

Cultural schock

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Sabrina Monforte Essay 2 Critical analysis ' To what extent are you convinced by Tange's (2005) position regarding cultural adaptation? ' Regarding the topic of cultural adaptation there are many theories. This essay, essentially, will analyse in depth the opinion of a Professor in the Department of Language and Businesscommunication- Hanne Tange - , whos major is inside the field of Intercultural communication, in opposite cultural and shock adaptation proposed by Sverre Lysgaard in 1995. At first, Tange illustrates in her article ' In a cultural No Man's Land - or, how long does ulture shock last? ' the meaning of sojourn, a key word in her study, to understand that it represents a short stay in another country, usually between a couple of months and a few years, to conduct an international project or a general work in order to expanded the company's view over the world, in order to gain a greater successful income for it. However, cultural shock has not been analysed from both sides, Tange's and Lysgaard, because of the fact that Tange's has been too subjective by taking in consideration this theme. So that, I can not be extended to one of those theories.

Anyway, let's introduce the argument by saying that cultural adaptation is relevant to employees to gain the maximum result from their tasks. During their stay, in the host country, so that they can acquire international competence to benefit their enterprises. According to Tange, to gain the best from a sojourn it is important that also the company should be involved in all the process of adaptation, by following the sojourn, and not to leave the employee on his own. So that the gain of high international qualified skills, can be elaborated as resources for international business.

But Tangle introduces the definition of another author by saying that, ' the process of acculturation rarely moves beyond the level of onstage culture' (Varner and Beamer 2005: 3), which starts during the process of involvement at the beginning in their own country and it ends there. However, to support the conception of cultural adaptation beyond their own national borders, there are two quite distinct approaches: Lysgard's and Tange's model. According to Lysgard's model which is related to the 50's, cultural adaptation follows a U shape curve. Indeed, ' at the beginning of the stage, adjustment is felt to be easy; then follows a ' crisis' in which one feels less well adjusted, somewhat lonely and unhappy; finally one begins to feel better adjusted again, becoming more integrated into the foreign community' (Lysgard cited in Tange, 2005). To arrive at this explanation, one survey has been conducted by analysing Norwegians visiting

The United States of America. On the other hand, against the previous theory, we have Tange who states that cross cultural adaptation is divided in three steps: arrival, two years crisis, intercultural stage. In this case, the finding into the research of ' intercultural business communication benefit from a qualitative method development in the anthropology and ethnology' (Tangle, 2005). Furthermore, to make this survey more reliable, she has taken seven people which they had to move from Scotland to Denmark, aged between 25 and 44 years old, and she has assessed the interviewees through an informal dialogue. Due to this reason it is hardly to think that her methodology can be thought reliable, because of the lowest number of interviewees. It is reasonable to ' distinguish between the concept of sojourners and immigrants' (Tangle, 2005).

Tangle refers to Stella Ting-Toomey to explain that the main differences are more based on an intercultural encounter rather than the natural experience of oneself. This is due to the reason of a different point of view. Immigrants are more likely to be stressed and this leads to an expectation of a permanent residence, which can be obtained by the Government only by following some standard routes, for instance, having a permanent job, staying in the same country for a couple of years without leaving it, receiving a good income. On the other hand, sojourners are also stressed; however, they do not need to stay for all their life in the host country, but the duration of the residence is subject to the contract with their own company. Anyway they can feel anxious in the second stage, according to Tangle's method, as a reaction of being far away from their country, and this is equivalent to: homesickness, and more in detail means missing -family, friends, their own culture -. In addition to that consequence, ' they experience also mild identity dislocation, disorientation and loneliness' (Ting-Toomey 1999: 248). Although this is the second stage, the first one and the last one are quite similar to each other from the aspect of feelings.

The interviewees showed an excited and relaxed attitude. It seems that the arrival stage consists of cultural assimilation, which refers to new exiting social networks, thus they feel emotionally charged up and curious about the new culture. While the third stage is blurred for the interviewees, because under this stage everything is absorbed at the subconscious level and are unlikely to show in a quantitative survey. But we can state that as they gain an inside perspective on their new culture, the frustration might be tail-off but for someone is totally erased.

For example, upon their return to the home country, they might find deviation between their own natural behaviour and their behavioural patterns, and it is unlikely to settle into their old way. In outlining the result from the survey, we can highlight the fact that most of the employees have been sent home, when they had the right feeling to use their intercultural skills to benefit their enterprise. According to Tange's, it is mainly advisable to extend sojourns over three years to strengthen the company's position in a particular market abroad.

At the opposite side, Tange suggests that Lysgaaed's model of the culture shock is not clear and fails to account for cultural overlapping. Whereas she sustains: ' Tangle model is based on a simplified version of reality' (Tangle, 2005). However that may be, dare I say that even if Tangle is approaching to the topic using a qualitative method, which is useful to measure something compared to real-life situation, the weakness aspect is that the interviewees analysed are concentrated. Thereof, we can add that the way putting the article is too subjective and she did not analyse in depth Lysgaard model. In conclusion, notwithstanding what Tangle thinks about Lysgaard strategy, it could be also valuable if analysed.

By evaluating the article, the strength is the duration of the survey taken from the employees settled down in the host country, and moreover it is written in an understandable way for a general audience, even if it might be written for big companies with subsidiaries branches. Tangle gained her aim by combining theories of sojourner adaptation with qualitative results but without countering her arguments. In fact, it is reasonable to imagine that the article and the survey are clashing. Taking over that, I would suggest, HR of

big companies have to invest in personnel development for a cultural overview, to prepare them and push through the stationing overseas in a reasonable way. Thereof, it is relevant that during the training and the sojourn, all the employees are accompanied by their partners, who can help them settle into their new place and to let them facing what they are going to expect. An also, HR have to send employees in another country within their same cultural region, so that they are likely to feel more relaxed.

Tangle survey could be hold in a different way by taking also other resources. 1200 words References Lysgaard S. , 1995. " Adjustment in a foreign society: Norwegian Fulbright Grantees Visiting The United States" in International SocialScienceBulletin 7: 45-51. Tange H. , 2005, ' In a cultural No Man's Land - or, how long does culture shock last? ', Journal of Intercultural Communication, issue 10. Ting-Tomey S. , 1999. Communication Across Cultures. New York: The Guliford Press. Varner, I. and L. Beamer, 2005. Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace. 3rd ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill.