust may also be informative to teacher thriving (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). As mentioned at the outset, teachers who accept international teaching contracts take a huge leap of faith. Cultivating trust in schools is more than just a nice concept. They offer good cost-benefit ratios, especially since they can increase adaptability (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000), which is critical for international teachers: "Organizations designed in ways that cultivate trust can reap the benefits of greater adaptability and reduced costs." (p. 573). Finally, when looking at the variations of sojourner adjustment in

conjunction with other social, developmental, and organizational behaviour, it may be more useful to understand the experiences of sojourner adjustment as growth opportunities, rather than the maladies they were once understood to be.

Strengths-based approaches, such as those offered by Megan and Bob Tschannen-Moran (2011) and Ladson-Billings (2014), offer a positive lens with which to view phenomena that are cross-cultural. Conducting cross-cultural research is not without ethical dilemmas (Said, 1993), and therefore the asset-focussed lens of positive organizational scholarship (Cameron, 2013) has potential to offer beneficial current and future studies on sojourner adjustment.

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