





**Transition Experiences
of the
Internationally Mobile Child**

**also referred to as
the Third Culture Kid**

[The Third Culture Kid]



Definition

An individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents' culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience.

[Major factors in the life of a TCK]

- Being raised in a cross-cultural world
- Being raised in a highly mobile world



Raised in a cross cultural world

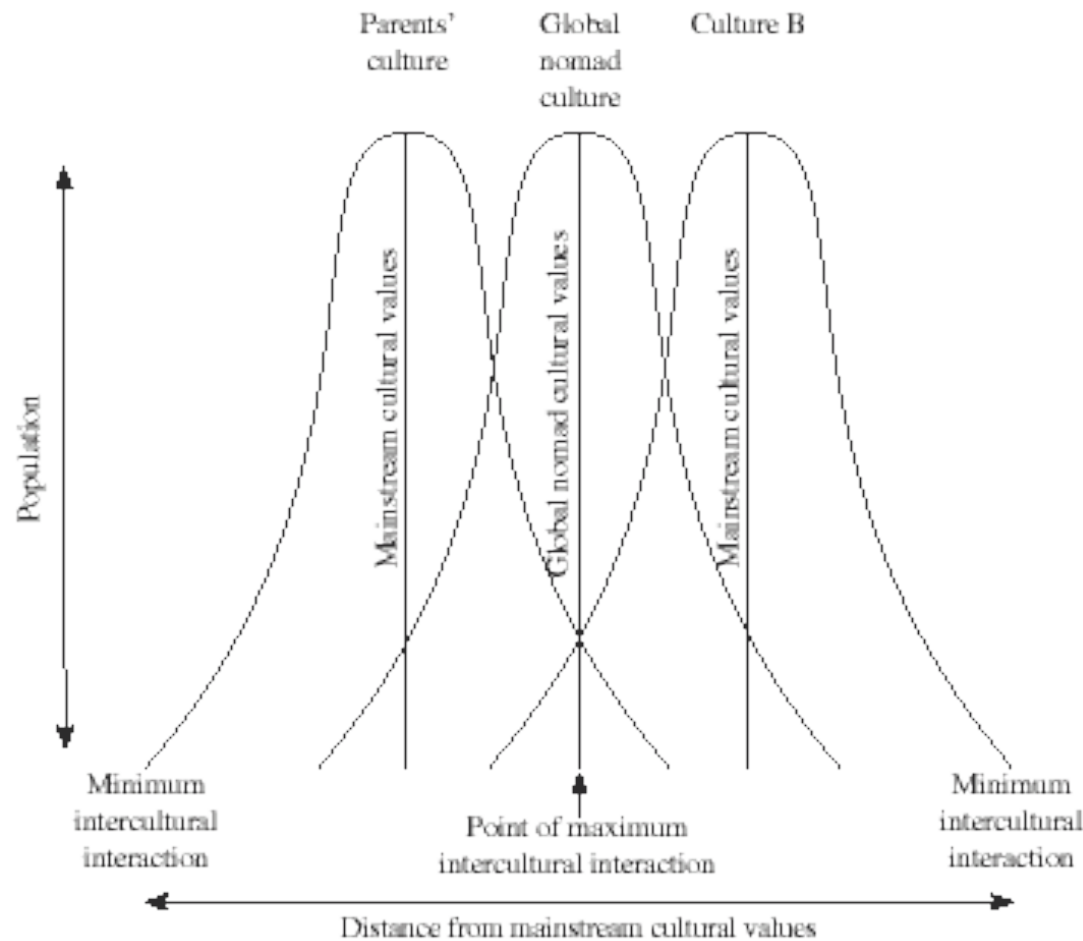
- Culture is the shared framework of learned experiences of people living in the same social environment, providing reference and helping them to make sense of life and the surrounding world.
- During their formative years TCKs experience a variety of cultural experiences all having an impact on the shaping of their identity.

Cultural Identity

- Cultural identity is not the same thing as ethnicity or a passport.

A child who has lived abroad has absorbed the influences of another country like a sponge and does not have the same kind of “national” identity that the parents have.

The cultural identity



- Each move adds more layers to the cultural identity of a TCK

Ways TCKs relate to the surrounding culture

	Look Different	Look Alike
Think Different	FOREIGNER	HIDDEN IMMIGRANT
Think Alike	ADOPTED	MIRROR



The highly Mobile World of a TCK

- The totality of frequent relocations by others as well as the TCKs themselves.
- Each coming and going involves more greetings, farewells- and adjustments.
- In a TCK's world, scenery, culture and schools constantly change.



Relocation



Often children experience moving as something serious happening to them.

Moving is stressful in most cases.

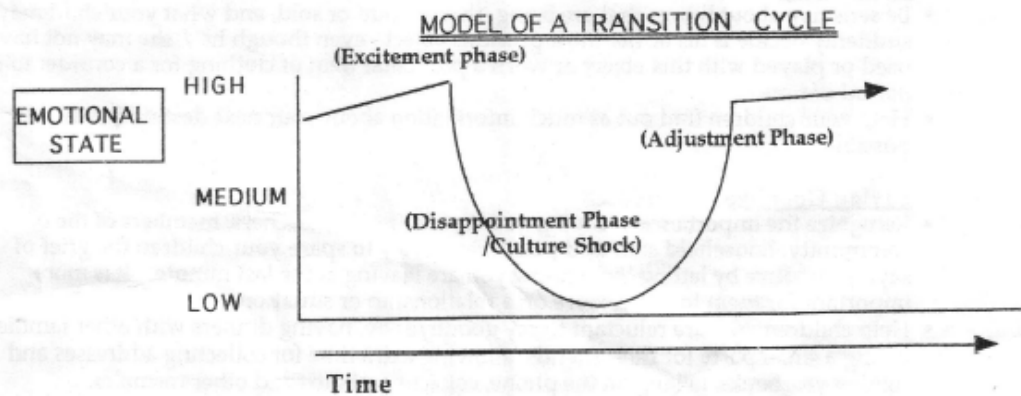
Stress is defined as a condition which is experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources he or she is able to mobilize



Transition

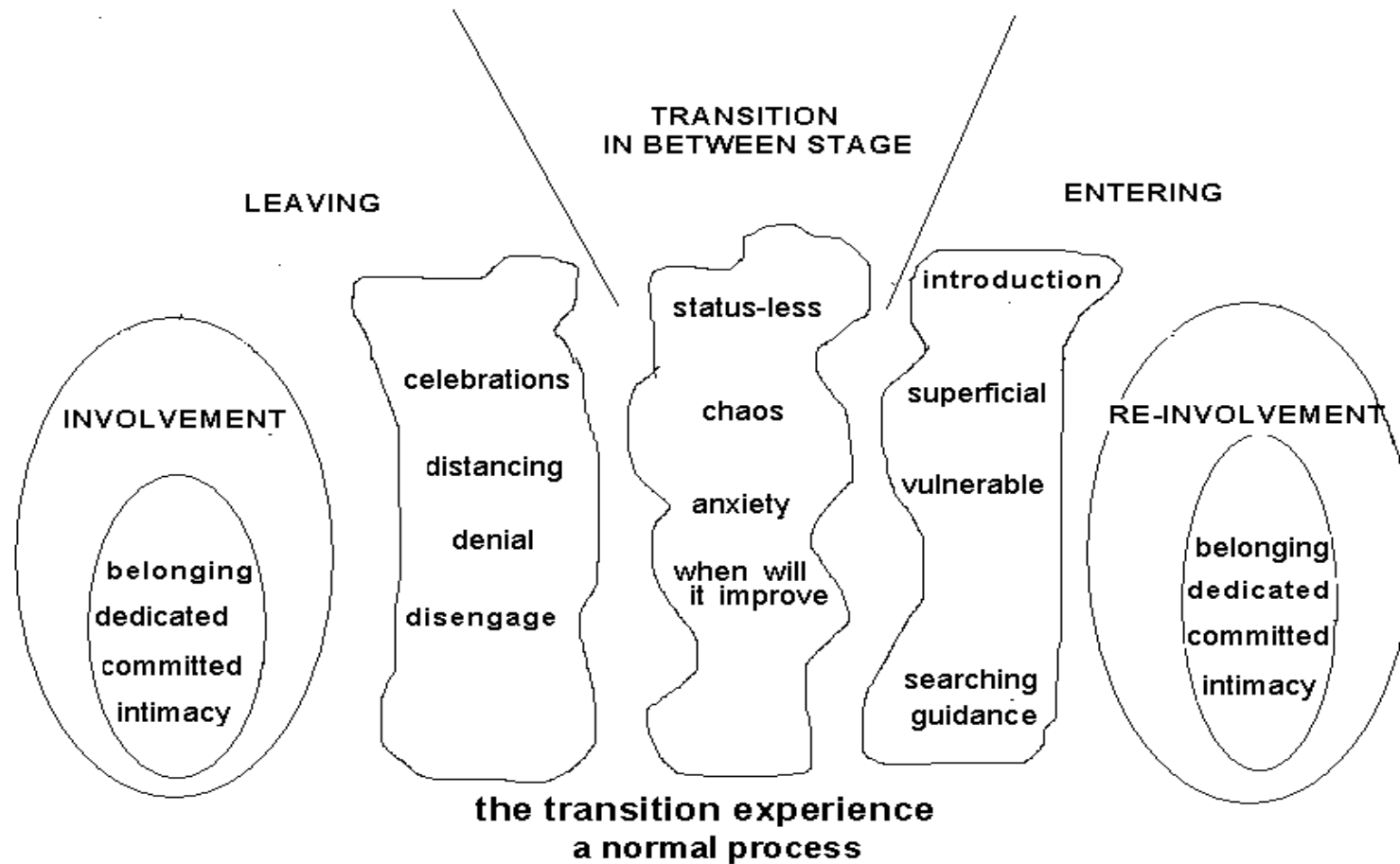
- Transition is the psychological process that an individual goes through in order to come to terms with this new situation.
- Transitions are inherent to the lifestyle of a TCK.
- Relocation requires considerable investment to become familiar and at ease with the new environment.

The transition model



- Involvement stage
- Leaving stage
- Transition stage (in between stage)
- Entering stage
- Re-involvement stage

A normal process



Source: David C. Pollock

Advantages of an international lifestyle

- Linguistic ability
- Cross-cultural skills
- High flexibility
- Three-dimensional world view
- Maturity
- Family closeness
- International orientation
- Highly motivated and high academic achievers

Possible drawbacks of an international lifestyle

- Rootlessness
- Insecurity
- Unresolved grief and sadness
- Off-balance
- Out-of-phase

Partir c'est mourir un peu

- The changes in a persons life can trigger feelings of grief and loss.
- For many TCKs the collection of significant losses and separations before the end of adolescence is often more than most people experience in a lifetime. (Pollock)

[Characteristics of TCK grief]

- Multiple** grief is experienced over and over again, every time a TCK (global nomad) or someone in his/her life moves away.
- Simultaneous** many losses are experienced simultaneously when a TCK moves; the loss of friends, teachers, pets, caregivers, places,
- Intense** this depth of loss and grief is experienced very intensely.
- Unresolved** the grief remains unresolved; it is not properly expressed and dealt with.
- Alone** grieving is a lonely experience when everyone is trying to avoid to talk about it.

The need to express grief

- When the grief process is allowed to flow, turning toward the new home can be done with perhaps a greater sense of excitement and anticipation. (David Pollock)
- Successful adjustment to a new location depends upon bringing appropriate closure to the old.
- One has to say a clear “good bye” in order to say a real “hello”.

Key elements for proper closure (RAFT)

R econciliation; make sure any personal conflicts are resolved.

A ffirmation; tell friends how important their friendship has been.

F arewells; to not have deep regrets at a later stage, it is important to say clear goodbyes.

T hink destination; think ahead and gather information about the new country.

What can you do to help your child during transition? Some suggestions:

■ Understand the process

- understand the nature of transitions and the emotions that are consistent with the stages,
- recognize signs of transition related stress: e.g. stomach aches, irregular sleep patterns, change in eating habits, aggressive or passive behaviour,
- listen to your child's concern without being judgmental, dismissive or defensive,
- appreciate how your reaction to your present surroundings (negative or positive) has an impact on your children,

[continuation]

- Offer children the chance to MAINTAIN CONTACT with people important to them e.g. friends, family, neighbours, teachers.
- Ensure that your child has some “sacred objects” which remind it of home, family and friends.
- Encourage your child to keep a scrap book or a diary to enable it to express its emotions.
- Help your children find new clubs or activities.
- Create a sense of continuity by keeping the routines. It gives stability and security.
- Please do not be afraid to ask questions about anything that may be puzzling you or your children.

[Comforting to know]

- according to experts, 90% of TCKs, when adults, choose to return to international life.

The world needs people that are able to cross barriers and bridge the gaps between cultures.



[Don't worry....]

It usually is said it takes 6 month to settle into a new country - its rules, its habits and life style. So don't worry, you and your family still have a lot of time.

We wish you a Happy Landing.

