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Barbara Bertagni is a trainer and a people developer, an anthropologist, an epistemologist and a clinical psychologist. A founder and managing partner of LKN-LOGOS Knowledge Network (Switzerland and European Union) and of GWK-Growth Wisdom Knowledge (Hong Kong).

Michele La Rosa is a professor of Sociology of Work and of Sociology of Economics by the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bologna. In the same university, he is also the President of the *Sociology* degree program and of the *Occupation, market and ambient* master program. He manages CIDOSPEL – The International Center for Documentation and Sociological Studies on Work Issues.

Fernando Salvetti specializes in skills for global business, cross-cultural intelligence and people development as a founder and managing partner of LKN-LOGOS Knowledge Network (Switzerland and European Union). He is also a founder and a managing partner of GWK-Growth Wisdom Knowledge (Hong Kong) and of some other parent companies, based in several countries. He lectures in different universities and business schools.

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"Glocal" working
Living and working across the world with cultural intelligence

edited by Barbara Bertagni, Michele La Rosa, Fernando Salvetti

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Sociology of work

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For information regarding the articles:

Mail to: LKN – LOGOS KNOWLEDGE NETWORK
European Union Networking Hub
12-14, rond-point des Champs-Élysées
F-75008 PARIS
or
LKN – LOGOS KNOWLEDGE NETWORK
Headquarters and Networking Hub
Bernstrasse 6,
CH-3005 BERN
E-mail: info@logosnet.org

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Never let yourself be goaded into taking seriously problems about words and their meanings. What must be taken seriously are questions of fact, and assertions about facts: theories and hypotheses; the problems they solve; and the problems they raise.

Karl Raimund Popper

*Prophete rechts, Prophete links,
Das Weltkind in der Mitten.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*Chi non sa nulla delle altre culture,
non conosce nulla di se stesso.*

"Glocal" working: a short introduction

Barbara Bertagni, Michele La Rosa and Fernando Salvetti

To live and work in our "glocal" (global & local) world, we have to be innovative as "outsiders" able to see the same things in many different ways. Being an "outsider" is both a challenge and a competitive advantage. If we see and think differently about a business need, a problem, or a market's niche, we have a good chance of coming up with an out-of-the-box approach - one that's original, unique and competitive. So we need some cross-cultural intelligence.

Cultural intelligence is the ability to bridge and benefit from the cultural complexity of people with different nationalities, professional backgrounds and fields, personalities and organizational cultures. Cultural intelligence combines the emotional, cognitive and practical dimensions of cross-cultural encounters and ensures more effective and fulfilling cross-cultural collaboration. Cultural intelligence means being skilled and flexible about understanding a culture, learning more about it from ongoing interactions with it and gradually reshaping your thinking to be more sympathetic to the culture and your behavior to be more skilled and appropriate when interacting with others from the culture.

Today cultural intelligence is a big challenge; the cognitive paradigms, the relational schemas and the value systems among cultures have been shown to vary significantly, not only among different countries, but also among professional people working in the same corporation. For instance, people from different cultural backgrounds are likely to have different attitudes towards hierarchy, ambiguity, achievement orientation, time and working with others.

Do we know how to understand the implicit, basic assumptions that guide people's behavior in different areas of our world? Do we know how to interpret the explicit norms and values that guide a foreign society? Starting with these questions, or with similar ones, we may draw up a scheme useful in understanding a new business context and, at the same time, develop our

own cognitive maps - intellectual flexibility, creativity, ability to innovate –
in the "glocal" world. We must learn to be like Proteus – flexible enough to
adapt with knowledge and sensitivity to each new cultural situation that we
face.

We are all becoming "glocal" people and everyone can learn to be more
culturally intelligent.

Think locally, act globally: cultural constraints in personnel management

Geert Hofstede

Organization cultures and national cultures

'Culture' in general has been defined as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another' (Hofstede 1991: p.5). In the case of national culture, the category is the nation - keeping other things equal. In the case of organization cultures, the category is the organization as opposed to other organizations - again other things, like nationality, being equal. Next to national and organization, one can distinguish occupational cultures, business cultures, gender cultures, age group cultures (like youth culture) and so on. However, the use of the word 'culture' for all these categories does not mean that they are identical phenomena. For different kinds of social systems, their 'cultures' may well be of a different nature. This is particularly the case for organization cultures versus national cultures, if only because membership of an organization is usually partial and voluntary, while the 'membership' of a nation is permanent and involuntary.

Culture as collective programming of the mind manifests itself in several ways. From the many terms used to describe manifestations of culture, the following four together cover the total concept rather neatly - symbols, heroes, rituals and values. These can be imagined as the skin of an onion, symbols representing the most superficial and values the deepest manifestations of culture, with heroes and rituals inbetween.

Symbols are words, gestures, pictures or objects which carry a particular meaning only recognized as such by those who share the culture. The words in a language or jargon belong to this category, as do dress, hair-do, Coca-Cola, flags and status symbols. New symbols are easily developed and old ones disappear; symbols from one cultural group are regularly copied by

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others. This is why symbols represent the outer, most superficial layer of culture.

Heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics which are highly prized in a culture, and thus serve as models for behavior. Founders of companies often become cultural heroes. In this age of television, outward appearances have become more important in the choice of heroes than they were before.

Rituals are collective activities, technically superfluous to reach desired ends, but which within a culture are considered as socially essential. They are therefore carried out for their own sake. Ways of greeting and paying respect to others, social and religious ceremonies are examples. Business and political meetings organized for seemingly rational reasons, often serve mainly ritual purposes; for instance, allowing the leaders to assert themselves.

Symbols, heroes and rituals together can be labeled '*practices.*' As such they are visible to an outside observer; their cultural meaning however, is invisible and lies precisely and only in the way these practices are interpreted by the insiders.

The core of culture is formed by *values*. Values are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Values are feelings with an arrow to it - a plus and a minus side. They deal with:

evil vs. good	dirty vs. clean
ugly vs. beautiful	unnatural vs. natural
abnormal vs. normal	paradoxical vs. logical
irrational vs. rational	immoral vs. moral

Values are among the first things children learn - not consciously, but implicitly. Development psychologists believe that by the age of ten, most children have their basic value system firmly in place and after that age, changes are difficult to obtain. Because they were acquired so early in our lives, many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore

they cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by outsiders. They can only be inferred from the way people act under various circumstances.

Two large research projects, one into national and one into organizational cultural differences (Hofstede *et al.* 1990; Hofstede 1991) showed that national cultures differ mostly at the level of values, while organizational cultures differ mostly at the level of the more superficial practices - symbols, heroes and rituals.

Figure 1

The mix of values and practices in culture for different social systems:

```
LEVEL OF CULTURE      PLACE OF SOCIALIZATION

              +---------------------------+
GENDER        :                         : FAMILY
NATION        :                         :
              :   VALUES               /
CLASS         :                       /
              :                      /
              :                     /
OCCUP-        :                    /    SCHOOL
  ATION       :                   /
              :                  /
BUSI-         :                 /
  NESS        :                /
              :               /
ORGANI-       :  PRACTICES   /    WORKPLACE
ZATION        :
              +---------------------------+
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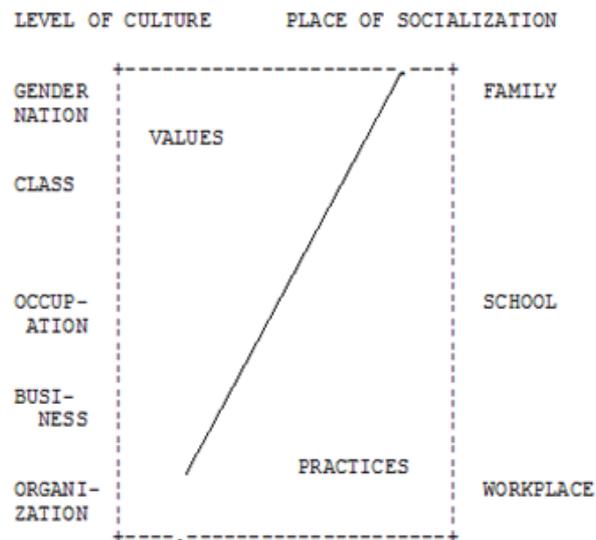
Figure 1 illustrates the different mixes of values and practices for the national and the organization levels of culture, as well as for gender, (social) class, occupation and business. These differences can be explained by the different places of socialization (learning) for values and for practices; these have been listed on the right side of the diagram. Values are acquired in one's early youth, mainly in the family and in the neighborhood and later at school. The two characteristics present at birth are gender and nationality. By the time a child is ten years old, most of its basic values have been programmed into its mind. The school as a socializing place relates to the student's future occupation. Organization cultures are only learned through socialization at the work place, which most people enter as adults - that is, with the bulk of their values firmly in place. A business culture level (like the culture of banking or of tourism) is placed somewhere between occupation and organization.

Figure 1 illustrates that national cultures and organization cultures are phenomena of a different order. Using the same term 'cultures' for both can be misleading.

In popular management literature, organization cultures have often been presented as a matter of values (e.g. Peters and Waterman 1982). The confusion arises because this literature does not distinguish between the values of the founders and leaders and those of the ordinary employees. Founders and leaders create the symbols, the heroes and the rituals that constitute the daily practices of the organization's members. Members do not have to adapt their personal values to the organization's needs. A work organization, as a rule, is not a 'total institution' like a prison or a mental hospital.

Members' values depend primarily on criteria other than membership in the organization, like their gender, nationality, class and occupation. The way these values enter the organization is through the hiring process; an organization recruits people of a certain gender, nationality, class, education and age. Their subsequent socialization in the organization is a matter of learning the practices - symbols, heroes and rituals. Personnel officers who pre-select the people to be hired, play an important role in maintaining an organization's values (for better or for worse).

The fact that organizational cultures are composed of practices rather than values makes them *somewhat* manageable. They can be managed by changing the practices. The values of employees once hired, can hardly be changed by an employer because they were acquired when the employees were children. Sometimes an employer can activate latent values which employees possess but were not allowed to show earlier, such as a desire for initiative and creativity by allowing practices which before were forbidden.

Dimensions of national cultures

The large research project into national culture differences referred to took place across subsidiaries of a multinational corporation (IBM) in 64 countries. Subsequent studies covered students in 10 and 23 countries respectively and elites in 19 countries (Hofstede 1991; Hofstede and Bond 1988; Hoppe 1990). These studies together identified five independent dimensions of national culture differences:

1. *Power Distance*: that is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality of course are extremely fundamental facts of any society and anybody with some international experience will be aware that 'all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others.'

Table 1

Consequences at the work place of differences in national culture:

Small Power Distance societies	Large Power Distance societies
Hierarchy means an inequality of roles, established for convenience	Hierarchy means existential inequality
Subordinates expect to be consulted	Subordinates expect to be told what to do
Ideal boss is resourceful democrat	Ideal boss is benevolent autocrat (good father)

Collectivist societies	Individualist societies
Value standards differ for in-group and out-groups: particularism	Same value standards apply to all: universalism
Other people are seen as members of their group	Other people seen as potential resources
Relationship prevails over task	Task prevails over relationship
Moral model of employer-employee relationship	Calculative model of employer-employee relationship

Feminine societies	Masculine societies
Assertiveness ridiculed	Assertiveness appreciated
Undersell yourself	Oversell yourself
Stress on life quality	Stress on careers
Intuition	Decisiveness

Weak Uncertainty Avoidance societies	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance societies
Dislike of rules – written or unwritten	Emotional need for rules – written or unwritten
Less formalization and standardization	More formalization and standardization
Tolerance of deviant persons and ideas	Intolerance of deviant persons and ideas

Table 1 at the top lists some of the differences at the work place between small and large Power Distance cultures. The statements refer to extremes;

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actual situations may be found anywhere inbetween the extremes. People's behavior in their work situation is strongly affected by their previous experiences in their family and in their school. The expectations and fears about the boss are projections of the experiences with their father - or mother - and their teachers. In order to understand superiors, colleagues and subordinates in another country, we have to know something about families and schools in that country.

2. *Individualism* on the one side versus its opposite *Collectivism*; that is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose and everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The word 'collectivism' in this sense has no political meaning. It refers to the group, not to the state. Again, the issue addressed by this dimension is an extremely fundamental one, regarding all societies in the world.

Table 1 also shows some differences at the work place between collectivist and individualist cultures; most real cultures will be somewhere inbetween these extremes. The words 'particularism' and 'universalism' are common sociological categories. Particularism is a way of thinking in which the standards for the way a person should be treated depend on the group or category to which this person belongs. Universalism is a way of thinking in which the standards for the way a person should be treated are the same for everybody.

3. *Masculinity* versus its opposite *Femininity*; refers to the distribution of roles between the sexes which is another fundamental issue for any society in which a range of solutions are found. The IBM studies revealed that (a) women's values differ less among societies than men's values; (b) men's

values from one country to another contain a dimension from very assertive and competitive and are maximally different from women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and are similar to women's values on the other. The assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine.' The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values.

Table 1 also lists some of the differences at the work place between feminine and masculine cultures.

4. *Uncertainty Avoidance* deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it.' People in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures are more phlegmatic and contemplative and not expected by their environment to express emotions.

Table 1 at the bottom lists some of the differences at the work place between weak and strong Uncertainty Avoidance cultures.

5. *Long Term* versus *Short Term Orientation*: this fifth dimension was found in a study among students in 23 countries around the world, using a questionnaire designed by Chinese scholars (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). It can

be said to deal with Virtue regardless of Truth. Values associated with Long Term Orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with Short Term Orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations and protecting one's 'face.' Both the positively and the negatively rated values of this dimension are found in the teachings of Confucius, the most influential Chinese philosopher who lived around 500 B.C.; however, the dimension also applies to countries without a Confucian heritage.

There has been insufficient research as yet on the implications of differences along this dimension to allow composing a table of differences like those for the other four dimensions in Table 1.

Scores on the first four dimensions were obtained for 50 countries and 3 regions on the basis of the IBM study and on the fifth dimension for 23 countries on the basis of student data collected by Bond. For score values see Hofstede (1991). Power Distance scores are high for Latin, Asian and African countries and smaller for Germanic countries. Individualism prevails in developed and Western countries, while Collectivism prevails in less developed and Eastern countries; Japan takes a middle position on this dimension. Masculinity is high in Japan, in some European countries like Germany, Austria and Switzerland and moderately high in Anglo countries; it is low in Nordic countries and in the Netherlands and moderately low in some Latin and Asian countries like France, Spain and Thailand. Uncertainty Avoidance scores are higher in Latin countries, in Japan and in German speaking countries, lower in Anglo, Nordic and Chinese culture countries. A Long Term Orientation is mostly found in East Asian countries, in particular in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea.

The grouping of country scores points to some of the roots of cultural differences. These should be sought in the common history of similarly scoring countries. All Latin countries, for example, score relatively high on both Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. Latin countries (those today speaking a Romance language i.e. Spanish, Portuguese, French or Italian) have inherited at least part of their civilization from the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire in its days was characterized by the existence of a central authority in Rome and a system of law applicable to citizens anywhere. This established in its citizens' minds the value complex which we still recognize

today. Centralization fostered large Power Distance and a stress on laws fostered strong Uncertainty Avoidance. The Chinese empire also knew centralization, but it lacked a fixed system of laws. It was governed by men rather than by laws. In the present-day countries once under Chinese rule, the mindset fostered by the empire is reflected in large Power Distance but medium to weak Uncertainty Avoidance. The Germanic part of Europe, including Great Britain, never succeeded in establishing an enduring common central authority and countries which inherited its civilizations show smaller Power Distance. Assumptions about historical roots of cultural differences always remain speculative, but in the given examples they are quite plausible. In other cases they remain hidden in the course of history.

The country scores on the five dimensions are statistically correlated with a multitude of other data about the countries. For example, Power Distance is correlated with the use of violence in domestic politics and with income inequality in a country. Individualism is correlated with national wealth (Per Capita Gross National Product) and with mobility between social classes from one generation to the next. Masculinity is correlated negatively with the share of their Gross National Product that governments of the wealthy countries spend on development assistance to the Third World. Uncertainty Avoidance is associated with Roman Catholicism and with the legal obligation in developed countries for citizens to carry identity cards. Long Term Orientation is correlated with national economic growth during the past 25 years, showing that what led to the economic success of the East Asian economies in this period is their populations' cultural stress on the future-oriented values of thrift and perseverance.

National cultures and the functioning of organizations: organizational structure

The national culture of a country affects its parents and its children, teachers and students, labor union leaders and members, politicians and citizens, journalists and readers, managers and subordinates. Therefore management

practices in a country are culturally dependent and what works in one country does not necessarily work in another. However, not only the managers and subordinates are human and children of their culture; also the management teachers, the people who wrote and still write theories and create management concepts are human and constrained by the cultural environment in which they grew up and which they know. Such theories and concepts cannot without further proof be applied in another country and if they are applicable at all, it is often only after considerable adaptation.

The structuring of organizations is primarily influenced by the two dimensions of Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. This is because organizing always demands the answering of two questions: (1) who should have the power to decide what? and (2) what rules or procedures will be followed to attain the desired ends? The answer to the first question is influenced by cultural norms of Power Distance and the answer to the second question, by cultural norms about Uncertainty Avoidance. Individualism and Masculinity affect primarily the functioning of the people within the organizations. Long Term Orientation affects the economic performance of organizations.

Research into the *formal* structures of organizations carried out by British researchers from the University of Aston in Birmingham in the 1960s and early 1970s (the 'Aston studies': Pugh and Hickson 1976) already concluded that the two major dimensions along which structures of organizations differ are 'concentration of authority' and 'structuring of activities.' The first is affected by Power Distance, the second by Uncertainty Avoidance. Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance indices measure the *informal*, subjective mental programming of the people within a country. The fact that these vary systematically between countries explains why the formal structures of organizations also vary between countries; formal structures serve to meet informal cultural needs.

Differences in implicit models of organizations were proven for the case of France, Germany and Great Britain by a study among INSEAD business students in Fontainebleau, France (Hofstede 1991: p.140ff). In dealing with a case study of organizational conflict, French students coming from a country with large Power Distance and strong Uncertainty Avoidance; treated the

organization like a ***pyramid of people*** and advocated measures to concentrate the authority and also structure the activities. Germans, coming from a country with strong Uncertainty Avoidance, but small Power Distance, treated the organization as a ***well-oiled machine*** and wanted to structure the activities without concentrating the authority. British students with a national culture characterized by small Power Distance and weak Uncertainty Avoidance treated the organization as a ***village market*** and advocated neither concentrating authority nor structuring activities, but developing the managers' negotiation skills and all of them were dealing with the same case study. Other things being equal, French organizations do concentrate authority more, German ones do need more structure and people in British ones do believe more in resolving problems *ad hoc* (Maurice *et al.* 1980). A fourth combination, large Power Distance with weak Uncertainty Avoidance is found in Asia and Africa and leads to an implicit model of an organization as an (extended) ***family*** in which the owner-manager is the omnipotent (grand)father.

Motivation

The PD x UA mix also affects the motivation of employees within an organization. Herzberg *et al.* (1959) argued that the work situation contains elements with a positive motivation potential (the real motivators) and elements with a negative potential (the hygiene factors). The motivators were the work itself, achievement, recognition, responsibility and advancement. These are often labeled 'intrinsic' elements of the job. The hygiene factors, which had to be present in order to prevent demotivation, but could not motivate by themselves, were company policy and administration, supervision, salary and working conditions, the 'extrinsic' elements of the job. Herzberg assumed this distinction to be a universal characteristic of human motivation. According to him it is the ***job content*** which makes people act, not the job context.

Long before Herzberg, the issue of human motivation was raised by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), one of the founding fathers of present-day psychology. According to Freud, we are impelled to act by unconscious forces inside us

which he calls our 'id.' Our conscious conception of ourselves, our 'ego' tries to control these forces. The ego in its turn is influenced by an inner pilot, again unconscious, our '*superego.*' The superego criticizes the thoughts and acts of the ego and causes feelings of guilt and anxiety when the ego is felt to be giving in to the id. The superego is developed in a young child mainly by the influence of their parents.

Freud was an Austrian and he conceived his ideas in the Austrian intellectual environment of his day. Austria in the PD x UA matrix takes an extreme position - small Power Distance but strong Uncertainty Avoidance. The latter stands for a strong psychological need for rules; the former stands for a psychological independence from a flesh-and-blood boss to enforce these rules. The superego can be interpreted as an interiorized boss/father who controls the individual through self-imposed guilt feelings. In Austria and other small PD, strong UA countries like Germany, rules that are part of what Herzberg called 'company policy and administration' should not be seen as 'hygiene;' they can be real motivators.

In a similar way, when Power Distances are large, 'supervision' should not be seen as a hygienic factor. In large PD countries, dependence on more powerful people is a basic need which can be a real motivator. When in addition Uncertainty Avoidance is strong, as in most Latin countries, the motivator is the *boss* in the sense of the formally appointed superior. When UA is weaker, as in Asian and African countries, the motivator should rather be labeled the *master*. The 'master' differs from the 'boss' in that the power of the former is based on tradition and charisma more than on formal position.

A cultural analysis therefore shows that Herzberg's theory of motivation is culturally constrained; like all management theories it reflects the culture of the environment in which its author grew up and did research. The same holds for another U.S. theory of motivation - Maslow's (1970) 'hierarchy of human needs.' In Maslow's hierarchy 'self-actualization' is seen as the supreme need. However, this assumes an individualist culture in which the self prevails over the group. In collectivist cultures, harmony with the group will rather be the supreme need. Maslow also puts 'esteem' over 'belongingness.' This assumes a masculine culture; in feminine cultures, belongingness will prevail over esteem as a motivator.

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A third culturally constrained motivation theory is McClelland's (1961) 'achievement motive.' McClelland predicted that countries for which he found a stronger achievement motive would show faster economic growth. This prediction did not come true. Hofstede (1980: p.170-1) showed that McClelland's achievement motive corresponds to weak Uncertainty Avoidance plus strong Masculinity; a combination found in all Anglo countries. However, in the years following McClelland's study, some stronger Uncertainty Avoidance countries like Japan and Germany grew faster economically than the Anglo countries. McClelland presented a culture pattern specific to his home society (the U.S.A) as a universal norm.

Performance appraisal and MBO

Performance appraisal systems are recommended in the North American and West European management literature. They assume that employees' performance will be improved if the employees receive direct feedback about what their superior thinks of them, which may well be the case in individualist cultures. However, in collectivist countries such direct feedback destroys the harmony which is expected to govern interpersonal relationships. It may cause irreparable damage to the employee's 'face' and ruin his or her loyalty to the organization. In such cultures, including all East-Asian and Third World countries, feedback should rather be given indirectly, for example through the withdrawing of a favor or via an intermediary person trusted by both superior and employee.

Management by Objectives as a management technique was developed in the U.S.A. Under a system of MBO, subordinates have to negotiate their objectives with their superiors. The system therefore assumes a cultural environment in which issues can be settled by negotiation rather than by authority and rules, which means a medium to low Power Distance and a not too high Uncertainty Avoidance. In a large Power Distance environment, subordinates and superiors will be unable to function in the ways the system prescribes. In a stronger Uncertainty Avoidance environment the system needs a more elaborate formal structure with norms and examples; this is the case in Germany.

Strategic management

Strategic management as a concept has also been developed in the U.S.A. It assumes a weak Uncertainty Avoidance environment in which deviant strategic ideas are encouraged. Although it is taught in countries with a stronger Uncertainty Avoidance, like Germany or France, its recommendations are rarely followed there, because in these cultures it is seen as the top managers' role to remain involved in daily operations (Horovitz 1980).

Humanization of work

This is a general term for a number of approaches in different countries trying to make work more interesting and rewarding for the people who do it. In the U.S.A. which is a masculine and individualist society, the prevailing form of humanization of work has been 'job enrichment;' giving individual tasks more intrinsic content. In Sweden which is feminine and less individualist, the prevailing form has been the forming of semi-autonomous work groups in which members exchange tasks and help each other. In Germany and German speaking Switzerland, the introduction of *flexible working hours* has been a popular way of adapting the job to the worker. Flexible working hours have never become as common in other countries; their popularity in German-speaking countries can be understood by the combination of a small Power Distance (acceptance of responsibility by the worker) with a relatively strong Uncertainty Avoidance (internalization of rules).

National cultures: convergence or divergence?

Do national cultures in the modern world become more similar? The evidence cited is usually taken from the level of practices - people dress the same, buy the same products and use the same fashionable words (symbols), they see the same TV shows and motion pictures (heroes) and they perform the same

sports and leisure activities (rituals). These rather superficial manifestations of culture are sometimes mistaken for all there is; the deeper, underlying level of values, which moreover determine the meaning to people of their practices, is overlooked.

Value differences between nations described by authors centuries ago are still present today, in spite of continued close contacts. Studies at the values level continue to show impressive differences among nations; after the IBM studies from around 1970 (Hofstede 1980) this is also the case for the European Value Systems Study (Harding and Phillips 1986; Ester et al. 1993). The only convergence is on the individualism dimension. Countries that became richer are moving towards greater individualism, but even here pre-existing differences between countries survive. Japanese on average have become richer than Americans and there is evidence of an increase of individualism in Japan, but traditional elements of Japanese collectivism survive as well. As the process of organizing is affected by national cultural *values*, the nationality component in the structure and functioning of organizations is unlikely to disappear for the decades or even centuries to come. International organizations will continue to have to take this component into account.

Dimensions of organization cultures

A research project similar to the IBM studies but focusing on organization rather than national cultures was carried out by IRIC (the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation, the Netherlands) in the 1980s (Hofstede *et al.* 1990). Qualitative and quantitative data were collected in twenty work organizations or parts of organizations in the Netherlands and Denmark. The units studied varied from a toy manufacturing company to two municipal police corps. As mentioned above, this study found large differences among units in practices (symbols, heroes, rituals), but only modest differences in values, beyond those due to such basic facts as nationality, education, gender and age group.

Six independent dimensions are allowed to describe the larger part of the variety in organizational practices. These six dimensions can be used as a

framework to describe organization cultures, but their research base in twenty units from two countries is too narrow to consider them as universally valid. For describing organization cultures in other countries and/or in other types of organizations, additional dimensions may be necessary or some of the six may be less useful. The dimensions of organization cultures found are listed in Table 2, together with some of the ways in which they manifest themselves. They are the followings:

Table 2 - Manifestations at the work place of differences in organization culture:

1. Process Oriented	**Results Oriented**
People avoid taking risks People spend little effort Each day is the same	Comfortable in unfamiliar situations. People spend maximal effort Each day presents new challenges.
2. Job Oriented	**Employee Oriented**
Pressure for getting job done Important decisions by Individuals Organizations only interested in work people do	Attention to personal problems. Important decisions by group. Organizations concerned with welfare of employees and their families.
3. Professional	**Parochial**
Think years ahead. Employee's private life is considered, their business only competence plays a role in recruiting	Do not think of far ahead. Norms of organization cover behavior on job and at home.
4. Open System	**Closed System**
Organization and people transparent to new comers and outsiders Almost every one fits into the organization	Organization and people closed and secretive even to insiders. Only very special people fit into the organization. New employees need more than a year to feel at home.
5. Tight Control	**Loose Control**
Everybody is cost conscious Meeting times kept punctually Lots of jokes about job and organization	Nobody is cost conscious Meeting times only kept approximately. Always serious about job and organization.
6. Pragmatic	**Normative**
Emphasis on meeting needs of customers Results are more important than procedure. Pragmatic, not dogmatic in matter of ethics.	Emphasis on correctly following procedures. Correct procedures more important than results High standard of ethics even at expense of results

1. *Process-oriented versus results-oriented cultures*. The former are dominated by technical and bureaucratic routines, the latter by a common concern for outcomes. This dimension was associated with the culture's

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degree of homogeneity. In results-oriented units, everybody perceived their practices in about the same way and in process-oriented units, there were vast differences in perception among different levels and parts of the unit. The degree of homogeneity of a culture is a measure of its 'strength;' the study confirmed that strong cultures are more results oriented than weak ones and vice versa (Peters and Waterman 1982).

2. *Job-oriented versus employee-oriented cultures*. The former assume responsibility for the employees' job performance only and nothing more; employee-oriented cultures assume a broad responsibility for their members' well-being. At the level of individual managers, the distinction between job orientation and employee orientation has been popularized by Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid (1964). The IRIC study shows that job versus employee orientation is part of a culture and not (only) a choice for an individual manager. A unit's position on this dimension seems to be largely the result of historical factors, like the philosophy of its founder(s) and the presence or absence in its recent history of economic crises with collective layoffs.

3. *Professional versus parochial cultures*. In the former, the (usually highly educated) members identify primarily with their profession; in the latter, the members derive their identity from the organization for which they work. Sociology has long known this dimension as 'local' versus 'cosmopolitan,' the contrast between an internal and an external frame of reference.

4. *Open systems versus closed systems cultures*. This dimension refers to the common style of internal and external communication and to the ease with which outsiders and newcomers are admitted. This dimension is the only one of the six for which there is a systematic difference between Danish and Dutch units. It seems that organizational openness is a societal characteristic of Denmark more than of the Netherlands. This shows that organization cultures also contain elements that reflect national culture differences.

5. *Tightly versus loosely controlled cultures*. This dimension deals with the degree of formality and punctuality within the organization; it is partly a function of the unit's technology. Banks and pharmaceutical companies can be expected to show tight control, research laboratories and advertising agencies

loose control; but even with the same technology, units still differ on this dimension.

6. *Pragmatic versus normative cultures*. The last dimension describes the prevailing way (flexible or rigid) of dealing with the environment, in particular with customers. Units selling services are likely to be found towards the pragmatic (flexible) side, units involved in the application of legal rules towards the normative (rigid) side. This dimension measures the degree of 'customer orientation,' which is a highly popular topic in management literature.

Determinants of organization cultures

Inspection of the scoring profiles of the twenty units on the six dimensions shows that dimensions 1, 3, 5 and 6 (process vs. results, parochial vs. professional, loose vs. tight and normative vs. pragmatic) are affected by the type of work the organization does and by the type of market in which it operates. In fact, these four dimensions partly reflect the *business or industry culture*. In Figure 1, it was located inbetween the occupational and the organizational level because a given industry employs specific occupations and it also maintains specific organizational practices for logical or traditional reasons. On dimension 1, most manufacturing and large office units scored process oriented; research/development and service units scored more results oriented. On dimension 3, units with a traditional technology scored parochial; high-tech units scored professional. On dimension 5, units delivering precision or risky products or services (such as pharmaceuticals or money transactions) scored tight, those with innovative or unpredictable activities scored loose. Surprisingly the two city police corps studied scored on the loose side; the work of a policeman is unpredictable and police personnel have considerable discretion in the way they carry out their task. On dimension 6, service units and those operating in competitive markets scored pragmatic while units involved in the implementation of laws and those operating under a monopoly scored normative.

While the task and market environment thus affect the dimension scores, the IRIC study also identified distinctive elements in each organization's culture, even compared to other organizations in the same industry. These represent competitive advantages or disadvantages.

The other two dimensions, 2 and 4 (employee vs. job and open vs. closed) seem to be less constrained by task and market but rather based on historical factors like the philosophy of the founder(s) and recent crises. In the case of dimension 4, open vs. closed system, the national cultural environment was shown above to play an important role.

Although organization cultures are mainly composed of practices, they do have a modest values component. The organizations in the IRIC study differed somewhat on three clusters of values. The first resembles the cross-national dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance. A cross-organizational Uncertainty Avoidance measure is correlated with dimension 4 (open versus closed), with weak Uncertainty Avoidance obviously on the side of an open communication climate. A second cluster of cross-organizational values bears some resemblance to Power Distance. It is correlated with dimension 1 (process versus results oriented) - larger Power Distances are associated with process orientation and smaller ones with results orientation.

Clusters of cross-organizational value differences associated with individualism and masculinity were not found in the IRIC study. Questions which in the cross-national study composed the Individualism and Masculinity dimensions formed a different configuration in the cross-organizational study labeled 'Work Centrality' (strong or weak) - the importance of work in one's total life pattern. It was correlated with dimension 3, parochial versus professional. Obviously work centrality is stronger in professional organization cultures. In parochial cultures, people do not take their work problems home with them.

For the other three dimensions, 2, 5 and 6, no link with values was found at all. These dimensions just describe practices to which people have been socialized without their basic values being involved.

Managing (with) organization culture

In spite of their relatively superficial nature, organization cultures are hard to change because they have developed into collective habits. Changing them is a top management task which cannot be delegated. Some kind of culture assessment by an independent party is usually necessary which includes the identification of different subcultures which may need quite different approaches. The top management's major strategic choice is either to accept and optimally use the existing culture or to try to change it. If an attempt at change is made it should be preceded by a cost-benefit analysis. A particular concern is whether the manpower necessary for a culture change is available.

Turning around an organization culture demands visible leadership which appeals to the employees' feelings as much as to their intellect. The leader or leaders should assure themselves of sufficient support from key persons at different levels in the organization. Subsequently, they can change the practices by adapting the organization's structure; its functions, departments, locations and tasks - matching tasks with employee talents. After the structure, the controls may have to be changed, based on a decision of what aspects of the work have to be coordinated how and by whom and at what level. At the same time it is usually necessary to change certain personnel policies related to recruitment, training and promotion. Finally, turning around a culture is not a one-shot process. It takes sustained attention from top management, persistence for several years and new culture assessments to see whether the intended changes have indeed been attained, as well as what other changes occurred in the meantime.

In the case of mergers and acquisitions, a diagnosis is needed for identifying the potential areas of culture conflict between the partners. Decisions on mergers are traditionally made from a financial point of view only; mergers are part of a big money power game and seen as a defense against (real or imaginary) threats by competitors. Those making the decision rarely imagine the operating problems which arise inside the newly formed hybrid organizations. A diagnosis of the cultures involved should be an input to the decision whether or not to merge and after the decision has been made, it should be an input to a plan for managing the post-merger integration so as to minimize friction losses and preserve unique cultural capital.

The six dimensions describe the culture of an organization but they are not prescriptive. No position on one of the six dimensions is intrinsically good or bad. Peters and Waterman (1982) have presented eight maxims as norms for excellence. The results of the IRIC study suggest that what is good or bad depends in each case on where one wants the organization to go and a cultural feature that is an asset for one purpose is unavoidably a liability for another. Labeling positions on the dimension scales as more or less desirable is a matter of strategic choice and this will vary from one organization to another. In particular, the popular stress on customer orientation (becoming more pragmatic on dimension 6) is highly relevant for organizations engaged in services and the manufacturing of custom made quality products, but may be unnecessary or even harmful for, as an example, the manufacturing of standard products in a competitive price market.

Managing culture differences in multinationals

Most multinational corporations do not only operate in different countries, but also in different lines of business or at least in different product/market divisions. Different business lines and/or divisions often have different organization cultures. Strong cross-national organization cultures within a business line or division, by offering common practices, can bridge national differences in values among organization members. Common practices, not common values, are what will keep multinationals together.

Structure should follow culture. The purpose of an organization structure is the coordination of activities. For the design of the structure of a multinational, multi-business corporation, three questions have to be answered for each business unit (a business unit represents one business line in one country). The three questions are: (a) which of the unit's in-and-outputs should be coordinated from elsewhere in the corporation?, (b) where and at what level should the coordination take place? and (c) how tight or loose should the coordination be? In every case there is a basic choice between coordination along geographical lines and along business lines. The decisive factor is whether business know-how or national cultural know-how is more crucial for the success of the operation.

Matrix structures are a possible solution but they are costly, often meaning a doubling of the management ranks and their actual functioning may raise more problems than it resolves. A single structural principle (geographic or business) is unlikely to fit for an entire corporation. Joint ventures further complicate the structuring problem. The optimal solution is nearly always a patchwork structure that in some cases follows business and in others geographical lines. This may lack beauty, but it does follow the needs of markets and business unit cultures. Variety within the environment in which a corporation operates should be matched with appropriate internal variety. Optimal solutions will also change over time so that the periodic reshufflings which any large organization knows should be seen as functional.

Like all organizations, multinationals are held together by people. The best structure at a given moment depends primarily on the availability of suitable people. Two roles are particularly crucial: (a) country business unit managers who form the link between the culture of the business unit and the corporate culture which is usually heavily affected by the nationality of origin of the corporation and (b) 'corporate diplomats,' i.e. home country or other nationals impregnated with the corporate culture, multilingual, from various occupational backgrounds and experienced in living and functioning in various foreign cultures. They are essential to make multinational structures work as liaison persons in the various head offices or as temporary managers for new ventures.

The availability of suitable people at the right moment is the main task of multinational personnel management. This means timely recruiting of future managerial talent from different nationalities and career moves through planned transfers where these people will absorb the corporate culture. Multinational personnel departments have to find their way between uniformity and diversity in personnel policies. Too much uniformity is unwarranted because people's mental programs are not uniform. It leads to corporate-wide policies being imposed on subsidiaries where they will not work - or only receive lip service from obedient but puzzled locals. On the other side, the assumption that everybody is different and that people in subsidiaries therefore always should know best and be allowed to go their own way is unwarranted too. In this case an opportunity is lost to build a

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corporate culture with unique features which keep the organization together and provide it with a distinctive and competitive psychological advantage.

Mergers and takeovers within countries have a dubious success record but cross-national ventures are even less likely to succeed. They have to bridge both national and organization culture gaps. Even more than in the case of national ventures, they call for a cultural map of the prospective partner as an input into the decision making on whether to merge or not.

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Three cultures of management: the key to organizational learning

Edgar H. Schein

Why do organizations fail to *learn how to learn* and therefore remain competitively marginal? In this article, I try to explain why organizational innovations either don't occur or fail to survive and proliferate. Some typical explanations revolve around vague concepts of "resistance to change," or "human nature," or failure of "leadership." I propose a more fundamental reason for such learning failure, derived from the fact that, in every organization, there are three particular cultures among its subcultures, two of which have their roots *outside* the organization and are therefore more fundamentally entrenched in their particular assumptions. Every organization develops an internal culture based on its operational success, what I call the "operator culture." But every organization also has, in its various functions, the designers and technocrats who drive the core technologies. I call this "engineering culture;" their fundamental references group is their worldwide occupational community. Every organization also has its executive management, the CEO and his or her immediate subordinates ---- what I call the "executive culture." CEOs, because of the nature of their job and the structure of the capital markets, also constitute a worldwide occupational community in the sense that they have common problems that are unique to their roles.

These three cultures are often not aligned with each other and it is this lack of alignment that causes the failures of organizational learning that I will discuss. The question is whether we have misconceived the initial problem by focusing on *Organizational* learning, when, in fact, it is the executive and engineering *communities* that must begin their own learning process if we are to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Organizations don't learn; innovations don't last or diffuse

The ability to create new organizational forms and processes, to innovate in both the technical and organizational arenas, is crucial to remaining competitive in an increasingly turbulent world. But this kind of organizational learning requires not only the invention of new forms but also their adoption and diffusion to the other relevant parts of the organization and to other organizations in a given industry. Organizations still have not learned how to manage that process. The examples of successful organizational learning we have seen either tend to be short-run adaptive learning ---- doing better at what we are already doing-----or, if they are genuine innovations, tend to be isolated and eventually subverted and abandoned.

For example, a new product development team in a large company worked with the MIT Organizational Learning Center to develop a capacity for learning, by using various techniques derived from "action science," systems dynamics, and organization development, the team created high levels of openness between hierarchical levels and increased communication and trust among its members. This openness and trust permitted team members to reveal engineering design problems as they arose instead of waiting until they had solutions, as prior tradition in this company had dictated.

Early identification of those problems was crucial in order to avoid later interactive effects that would require costly, complex redesigns. For example, changing the chassis design might increase weight, which might require a different tire design, which, in turn, might cause more internal noise, and so on. By revealing such problems early, the team could view the whole car more systemically and could therefore speed up redesign. However, the pileup of early problems caused upper-level managers to make a false attribution. They considered the team to be "out of control" and ordered it to get itself back under control. The team realized that higher management did not understand the value of early problem identification and continued to use its new learning, assuming that the ultimate results

would speak for themselves. The team was able to complete the design well ahead of schedule and with considerably lower costs, but, contrary to expectations, higher managers never understood the reason for these notable results nor gave the team credit for having learned a new way of solving problems.

Instead, higher managers gave themselves credit for having gotten the team "under control." They did not consider the team to be particularly innovative and disbanded it. They subsequently encouraged several of its members and leaders to take early retirement as part of the company's general downsizing program. In another example, an insurance company decided to move toward the paperless office. Top management hired a manager to implement the new system, mandated a schedule, and provided whatever resources the manager needed to accomplish the task. In order to use the new system, employees had to learn complex new computer routines to replace their familiar work with paper. Because the company was also under financial pressure, it had instituted a number of productivity programs that caused line managers to insist that all the daily work continue to be performed even while the learning of the new system was supposed to take place. The new manager was equally insistent that the system be implemented on schedule, causing employees to short-circuit certain routines, to learn only the rudiments of the new system, and even to misrepresent the degree to which they were now working without paper.

The new manager, based on partial and incorrect information, declared that the system was implemented "on schedule" and was given public credit for this achievement. However, the result was that the employees did not learn the new system well enough to make it more productive than the old paper system. In fact, productivity was lower with the new system because it was so imperfectly implemented.

In a third example, a company decided to introduce automatic machine tools into its production process. The idea originated with the engineers who saw an opportunity to do some "real" engineering. The engineers and the vendors developed a proposal based on technical elegance, but found that middle management would not push the proposal up to executive management unless it was rewritten to show how it would reduce costs by

cutting labor. No accurate figures were available, so the team more or less invented the numbers to justify the purchase of the expensive new machines.

As the proposal worked its way up the hierarchy, the labor union got wind of the project and insisted that it would not go along unless management guaranteed that no jobs would be lost and that all the present operators would be retrained. This not only delayed the project, but, when the machines were finally installed, the production process proved to be much less effective and much more costly than had been promised in the proposal. The engineers were highly disappointed that their elegant solution had, from their point of view, been subverted and that all the operators that were to have been replaced had merely been retrained and kept on jobs that the engineers considered superfluous.

Beyond these three specific cases, the history of organizational development, change, innovation and learning shows over and over that certain lessons seem not to take hold. Since the Hawthorne studies of the 1920s, it has been recognized that employees' involvement increased both productivity and motivation. Lewin, Argyris, McGregor, Likert, and many others showed how managers who treated people as adults, who involved them appropriately in the tasks that they were accountable for, and who created conditions so employees could obtain good feedback and monitor their own performance were more effective than those who did not.

Programs such as the National Training Labs' 'sensitivity training groups' and Blake's managerial grid were, for several decades, touted as the solution to all our productivity problems, just as the human relations and participatory management programs of the forties had promised. Yet these and other similar programs have come and gone, and it is not at all clear what organizations learned from them or why these innovations have disappeared, only to be reinvented under new labels such as empowerment, self managed groups and servant leadership.

The lesson of these and similar cases is complicated. On the one hand, we can say that this is just normal life inside organizations. It is just politics or just human nature. Or we can say that these projects and programs were mismanaged, by either the project teams or the executive managers above them. Or we can say that all these human-relations–oriented programs were misguided in the first place. However, I have begun to see deeper

phenomena at work here.

The deeper issue is that in most organizations, there are three different major occupational cultures that do not really understand each other very well and that often work at cross-purposes. These cultures cut across organizations and are based on what have been described as "occupational communities."

The concept of culture and occupational communities

A culture is a set of basic tacit assumptions about how the world is and ought to be, that a group of people share and that determines their perceptions, thoughts, feelings and, to some degree, their overt behavior. Culture manifests itself at three levels: the level of deep tacit assumptions that are the essence of the culture, the level of espoused values that often reflect what a group wishes ideally to be and the way it wants to present itself publicly, and the day-to-day behavior that represents a complex compromise among the espoused values, the deeper assumptions, and the immediate requirements of the situation. Overt behavior alone cannot be used to decipher culture because situational contingencies often make us behave in a manner that is inconsistent with our deeper values and assumptions. For this reason, one often sees "inconsistencies" or "conflicts" in overt behaviour or between behaviour and espoused values. To discover the basic elements of a culture, one must either observe behavior for a very long time or get directly at the underlying values and assumptions that drive the perceptions and thoughts of the group members. For example, many organizations espouse "teamwork" and cooperation," but the behavior that the incentive and control systems of the organization reward and encourage is based more on a shared tacit assumption that only individuals can be accountable and that the best results come from a system of individual competition and rewards. If the external situation demands teamwork, the group will develop some behavior that looks, on the surface, like teamwork by conducting meetings and seeking consensus, but members will continue to share the belief that they can get ahead by individual effort and will act accordingly when rewards are given out. I have heard many executives tell their subordinates that they expect them to act as a team but remind them in the same sentence that they are all competing for the boss's job!

Cultures and subcultures

Cultures arise within organizations based on their own histories and experiences. Starting with the founders, those members of an organization who have shared in its successful growth have developed assumptions about the world and how to succeed in it and have taught those assumptions to new members of the organization. Thus IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Ford and any other company that has had several decades of success will have an organizational culture that drives how its members think, feel and act.

Shared assumptions also typically form around the functional units of the organization. They are often based on members' similar educational backgrounds or similar organizational experiences, what we often end up calling "stove pipes" or "silos." We all know that getting cross-functional project teams to work well together is difficult because the members bring their functional cultures into the project and, as a consequence, have difficulty communicating with each other, reaching consensus and implementing decisions effectively. The difficulty of communication across these boundaries arises not only from the fact that the functional groups have different goals, but also from the more fundamental issue that the very meaning of the words they use will differ. The word "marketing" will mean product development to the engineer, studying customers through market research to the product manager, merchandising to the salesperson, and constant change in the sign to the manufacturing manager. When they try to work together, they will often attribute disagreement to personalities and fail to notice the deeper shared assumptions that color how each function thinks.

Another kind of subculture, less often acknowledged, reflects the common experiences of given levels within a hierarchy. Culture arises through shared experiences of success. If first-line supervisors discover ways of managing their subordinates that are consistently successful, they gradually build up shared assumptions about how to do their job that can be thought of as the "culture of first-line supervision." In the same way, middle management and higher levels will develop their own shared assumptions and, at each level, will teach those assumptions to newcomers as they get promoted. These hierarchically based cultures create the communication problems associated with "selling senior management on a new way of doing things," or "getting budget approval for a new piece of equipment" or "getting a personnel requisition through." As each cultural boundary is crossed the proposal has to be put into the appropriate language for the next higher level and has to

reflect the values and assumptions of that level. Or, from the viewpoint of the higher levels, decisions have to be put into a form that lower levels can understand, often resulting in "translations" that actually distort and sometimes even subvert what the higher levels wanted.

So far, I have focused on the cultures that are within organizations from the unique experiences of its members. But "occupational communities" also generate cultures that cut across organizations. For example, fishermen around the world develop similar world-views, as do miners, as do the members of a particular industry based on a particular technology. In these cases, the shared assumptions derive from a common educational background, the requirements of a given occupation such as the licenses that have to be obtained to practice and the shared contact with others in the occupation. The various functional cultures in organizations are, in fact, partly the result of membership in broader cross-organizational occupational communities. Salespeople the world over, accountants, assembly line workers and engineers share some tacit assumptions about the nature of their work regardless of who their particular employer is at any given time.

Such similar outlooks across organizations also apply to executive managers, particularly CEOs. CEOs face similar problems in all organizations and in all industries throughout the world. Because executives are likely to have, somewhere in their history, some common education and indoctrination, they form a common worldview - common assumptions about the nature of business and what it takes to run a business successfully.

Three cultures of management

The learning problems that I have identified can be directly related to the lack of alignment among three cultures, two of which are based on occupational communities: (1) the culture of engineering, (2) the culture of CEOs and (3) the culture of operators - and the shared assumptions that arise in the "line units" of a given organization as it attempts to operate efficiently and safely. To understand how these three cultures interact, let us examine their shared assumptions.

The operator culture

The culture of operators is the most difficult to describe because it evolves locally in organizations and within operational units (see the sidebar). Thus we can identify an operator culture in the nuclear plant, the chemical complex, the auto manufacturing plant, the airplane cockpit and the office, but it is not clear what elements make this culture broader than the local unit. To focus on this issue, we must consider that the operations in different industries reflect the broad technological trends in those industries. At some fundamental level, how one does things in a given industry reflects the core technologies that created that industry. And, as those core technologies themselves evolve, the nature of operations changes. For example, as Zuboff has persuasively argued, information technology has made manual labor obsolete in many industries and replaced it with conceptual tasks In a chemical plant, the worker no longer walks around observing, smelling, touching and manipulating.

Assumptions of the operator culture

- *Because the action of any organization is ultimately the action of people, the success of the enterprise depends on people's knowledge, skill, learning ability and commitment.*
- *The required knowledge and skill are "local" and based on the organization's core technology.*
- *No matter how carefully engineered the production process is or how carefully rules and routines are specified, operators must have the capacity to learn and to deal with surprises.*
- *Most operations involve interdependencies between separate elements of the process; hence, operators must be able to work as a collaborative team in which communication openness, mutual trust and commitment are highly valued.*

Instead he or she sits in a control room and infers the conditions in the plant from the various indexes that come up on the computer screen. The operator culture is based on human interaction and most line units learn that high levels of communication, trust and teamwork are essential to getting the work done efficiently. Operators also learn that no matter how clearly the rules are specified as to what is supposed to be done under different

operational conditions, the world is to some degree unpredictable and one must be prepared to use one's own innovative skills. If the operations are complex, as in a nuclear plant, operators learn that they are highly interdependent and must work together as a team, especially when dealing with unanticipated events. Rules and hierarchy often get in the way in unpredicted conditions. Operators become highly sensitive to the degree to which the production process is a system of interdependent functions, all of which must work together to be efficient and effective. These points apply to all kinds of "production processes," whether sales function, a clerical group, a cockpit or a service unit.

The tragedy of most organizations is that the operators know that, to get the job done effectively, they must adhere to the assumptions stated above, but that neither the incentive system nor the day-to-day management system may support those assumptions. Operators thus learn to subvert what they know to be true and "work to rule," or use their learning ability to thwart management's efforts to improve productivity. To understand why this happens, we must examine how two other major cultures operate in organizations.

The engineering culture

In all organizations, one group represents the basic design elements of the technology underlying the work of the organization and has the knowledge of how that technology is to be utilized. This occupational community cuts across nations and industries and can best be labeled the "engineering culture." A colleague who works for a company driven by the engineering culture told me that in the parking lot of his company, signs say, "Maximum Speed Limit: 5.8 Miles Per Hour." Although this culture is most visible in traditional engineering functions, it is also evident among the designers and implementers of all kinds of technologies - information technology, market research, financial systems and so on. The shared assumptions of this community are based on common education, work experience and job requirements (see the sidebar). Engineers and technocrats of all persuasions are attracted to engineering because it is abstract and impersonal. Their education reinforces the view that problems have abstract solutions and that those solutions can, in principle, be implemented in the real world with products and systems free of human foibles and errors. Engineers (and I use this term in the broadest sense) are designers of products and systems that

have utility, elegance, permanence, efficiency, safety and maybe, as in the case of architecture, even aesthetic appeal. But they are basically designed to require standard responses from their human operators, or, ideally, to have no human operators at all. In the design of complex systems such as jet aircraft or nuclear plants, the engineer prefers a technical routine to ensure safety rather than relying on a human team to manage the possible contingencies. Engineers recognize the human factor and design for it, but their preference is to make things as automatic as possible. Safety is built into the designs themselves.

Assumptions of the engineering culture

- *Engineers are proactively optimistic that they can and should master nature.*
- *Engineers are stimulated by puzzles and problems and are pragmatic perfectionists who prefer "people free" solutions.*
- *The ideal world is one of elegant machines and processes working in perfect precision and harmony without human intervention.*
- *Engineers are safety oriented and overdesign for safety.*
- *Engineers prefer linear, simple cause-and-effect, quantitative thinking.*

When I asked an Egyptian Airlines pilot whether he preferred Russian or U.S. planes, he answered immediately that he liked the U.S. planes because the Russian planes have only one or two back-up systems, while the U.S. planes have three back-up systems. In a similar vein, during a landing at the Seattle airport, I overheard two engineers saying to each other that the cockpit crew was totally unnecessary. A computer could easily fly and land the plane.

In other words, a key theme in the culture of engineering is the preoccupation with designing humans out of the systems rather than into them. For example, the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) uses totally automated trains. But the customers, not the operators, objected to this degree of automation, forcing management to put human operators on each train even though they had nothing to do except to reassure people by their presence.

In the earlier example of the company introducing automated machines tools into production processes, the engineers were very disappointed that the operations of the elegant machine they were purchasing would be constrained by the presence of more operators than necessary, by a costly retraining program and by management-imposed policies that had nothing to do with "real engineering." In my own research on information technology, I found that engineers fundamentally wanted the operators to adjust to the language and characteristics of the particular computer system being implemented and were quite impatient with the operators' "resistance to change." From the viewpoint of the users, not only was the language arcane, but they did not consider the systems useful for solving operational problems. Both operators and engineers often find themselves out of alignment with a third critical culture, the culture of executives.

The executive culture

The "executive culture" is the set of tacit assumptions that CEOs and their immediate subordinates share worldwide. This executive worldview is built around the necessity to maintain an organization's financial health and is preoccupied with boards, investors and the capital markets. Executives may have other preoccupations, but they cannot get away from having to worry about and manage the financial survival and growth of their organization (for the assumptions of the executive culture, see the sidebar).

What I have identified as the executive culture applies particularly to CEOs who have risen through the ranks and been promoted to their jobs. Founders of organizations or family members appointed to these levels have different assumptions and often have a broader focus. The promoted CEO especially adopts the exclusively financial viewpoint because of the nature of the executive career. As managers rise in the hierarchy, as their level of responsibility and accountability grows, they not only have to become more preoccupied with financial matters, but also find that it becomes harder to observe and influence the basic work of the organization. They discover that they have to manage from afar and discovery inevitably forces them to think in terms of control systems and routines that become increasingly impersonal. Because accountability is always centralized and flows to the top of organizations, executives feel an increasing need to know what is going on while recognizing that it is harder to get reliable information. That need for information and control drives them to develop elaborate

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information systems alongside control systems and to feel increasingly alone in their position atop the hierarchy.

Paradoxically, throughout their careers, managers have to deal with people and recognize intellectually that people ultimately make the organization run. First-line supervisors, especially, know very well how dependent they are on people. However, as managers rise in the hierarchy, two factors cause them to become more "impersonal." First, they become increasingly aware that they are no longer managing operators, but other managers who think like they do are, thus making it not only possible, but also likely that their thought patterns and worldview will increasingly diverge from the worldview of the operators. Second, as they rise, the units they manage grow larger and larger until it becomes impossible to personally know everyone who works for them. At some point, they recognize that they cannot manage all the people directly and, therefore, have to develop systems, routines, and rules to manage "the Organization." They increasingly see people as "human resources" to be treated as a cost rather than a capital investment.

Assumptions of the executive culture
Financial focus
• Executives focus on financial survival and growth to ensure returns to shareholders and to society.
• Financial survival is equivalent to perpetual war with one's competitors

Self-Image: the embattled lone hero

• The economic environment is perpetually competitive and potentially hostile, so the CEO is isolated and alone, yet appears omniscient, in total control and feels indispensable.
• Executives cannot get reliable data from subordinates, so they must trust their own judgment.

Hierarchical and individual focus

• Organization and management are intrinsically hierarchical; the hierarchy is the measure of status and success and the primary means of maintaining control.
• The organization must be a team, but accountability has to be individual.
• The willingness to experiment and take risks extends only to those things that permit the executive to stay in control.

Task and control focus

• Because the organization is very large, it becomes depersonalized and abstract and, therefore, has to be run by rules, routines (systems) and rituals ("machine bureaucracy").
• The inherent value of relationships and community is lost as an executive rises in the hierarchy.
• The attraction of the job is the challenge, the high level of responsibility and the sense of accomplishment (not the relationships).
• The ideal world is one in which the organization performs like a well-oiled machine, needing only occasional maintenance and repair.
• People are a necessary evil, not an intrinsic value.
• The well-oiled organization does not need people, only activities that are contracted for.

The executive culture thus has in common with the engineering culture a predilection to see people as impersonal resources that generate problems rather than solutions. In other words, both the executive culture and the engineering culture view people and relationships as a means to the end of efficiency and productivity, not as ends in themselves. If we must have human operators, so be it, but minimize their possible impact on the operations and their cost to the enterprise.

Dysfunctional interactions among the three cultures

In many industries, there is enough initial alignment among the needs of the task as defined by the operators, the needs of the engineers for reliable

and efficient operations and the needs of the executives for minimizing costs and maximizing profits so that there are no problems. But when organizations attempt to learn in a generative way, when they attempt to reinvent themselves because the technologies and environmental conditions have changed drastically, these three cultures collide and we see frustration, low productivity and the failure of innovations to survive and diffuse.

For example, in their research on nuclear plants, Carroll and Perin found that plant operators understood very well the interdependencies and interactions of all the systems. They lived in an environment that had its own ecology in which interdependence was visible and in which the management of interdependencies through teamwork was crucial to safety and productivity. But one or two levels above the plant, management saw only specific technical and financial issues, driven very much by the outside forces of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency and their own worldview as executives, a view that could best be described as a "machine bureaucracy," while the operators' worldview could better be described as a "socio-technical system."

The plants were different in how they operated, but each developed its own concept of how to improve its operations. Such improvement plans often required additional allocations of money for training and plant redesign and also often required bending some formal rules and procedures mandated by the industry. These were articulated by the engineering community which was focused primarily on finding standard solutions to problems as solutions preferably free of human intervention, and executive management focused primarily on money and cost control. The lack of alignment among the three cultures often led to inaction and the continuation of practices that were viewed as less efficient or effective.

In some situations, like that in an airplane cockpit, the executive and operator cultures can collide in a drastically dysfunctional way. Blake's research has shown that some airline crashes are due to communication failures in the cockpit resulting from obsession with rank and hierarchy. For example, in one crash a few miles short of the runway, the flight recorder revealed that the flight engineer had shouted for several minutes that they were running out of gas, while the pilot, functioning as the CEO, continued to circle and tried to fix a problem with the landing gear. When this situation was run in simulator, the same phenomenon occurred; the pilot was so busy with his operational task and so comfortable in his hierarchical executive position that he literally did not hear critical

information that the flight engineer shouted at him. Only when the person doing the shouting was a fellow pilot of equal or higher rank did the pilot pay attention to the information. In other words, the hierarchy got in the way of solving the problem. The engineering solution of providing more warning lights or sounds would not have solved the problem either, because the pilot could easily rationalize them as computer or signal malfunctions.

At the boundary between the engineering and executive culture, other conflicts and problems of communication arise. In my research on executive view of information technology (IT) contrasted with the views of IT specialists with an engineering mentality, the IT specialists saw information as discrete, packageable and electronically transmittable, while executives saw information as holistic, complex, imprecise and dynamic. Where the IT specialist saw networking as a way of eliminating hierarchy, executives saw hierarchy as intrinsic to organizational control and coordination. Where IT specialists saw the computer and expert systems as the way to improve management decision making, executives saw the computer as limiting and distorting thinking by focusing only on the kinds of information that can be packaged and electronically transmitted. And if executives did buy into IT implementations for reasons of cost reduction and productivity, they often mandated it in a way that made it difficult for the operators to learn to use the systems effectively because insufficient time and resources were devoted to the relearning process itself, as the earlier insurance company example showed.

Of course, the way in which technology is used is influenced by the values and goals imposed by the executive culture, as some of my examples have shown. And those values are sometimes more stable than the technological possibilities, causing technologies like information technology to be underutilized from the viewpoint of the engineering culture. In the earlier example, the engineers were thwarted by the executive culture and the solution that resulted from union pressure reflected the executives' short-run financial fears.

The lack of alignment among the executive, engineering, and operator cultures can be seen in other industries such as health care in which the needs of the primary care physicians (the operators) to do health maintenance and illness prevention conflicts with the engineering desire to save life at all costs and the executive desire to minimize costs no matter how this might constrain either the engineers or the operators.

In education, the same conflicts occur between teachers who value the human interaction with students and the proponents of sophisticated computerized educational systems on the one hand and the cost constraints imposed by school administrators on the other hand. If the engineers win, money is spent on computers and technologically sophisticated classrooms. If the administrators win, classes become larger and undermine the classroom climate. In either case, the operators - the teacher - lose out, and human innovations in learning are lost.

Implications of the three cultures

There are several important points to note about the three cultures. First the executive and engineering cultures are worldwide occupational communities that have developed a common worldview based on their education, their shared common technology and their work experience. This means that even if an executive or engineer in a given organization learns to think like an operator and becomes more aligned with the operator culture, his or her eventual replacement will most probably return the organization to where it was. The field of organization development is replete with examples of innovative new programs that did not survive executive succession. In other words, the executive's or the engineer's reference group is often *outside* the organization in his or her peer group, whose definition of "best practice" may differ sharply from what is accepted *inside* the organization. Executives and engineers learn more from each other than from their subordinates.

Second, each of the three cultures is "valid" from its viewpoint, in the sense of doing what it is supposed to. Executives are supposed to worry about the financial health of their organization and engineers are supposed to innovate toward the most creative people-free solutions. To create alignment among the three cultures then, is not a case of deciding which one has the right view point, but of creating enough mutual understanding among them to evolve solutions that will be understood and implemented. Too often in today's organizational world, either the operators assume that the executives and engineers don't understand, so they resist and covertly do things their own way, or executives and/or engineers assume that they need to control the operators more tightly and force them to follow policies and procedure manuals. In either case, effectiveness and efficiency will

suffer because there is no common plan that everyone can understand and commit to.

Third, both the executive and engineering cultures are primarily task focused and operate on the implicit assumption that people are the problem, either as costs or as sources of error. In the case of the engineers, the assumption is already implicit in their education and training. The ultimately elegant solution is one that always works and works automatically, in other words, without human intervention. In the case of the executives, the situation is more complex. Either they have come from the engineering culture where people were not important in the first place, or they learned as they were promoted and began to feel responsible for hundreds of people that they had to think in terms of systems, routines, rules and abstract processes for organizing, motivating and controlling. And as they became chief executives accountable to the financial markets and their stockholders, they learned to focus more and more on the financial aspects of the organization. The gradual depersonalization of the organization and the perception that employees are mostly a cost instead of a capital investment is thus a learned occupational response.

It is not an accident that chief executives tend to band together and form their own culture because they come to believe that noone except another chief executive really understands the lonely warrior role. With that sense of aloneness comes related assumptions about the difficulty of obtaining valid information and the difficulty of ensuring that subordinates down the line will understand and implement what they are asked to do, leading ultimately to fantasies of spying on their own organizations like the Caliph of Baghdad who donned beggar's clothes to mingle among the people and find out what they were really thinking. Even though the CEO's immediate subordinates are humans, increasingly the chief executive sees them as part of a larger system that must be managed impersonally by systems and rules. CEOs often feel strongly about not fraternizing with subordinates because, if the organization gets into trouble, those subordinates are often the first to be sacrificed as evidence of "fixing" things.

Fourth, the engineering and executive cultures may agree on the assumption that people are a problem, but they disagree completely on how to make organizations work more effectively. Executives recognize that their world is one of imperfect information, of constant change and of short-run coping while attempting to maintain a strategic focus. Engineers seek elegant permanent solutions that are guaranteed to work and be safe

under all circumstances and therefore typically produce solutions that cost much more than the executives believe they can afford. So the executives and the engineers constantly battle about how good is good enough and how to keep costs down enough to remain competitive.

What is most problematic is that we have come to accept the conflict between engineering and management as "normal," leading members of each culture to devalue the concerns of the other rather than looking for integrative solutions that will benefit both. A few creative companies have sent engineers to talk to customers directly to acquaint them with business realities and customer needs. Some executives aware of this conflict involve themselves from time to time in operations and product development so they do not lose touch with the realities and strengths of the other cultures. But this kind of remedy deals only with the organizational level. The dilemma of twenty-first century learning is broader.

The dilemma of twenty-first century learning

Organizations will not learn effectively until they recognize and confront the implications of the three occupational cultures. Until executives, engineers and operators discover that they use different languages and make different assumptions about what is important and until they learn to treat the other cultures as valid and normal, organizational learning efforts will continue to fail. Powerful innovations at the operator level will be ignored, subverted or actually punished; technologies will be grossly underutilized; angry employees will rail against the impersonal programs of reengineering and downsizing; frustrated executives who know what they want to accomplish will feel impotent in pushing their ideas through complex human systems and frustrated academics will wonder why certain ideas like employee involvement, socio-technical systems analyses, high-commitment organizations, and concepts of social responsibility continue to be ignored, only to be reinvented under some other label a few decades later.

First, we must take the concept of culture more seriously than we have. Instead of superficially manipulating a few priorities and calling that "culture change," we must recognize and accept how deeply embedded the shared, tacit assumptions of executives, engineers and employees are. We

have lived in this industrial system for more than a century and have developed these assumptions as an effective way to deal with our problems. Each has contributed to the success of the industrial system that has evolved.

Second, we must acknowledge that a consequence of technological complexity, globalism and universal transparency is that some of the old assumptions no longer work. Neither the executives nor the engineers alone can solve the problems that a complex sociotechnical system like a nuclear plant generates. We must find ways to communicate across the cultural boundaries, first by establishing some communication that stimulates mutual understanding rather than mutual blame.

Third, we must create such communication by learning how to conduct cross-cultural "dialogues." Recently, the concept of "dialogue" has substantially improved our understanding of human thought and communication and promises to make some understanding across cultural boundaries possible. If people from different cultures will sit in a room together, which is hard enough, they must reflectively listen to themselves and to each other, which is even harder. Fortunately, the understanding of what it takes to create effective dialogues is itself coming to be better understood.

The engineering and executive cultures I have described are not new. What is new is that the operator culture in all industries has become much more complex and interdependent, which has thrown it more out of alignment with the other two cultures. The implication is that *each* community will have to learn how to learn and evolve some new assumptions. We have directed our efforts primarily at the operational levels of organizations and viewed the executive and engineering cultures as problems or obstructions, partly because they do not sufficiently consider the human factor. Yet these cultures have evolved and survived and have strengths as well as weaknesses.

The key to organizational learning may be in helping executives and engineers learn how to learn, how to analyze their own cultures around their strengths. These communities may learn in different ways and we will have to develop appropriate learning tools for each community. Learning may have to be structured along industry lines through consortia of learners rather than along individual organizational lines. And business and engineering education itself will have to examine whether the assumptions

of academics are evolving at a sufficient rate to deal with current realities.

We are long way from having solved the problems of organizational learning, but thinking about occupational communities and the cultures of management will begin to structure these problems so that solutions for the twenty-first century will be found.

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The cultural metaphoric method: description, analysis and critique

Martin J. Gannon

There are many ways of studying ethnic and national cultures. Two of the most general ways are *etic* or culture-general and *emic* or culture-specific. These terms originated in linguistics and refer to the sounds of languages. *Etic* sounds are those found within all or almost all cultures; *emic* sounds are specific to a particular culture or a small number of cultures. The well-known bi-polar or dimensional research by Hofstede (2001) and House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004) in the GLOBE study reflect the *etic* or culture-general approach which dominates the cross-cultural fields of management and psychology. The concept underlying this culture-general method is to construct a large-scale survey that can be administered across numerous national cultures or societies, after which the researchers derive several scales e.g., individualism-collectivism or the degree to which the individual sees himself as part of a group and makes decisions accordingly, even to the extent that he will subordinate his own needs and desires to group values and norms. National cultures or national societies can then be ranked on each of these dimensions so that a profile of each emerges.

The work of Geertz (1973), Gannon (2004; see also Gannon and Pillai, 2010), Nielsen and Mariotto (2005/6), Nielsen, Soares, Machado (under review) and Montague and Morais (1975) are representative of the *emic* approach. These authors attempt to move beyond general descriptions or profiles of each ethnic or national culture or national society into a more in-depth understanding of it through the use of cultural metaphors. A cultural metaphor is any activity, phenomenon or institution with which all or most members of an ethnic or national culture or even a cluster of similar cultures located close to one another (e.g., the Scandinavian nations), identify closely and to which they react emotionally and intellectually; e.g.,

the Japanese garden and the Swedish *stuga* or simple, unadorned weekend and summer home.

In the first part of this article there is an explanation of grounded theory through the use of which, each in-depth or *emic* description of a national culture is derived. This is then followed by a description, analysis and critique of the cultural metaphoric method.

The grounded theory method

This method was developed by Glaser and Strauss (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). They comparatively analyzed grounded theory and logico-deductive theory, the latter of which emphasizes the testing of hypotheses derived from a theory. Frequently, this logico-deductive theory is based on another prominent theory or theoretical perspective and as a consequence, the tests of its hypotheses tend to result in only minor changes in the theoretical perspective, since the system is partially or largely closed to new viewpoints. Glaser and Strauss (1967) are particularly harsh toward the well-known work of Blauner (1964) who described four types of alienation largely based on Marx's theory of alienation while not supposedly entertaining new viewpoints and ideas. They commented scathingly - "In short: Verify (and qualify) this great body of received theory – with every expectation of its relative accuracy. Fortunate indeed are we for our perceptive ancestors!" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 125)

In some ways this charge can be leveled against the bi-polar approach. Hofstede (1967), using only 22 questionnaire items constructed four scales, some of which are significantly inter-correlated, particularly individualism-collectivism and power distance extending from low to high (-0.35). One of the best and least-mentioned features of his 1980 work as in the case of Blauner's review of Marxist alienation is his discussion of the long historical evolution of the framework underlying his four dimensions (see

Parsons, 1935, for an earlier but related and pioneering discussion. Parsons introduced the work of such social theorists as Durkheim, Pareto and Weber to the English-speaking world and discussed at length such concepts as individualism-collectivism and alienation.) While most of the discussions of Hofstede's work have focused on the reliability and validity of his four scales and the wording of the items purportedly representing them (Kirkman et al, 2006), only limited attention was focused on the partially-closed system that they represent. In fact, the swirling debates about the naming of the scales and the items included within them, are related directly to the long historical evolution of this framework.

House and the GLOBE researchers seemed to be aware of this problem, even to the extent of having one well-known cultural anthropologist, Michael Agar, as part of the team. They also employed society-specific researchers in each of their 62 national societies who contributed ideas and survey items to the final questionnaire. Still, while the number of dimensions they discovered increased to nine, Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Erez and Gibson (2005) argued that the scales of the GLOBE study overlapped significantly with the Hofstede study and at best, introduced three novel dimensions - Performance Orientation, Humane Orientation and Societal Orientation. In this sense the GLOBE study may also represent a partially closed system. However, the GLOBE study did introduce several innovations such as differentiating between cultural values and practices while clustering the 62 national cultures into four groups on each scale rather than ranking ordering them, as Hofstede did with his 53 national cultures. It also updated Hofstede's 1980 discussion of the theoretical constructs underlying the development of the survey and specified two types of individualism-collectivism, organizational and institutional.

Schwartz (1994) also appeared to be aware of the closed-system problem Glaser and Strauss criticized. He employed psychologists in the nations studied and asked them to submit items reflective of their specific cultures after which he subjected the survey data to analyses at both the cultural and individual levels, deriving cultural dimensions at both the level of culture and of the individual. He also surveyed both students and teachers with the assumption that they represent the major value systems in their national

cultures. His dimensions such as conservatism, mastery and intellectual autonomy seem quite different from those developed in the Hofstede study and the GLOBE study, although many of them correlated significantly with the Hofstede measures at the cultural level. In short, both the GLOBE study and the Schwartz study seemed to be moving from a purely *etic* approach Hofstede championed to a mix between *etic* and *emic* approaches.

Grounded theory can be succinctly described as an inductive method designed to discover theory from data, rather than allowing the accepted theory to narrow the range of enquiry.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 23) offer a more precise definition:

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discussed, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with one another. One does not begin with a theory and then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge.

However, the developers of grounded theory are not completely opposed to the logico-deductive framework, for at some stage, typically the final stage; a grounded theory must meet the canons of science and be empirically tested. Still, they do argue against an over-reliance on prominent theoretical perspectives that narrow the vision of the researcher and the range of enquiry. Thus, they believe in the importance of formal theory in which hypotheses are formally derived inductively and tested, but they also feel that this formal theory should be substantive in the sense that it is grounded in some way to the phenomenon it is trying to explain. In short, hypothesis testing is the final stage of the process and the hypotheses should be grounded in real-world experiences. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 5) frame their perspective as follows: "Thus, one canon for judging the usefulness of a theory is how it was generated and we suggest that it is likely to be a

better theory to the degree that it has been inductively developed from social research."

Another belief of grounded theorists is that the theory should be readily understandable by academic researchers and laypeople alike. They believe strongly that triangulation, using a variety of methods such as historical records, qualitative data provided through means such as structured and semi-structured interviews and panel discussions, questionnaire surveys and quantitative data of a statistical nature should be used to gather data and confirm the research conclusions (see: also Denzin, 1978). When and if, there are conflicts, then additional data from a variety of sources should be collected until the conflicts disappear.

Glaser and Strauss equate grounded theory with 'the constant comparative method of analysis' which should be continued until repetition of responses and information occurs and no new information is forthcoming, a phenomenon they call "saturation." They contrast statistical sampling (in which the samples selected are predetermined) and theoretical sampling (which is used with the grounded theory method). Theoretical sampling ends when saturation is reached. Obviously there is an element of subjectivity associated with theoretical sampling. Still, saturation tends to be easily recognized by researchers using grounded theory. It is only after theoretical sampling ends that statistical testing or the formal testing of hypotheses representing a broadened theoretical framework takes place. Formal testing of hypotheses does not occur simply after a review of the literature, even as thorough a review as Hofstede completed.

The originators of grounded theory have described in depth the manner in which a specific grounded theory should be tested. However, their research focuses primarily on work organizations. The study of national cultures requires some modifications, simply because of the size and complexity of the endeavor. We are in uncharted waters in this regard as there are only meager attempts at the statistical testing of cultural metaphors as explained below. In the final analysis, statistical testing must occur in the final stage or stages. Otherwise, the writing can be attacked as merely journalistic or literary rather than social scientific.

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Constructing cultural metaphors

For many years metaphors were treated only as linguistic devices suitable for creative thought and creative writing courses. However, Ortony (1975) basically argued that metaphors are not only nice, but necessary, as the title of his well-known article explicitly states. His point of view was consistent with Lakoff and Johnson's position (1980, p. 1) that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical and that the way we think, what we experience and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. That is, metaphors frame the manner in which we interpret the world and the activities within it. For Ortony and Lakoff and Johnson, a metaphor is using the characteristics of one phenomenon to describe another phenomenon, a definition consistent with the construction of cultural metaphors as described in this article.

Clifford Geertz (1973) is generally recognized as the researcher who created the initial interest in using cultural metaphors as descriptors of ethnic and national cultures. As a Fulbright professor in Bali, he had difficulty obtaining information from citizens who could facilitate his research as informants. They were very polite, but evasive. One day he attended an illegal cockfight simply out of boredom. The police arrived, at which time everyone fled, including Geertz. As he was running down an alley, a person waved that he should enter a home; the hostess was putting a tablecloth on a table in the home's courtyard and indicated that he should sit. Moments later the police arrived; immediately the host shouted indignantly that the police were interfering with the celebratory dinner in honor of Geertz, their distinguished Fulbright professor about whom he knew a good amount of information, to Geertz's surprise. After the police left, there was much joviality and breaking down of the barriers separating Geertz and others.

This led Geertz into a statistical study of 500 cockfights and, more importantly, to the proposition that the cockfight represented the essentials of Balinese culture, particularly male Balinese culture. (It should be noted that these statistical tests were preliminary in nature and not the final stage of the research process which is a fundamental requirement of grounded

theory. Geertz's work falls clearly into the realm of interpretative cultural anthropology that accords a secondary or limited role to statistical testing of a theoretical framework and the hypotheses directly related to it, in this case whether the Balinese cockfight genuinely represents Balinese culture.) Each cockfight pitted individuals, families and even neighboring villages against one another. The victor, whether individual, family or village was symbolically giving a delicious and public insult to the loser that would not be countenanced in everyday life. In essence, Geertz had created a cultural metaphor for Bali.

This study is well-known, consistently popular and required reading in many universities and colleges. Paradoxically, it did not motivate other researchers to create cultural metaphors for other ethnic and national cultures. For one exception, see Montague and Morais, 1975, who also did not formally test any hypotheses at the final stage or stages of research. While the field of cultural anthropology was interested in metaphors, the discussion of them tended to be abstract and difficult to apply to business situations (see, for example, Fernandez, 1991).

The author of this article was not very interested in studying cross-cultural differences or cultural metaphors until he served as a Kennedy/Fulbright Professor at Thammasat University in Thailand in 1988. His basic belief at the time was that cultural differences did not significantly matter in the many types of U.S. organizations in which he had worked, providing that the playing field was level.

For his stay, he prepared thoroughly by studying the history, demography, religion and language of Thailand and by reading Hofstede's 1980 book. While he accepted Hofstede's profile of Thailand and the Thais before living there, he was perplexed by the behavior of Thais that he experienced. For example, Hofstede profiled them as collectivistic, whereas the author saw them as a mixture of individualism and collectivism depending upon the situation. It was not until he read John Fieg's description comparing Thais to U.S. Americans, that he felt that he was making progress in understanding the Thais (Fieg, 1976; Fieg & Mortlock, 1989). In both cultures there is a love of freedom, a dislike of pomposity and a pragmatic

outlook. Fieg characterizes Thai behavior and values in terms of a rubber band held loosely between the fingers of both hands. In this authority-ranking culture, the band tightens only periodically when a direct order is given, after which it is immediately loosened and relaxed behavior reoccurs. By contrast, Fieg portrays U.S. American behavior and values in terms of a taut string held between the fingers of both hands most of the time, and seldom is the string loosened. Other U.S. Expatriates with whom Gannon talked and who had read this book also indicated that this short description which takes up only a few paragraphs, provided an apt description of what they were experiencing.

Eventually, through the seminar described below, he was able to identify a cultural metaphor for Thailand, the Thai Kingdom. Most if not all, Thais revere the King, even to the point of viewing him as a semi-deity. The first feature of this metaphor became loose vertical hierarchy as Thailand is a hierarchical culture but Thais only loosely follow rules and commands unless a leader gives a very direct and unambiguous command, as our discussion of the rubber band suggests. In the King's case, he has called several Prime Ministers to the Palace over a period of 60 years and asked for their resignations which were immediately submitted. Freedom and equality represent the second feature. Thailand is one of the few nations in the world that has never been conquered and the only undefeated nation in Southeast Asia. Similar to U.S. Americans, they believe in freedom and equality. Finally, the third feature is the Thai smile which represents the Thais' unending search for a comfortable interpersonal environment, although it does not necessarily connote friendship. A Thai may smile even when he detests the behavior of the other person in order to achieve harmony, just as the King evokes harmony and peace through his adroit handling of Prime Ministers. For a complete description, see chapter 2 of Gannon and Pillai (2009).

Parenthetically, Hofstede seems to have had some difficulty deciding whether a specific culture is individualistic or collectivistic. In the 1980 book, he classified Japan as individualistic, as it ranked 22/23 on individualism-collectivism. Half of the 53 nations were classified as individualistic and half as collectivistic. In his 1991 book, he used a tri-

partite classification system which effectively put Japan into the middle cluster that was collectivistic.

After his return from Thailand to the United States, the author decided to form an MBA/PhD seminar. He wanted to create cultural metaphors for a large number of nations but needed the help of knowledgeable and motivated graduate students, many of whom became co-authors in this endeavor; several have gone on to distinguished academic careers (See Gannon, 2004, for a listing of co-authors in the preface). As described in chapter 1 (Gannon, 2004), the objectives included the following, namely to: 1) study a selected national culture in depth using such theoretical perspectives as those of Hall (Hall and Hall, 1990), Hofstede (1980 and 2001) and Kluckholn and Strodtbeck (1961), as well as a large number of additional variables such as each national culture's history, its demographics, geography and religion or religions (See chapter 1 in Gannon, 2004, or Gannon and Pillai, 2009); 2) identify a cultural metaphor for a specific national culture; and 3) write a readable chapter whose subheadings would be the major features (typically three to seven) of each metaphor and in the process, show how these prominent features are activated within each national culture in a manner consistent with the nation's cultural metaphor, particularly in business.

It is important to note that, at the time when the MBA/PhD seminar began in the late 1980s, there were a wide variety of cross-cultural approaches but few which were widely accepted in and across the cognate fields of cultural anthropology, cross-cultural psychology, intercultural communication and cross-cultural management. Hofstede's 1980 book was beginning to receive wide acceptance in the fields of cross-cultural psychology and cross-cultural management, in large measure due to the fact that other researchers using surveys were able to confirm the four-dimensional approach he derived from theory. One group of researchers titled the Confucius Connection, expanded Hofstede's framework into five dimensions, adding short-term/long-term time orientation with which Hofstede agreed (The Confucius Connection, 1987).

Similarly, Edward T. Hall's cultural anthropological framework enjoyed both popularity and critical acceptance and it is still influential in today's world. For example, Richard R. Gesteland (2005) classifies national cultures primarily through the use of Hall's framework. Further, many writers regard the Kluckholn/Strodtbeck framework as both insightful and very useful, as it combined the cultural anthropological or *emic* perspective and the *etic* or dimensional perspective uniquely. They argued that cultures vary across six dimensions that Western thought has emphasized at least since the 15th Century, that each culture has a dominant orientation in terms of these six dimensions but that other weaker orientations may exist simultaneously in its different geographic regions and racial and ethnic groups.

Most importantly, the students in the seminar possessed variable amounts of knowledge in the social and behavioral sciences. We needed a way to standardize how each student would collect information and data in their research and interviews. Hence we reviewed the perspectives above at the beginning of the semester seminar before allowing the students to begin data collection and interviews.

This grounded approach to culture required an enormous amount of work and Gannon almost gave up on the project after a year. The encouragement and advice offered by the cultural anthropologist Michael Agar, a colleague and friend at Maryland, proved invaluable and motivated him to continue. After six years of work, Gannon and his students were able to meet the objectives of the seminar for 17 national cultures in the first edition of the book, *Understanding Global Cultures* (Gannon, 1994). This first edition contained only a preface, the introductory chapter and one chapter for each national culture. Over time the complexity and length of the book increased significantly; there are now 12 parts and 34 chapters in the fourth edition and the range of topics is highlighted in the subtitle: 'Metaphorical Journeys through 29 Nations, Clusters of Nations, Continents and Diversity' (Gannon and Pillai, 2009).

Nielsen and Mariotto (2005/6) and Nielsen, Soares and Machado (under editorial review) appear to be the only other current researchers using

grounded theory to create cultural metaphors for national cultures. They however, have not proceeded to the final stage hypothesis testing. Nielsen and co-authors have developed two metaphors, the Argentinean tango and Portuguese *fado*. She relies on a deep understanding of these cultures through the use of knowledgeable insiders and extended stays in a national culture. In general, she follows the methodology Gannon outlined in chapter 1 of his book, although there are some variations as noted below. Also, there is at least one doctoral dissertation that focuses on the metaphor for Italy and refines part of it when applied to large cities such as Rome and Milan (see Venezia, 1997).

Analysis

As indicated above, grounded theory argues that the researcher must eventually test hypotheses. Gannon, Gupta, Audia and Kristof-Brown provide such tests (2005/6). They selected six nations and developed two separate paragraph descriptions for each nation using Gannon's book (1994), only one of which paragraph explicitly mentioned the cultural metaphor for that nation. They also developed questionnaire items for each nation. They then examined two nations at a time, creating three separate questionnaires. University students in each of the six nations (n= 664) then completed the appropriate questionnaire. Also, they employed the standard translation-retranslation process. Questionnaire #1 was completed in India and the United States; questionnaire #2 in Germany and Italy; and questionnaire #3 in Taiwan and Britain. For example, the instructions for the U.S. American and Indian students were - 'Please indicate, by filling in any number between 0 and 10, the degree to which you agree that each statement or description represents the United States. Then, alongside this rating, please indicate the degree to which you feel each item represents India. Use 0 for do not agree at all and 10 for totally agree or any number in between.' At the top of each page for the items, the header read - "MOST PEOPLE IN MY COUNTRY," followed by approximately 50 items derived from the two appropriate chapters in Gannon's book. These items

were designed as sentence fragments to complete the header placed at the top of the page (MOST PEOPLE IN MY COUNTRY) and there were two spaces alongside each item in which to record the two responses for each item. A similar process was used for the four paragraphs included in each questionnaire, two for each nation. (The full questionnaire is available in Gannon (2001) and on his website: *www.csusm.edu/mgannon* under the topic - Gannon's *Working Across Cultures: Applications and Exercises*. See: Exercise 4.1, Questionnaire Items and Exercise 4.2, Paragraph Descriptions (Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6). Individual questionnaire items were factor analyzed for two nations at a time to derive independent measures; t-tests for independence were then employed to compare the two nations on each measure in each of the three comparisons.

This research strongly supports both the validity of these six cultural metaphors and the proposition that cultural metaphors can be used as frames of reference for understanding each nation and its culture. Second, this research uncovered both *etic* and *emic* dimensions for each culture. For instance, the three factor analyses confirmed that individualism-collectivism is a major dimension of each of the six cultures. However, it should be observed that Gannon (1994 and 2004) describes many different types of individualism and collectivism particular to each national culture. For example, competitive individualism for the United States as expressed in American football; proud and self-sufficient individualism for Spain as expressed in the Spanish bullfight; and Indian collectivism expressed in the religion-dominated Hindu family system.

When only one standard questionnaire is used across many national cultures or societies, such refined and in-depth descriptions are not possible. Further, most of the dimensions found in this study were *emic* rather than *etic*. This implies that *etic* studies based solely or largely on a single standard questionnaire should be supplemented by additional in-depth analyses and methods associated with grounded theory. Finally, this study refined the initial *emic* dimensions or features of each cultural metaphor found in Gannon (1994). Again, this follows the logic of grounded theory as each metaphor was developed inductively using a variety of methods and then tested empirically and refined accordingly.

Critique

As is the case of any method, there are strengths and weaknesses associated with the cultural metaphoric method. The author has compiled a comparative list of the strengths and weaknesses associated with the *etic* or bi-polar method and the cultural metaphoric method. Using a 5-point scale going from very low to very high, he was able to derive this profile of each method that involved 14 features (Gannon, 2007).

For example, the bi-polar method seems superior to the cultural metaphoric method in terms of its ease of using statistical testing relative to relating the cultural measures to other measures such as rates of national innovation and economic growth; ease of comparing specific national cultures in terms of comparative profiles; and susceptibility to distortions and inaccurate stereotyping. The cultural metaphoric method seems superior to the bi-polar method in terms of a detailed in-depth understanding of a specific culture; ease of use in remembering and using the framework in everyday life; enlargement of the cultural frames of individuals and moving away from a closed system toward an open system; and not masking intra-cultural differences. Readers of this article may disagree with some of these assessments but the discussion thus far should be sufficient to understand how and why the author rated in this fashion. Gelfand and her students compiled a similar comparative list of strengths and weaknesses of each of these two methods (See: Gannon, 2001, Exercise 4.8, Debating the Merits of Cultural Metaphors, 55-58; this is also reprinted on Gannon's website in the location mentioned earlier).

It is important to remember that a cultural metaphor is just a first step in attempting to understand a specific culture. Over time, as the visitor's experiences increase, he will modify and expand his framework. Osland and Osland (2005/6) have demonstrated that expats who begin to see the host culture in terms of paradoxes are more effective. These Experts still accept the basic cultural stereotype but modify it based upon their experiences, while their less effective counterparts do not do so. According to Brislin (1993, p. 30), stereotypes are generalizations about a group or

class of people that have no place for individual differences. However, Brislin was talking only about one type of stereotyping expressed as a universal syllogism. There are many types of stereotypes. Even though psychologists originally viewed all stereotypes as inaccurate, following Allport's definition (1954) of a stereotype as that of distorted thinking, over the years they have modified their viewpoint to a belief that sometimes stereotypes are inaccurate, sometimes accurate and sometimes a combination of accuracy and inaccuracy. The objective is to avoid inaccurate stereotyping completely.

Gannon (1994) explained that cultural metaphors are only probabilistic statements that apply to the cultural group, but not every person in it. In this sense, cultural metaphors are stereotypes that are not expressed in terms of a universal syllogism; and as Adler (with Gundersen, 2006) has argued that as long as a person meets the following criteria, it is useful to employ a stereotype namely, that it is only a first best guess, data based, descriptive and not evaluative and the person is willing to change the stereotype or cultural metaphor as new data is collected.

Still, there are a number of other issues that need to be explored. Nielsen, Soares and Machado (under editorial review) and Gannon (2004) have developed different cultural metaphors for Portugal, *fado* and the Portuguese bullfight. There is no reason for not accepting alternative metaphors, especially if they provide additional insight into a culture. However, the guidelines of grounded theory indicate that eventually each cultural metaphor should be tested empirically. It may well be that each metaphor refines our understanding of Portuguese culture in different ways or that one of the metaphors is superior to the other. Currently we do not know as alternative cultural metaphors have been proposed only for Portugal. Further, readers and reviewers of Gannon's book (and there have been several reviews over the year) have positively reacted to the metaphors he and his colleagues developed and have not suggested alternatives.

Still, the issue of alternative metaphors is valid and in the seminar we considered several possible cultural metaphors for each nation based on the

information and data collected, before the seminar participants agreed that one metaphor was appropriate for a particular nation. For example, we considered Russia in terms of Mother Russia, the village decision making decision system whose vestiges can be seen in modern Russia and vodka consumption. Finally we agreed on Russian ballet, largely because Russia represents a culture torn from its roots several times in its history and ballet originated outside of Russia. Even in the past 70 years, Russia has undergone three such wrenching experiences.

There is also the issue of using insiders and/or outsiders to collect information. Sometimes, when the graduate students developed information about a nation's culture in the construction of each cultural metaphor, they had been insiders of its culture, having been born and educated in it. At other times, however, outsiders knowledgeable about each culture developed the cultural metaphor although they interviewed insiders. The important point is not whether they are insiders or outsiders, but that they do not make value-laden or evaluative statements and do not rely upon questionable assumptions about values and practices. To be effective, the writing should be descriptive but non-evaluative. This is a very difficult criterion and Gannon has had to reject several potential chapters because of it.

Sometimes the author is asked which of the 29 national cultures was the hardest to write about. His answer is that each chapter is difficult, but the most difficult cultures to write about are the 25 to 30 whose cultural metaphors could not be transported into a readable chapter.

Also, it seems much easier to develop cultural metaphors in a graduate seminar rather than working independently with a few associates, as Nielsen seems to do, and as Gannon has done for a few cultural metaphors as discussed below. When we began work on cultural metaphors, we did not have a model to follow other than trying to identify a cultural metaphor for a specific nation whose specific features would serve as the major subheadings of the chapter. This was critical in Gannon's thinking about using cultural metaphors. However, it is easier to employ the iterative process associated with cultural metaphors and grounded theory in a

seminar than working independently or with one or two other co-authors. The only exceptions that Gannon experienced involved two cross-cultural writers, one a U.S. American who completed her dissertation on Poland (the Polish village church) and the other a U.S. American who has lived in Finland (Finnish sauna) for over 20 years (See Gannon and Pillai, 2009). In general, Gannon's experiences with working solely with one person outside of the seminar format have been discouraging; sometimes consuming days of work and multiple drafts before Gannon and the potential co-author agree amicably that the chapter will not be finalized.

Another major issue is the degree to which the dimensional and cultural metaphoric methods should be consistent with one another. As indicated in our discussion of the research conducted on cultural metaphors, they do sometimes diverge from one another. There does not need to be a complete overlap of the two methods. Each has advantages and provides insights, but convergence is not the goal. Rather, it is the insight each method provides and the additional questions generated for further exploration that are important.

Thus far, cultural metaphors have been developed only for 30 nations. It would be ideal to develop cultural metaphors for the approximately 220 nations in the world but this is most probably not feasible. Still, there is room for growth. It is somewhat discouraging that there are only 31 cultural metaphors at present, two for Portugal developed separately by Gannon and Nielsen, Soares and Machado; another one that Nielsen and Mariotto constructed for Argentina; and the other 28 developed by Gannon and his co-authors. Since Gannon's graduate seminar ended in 2003, progress has been slow.

Further, a glaring problem is that no one seems to be focusing on developing cultural metaphors for ethnic cultures that exist within one nation or that cross national borders. Less than 10% of the world's national cultures include primarily one group. Japan is frequently cited as being mono-cultural, although there are approximately 600,000 Koreans living there. This is also a major issue when dimensional researchers use a standard survey to make generalizations about a national culture that has

many different ethnic and religious groups. Such generalizations are most probably not valid for all of the many ethnic and religious groups in a national culture. For instance, U.S. Hispanic Americans seem more collectivistic than U.S. white, Anglo Saxon Americans.

There is a paradox relative to cultural metaphors. As indicated earlier, the dominant methodology in cross-cultural management and psychology is that of the bi-polar dimensions. This popularity reflects, at least in some ways, the ease with which researchers can relate the bi-polar dimensions to a large number of variables, such as rates of innovation, economic growth and even airline accident rates. However, while researchers have not been attracted to the task of creating ethnic and national cultural metaphors, they remain popular as evidenced by the widespread reading and acceptance of Geertz's Balinese cockfight and the continuing popularity of Gannon's book; all or almost all of the many book reviews of various editions of Gannon's book have been uniformly positive. Similarly, the three-hour Workshop on the Argentinean tango given at the 2007 Academy of Management Conference in Anaheim was greeted enthusiastically by the large number of academics in attendance. Why then, has academic interest in this research stream been so unenthusiastic outside of the researchers discussed in this article?

One possible explanation of this paradox is that it is much easier to complete bi-polar research than cultural metaphoric research, as the bi-polar research relies almost exclusively on one large-scale questionnaire survey administered in several nations. Conversely, grounded theory requires the use of triangulation and saturation which involve a great commitment of time and energy from the researchers involved. While this is not to denigrate the bi-polar approach, the author maintains that it is far easier to complete publishable research using the bi-polar type of survey than it is using cultural metaphors, especially when its scales can be correlated with other phenomena such as innovation rates and economic growth. Also, the time and energy required not only to develop but also to test cultural metaphors are daunting. For instance, as indicated previously, the first edition of Gannon's book required six years of work. As we have seen, there is only one published study testing the validity of cultural

metaphors (Gannon et al, 2005/6). As emphasized above, statistical testing represents the final but essential stage of grounded theory.

Finally, it may well be time to build upon the cross-cultural research thus far but employ new perspectives that will extend our understanding of cultures and related phenomena. Gannon (2008) has argued that globalization has created many cross-cultural paradoxes; he was able to identify 93 such cross-cultural paradoxes in a large number of areas such as motivation, group behavior, interpersonal communication, leadership, language, negotiation, ethics, geography, demography, immigration, religion, economic development, human resource management and business strategy. Following others, he defines a cross-cultural paradox as a statement containing inconsistent or contradictory elements that seems to be untrue but is in fact true. In this way he sees these paradoxes as ways of understanding how globalization is influencing many areas of activity. These paradoxes represent a viable link between globalization and culture, which influence one another and provide new insights and a wider range of topics that are normally covered in a cross-cultural course.

In sum, there are strengths and weaknesses associated with any method and the cultural metaphoric method is no exception. Still, there is much room for completing cultural metaphoric studies both for ethnic and national cultures and even clusters of national cultures and of ethnic cultures spanning two or more nations. The need to provide education and training to students and managers in the cross-cultural area has never been greater, especially in this area of modern globalization in which the fates of nations are increasingly linked together. For this and other reasons cited in this article, it appears wise for at least some academic attention to be devoted to the creation and use of cultural metaphors both for ethnic and national cultures, along the lines suggested in this article.

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Cultural intelligence: a concept for bridging and benefiting from cultural differences

Elisabeth Plum

What have international relations, mergers and cross-discipline innovation got in common? They share a dependence on the ability to create mutual understanding and synergy between people from different cultural backgrounds. In this paper I want to introduce the concept of cultural intelligence, which aims to provide new insight into the social skills and mental frameworks which enable us to bridge cultural differences. One of the core points in the concept of cultural intelligence is that the cultural dynamics of a situation are the same in relation to professional, organisational, national or racial differences.

I believe that cultural difference has a greater impact on business effectiveness than we think. Our cultural backgrounds influence the way we think and act and the way we interpret each other's contributions. Our success or failure in communication depends on this competence and ultimately skill in this area affects the company's bottom line.

Cultural intelligence: a definition

I define cultural intelligence as the ability to make oneself understood and the ability to create a fruitful collaboration in situations where cultural differences play a role. It involves the ability to act in an appropriate way in multicultural situations coupled with the ability to have an open mind which admits new information and is curious about difference. We need to both know who we are and be curious about 'the other' so that differences can be elaborated rather than smoothed down. Cultural intelligence consists of three dimensions that correspond to the classical division between emotion, understanding and action.

Emotional

This dimension relates to the emotional or feeling component of the situation and the motivation to generate solutions. This dimension is the 'touch paper' in the intercultural encounter - the thing that changes fuel into fire and contains both the creative potential and the 'danger;' the positive driving forces and the stumbling blocks that can destroy or enliven the contact.

Feelings are related to beliefs, to our notion of what is the right way to behave. It is a subjective attitude which is based on internal values, such as fairness or respect. We make judgments about others, whether we trust them or not, whether we can 'allow them in.' This is a powerful aspect and refers to attitudes towards difference, involving the capacity or courage to allow oneself to be changed during the intercultural situation. It has a receptive quality which might be judged 'weak' in some cultures. It also requires the ability to cope with one's own and other people's emotional reactions when awkwardness and cultural misunderstandings occur.

This dimension includes the motivation we have to achieve for a fruitful inter-cultural encounter. Our motivation comes from both external drivers, goals and objectives such as the need to develop a strategy for innovation and internal drivers such as curiosity or an attraction to things or people who are different, perhaps even to the exotic. These drivers determine how much of an investment we are prepared to put into any situation. This dimension is called **intercultural engagement.**

Cognitive

The cognitive component is the objective or rational component. It is based on reason and the capacity to develop mental structures which enable us to understand the encounter, to think about what is going on and to make judgments based on conceptual frameworks and language. It consists of understanding oneself as a cultural being as well as understanding people with a different cultural background.

This dimension requires knowledge about what culture is as well as knowledge about the characteristics of our own and others' cultures. It also consists of cognitive flexibility and the ability to transfer experience from one kind of cultural encounter to another. This dimension is called the **cultural understanding**.

Action

This component is about what happens during an encounter, what we decide to do based on our judgments about the situation coming from the emotional and rational data we have collected. The action dimension is the activity and communication during the cultural encounter, what each participant actually *does* in this encounter. It consists of various types of interpersonal communication, for example, listening, questioning, summarizing, agreeing or disagreeing etc. as well as skills which we have learned to manage relationships in general involving body language, etiquette, rituals, rules and techniques.

The action dimension brings the other two dimensions of cultural intelligence into play thereby creating the content of the communication. The content of the encounter could be described as the problem to be solved or the decisions to be made. This dimension is called the **intercultural communication.**

These three dimensions are all equally important and form the structure which helps us to gain a deeper understanding of the intercultural encounter and gives us some options for improving the outcome. This definition emphasizes the idea that successful cultural encounters are not just a question of possessing knowledge about a specific "foreign" culture. Understanding the 'other' culture, paying attention to our own cultural norms and developing techniques and skills to bridge differences are important parts of cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence involves a combination of the three dimensions; none of them can stand alone. All of the dimensions apply to all the participants, not just to the 'other.'

The three dimensions in cultural intelligence can be illustrated like this:
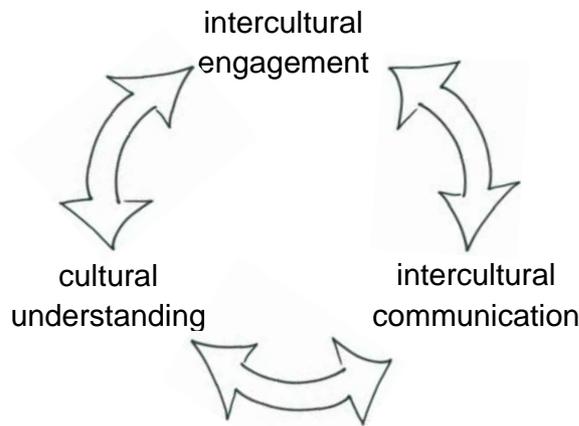
The three dimensions influence each other so that, for instance, courage to allow oneself to be changed in a cultural encounter will enhance our listening capacity and increase our understanding of the other. Knowledge about some differences between yours and the other person's culture can, for instance, enable you to plan an event so that you have the best chance of enabling the communication to run smoothly. It is helpful to have curiosity and knowledge about the customs and norms of other cultures and the meanings associated with simple actions so that we can understand re-actions and can influence the action by preventing misunderstandings as far as possible. This involves being aware of our own rules and prohibitions so that they can be evaluated and examined in terms of appropriateness in different situations. Otherwise we make snap judgments based on criteria that are not shared.

Cultural intelligence in a Scandinavian context

This version of cultural intelligence is a further development of a US concept which comes from ideas such as Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence and Howard Gardner's thoughts on Multiple Intelligences.

The concept elaborated here has been developed in a Scandinavian context.

The model comes from theories which define organizations as complex adaptive systems which rely on a constant flow of information in all directions. It is not a hierarchical model where the top of the pyramid has the knowledge and the information to make decisions on behalf of others. In this model the organization is expected to learn in order to adapt and equality is assumed even though there are power differences between people depending on their role. To do this we have to treat others with respect and an open mind even though they do not think or react like 'us.'

The following is three short examples of situations where cultural intelligence is vital.

Cross-national work

When an organization needs to collaborate with partners in other countries it is vital to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. A culturally intelligent manager will ensure that the key people are given the opportunity to study not only the strategic background for the cross-national work, but also their own motivations and attitudes to cultural differences.

National self-perception must be examined as well as the cultural background of the international partners. The key people need to know how to create the setting to establish good communication based on mutual understanding. This involves many different kinds of intelligence, including cultural intelligence to enable them to develop common ground and a common 'language' in an international group.

Mergers

Mergers are an example of how the emphasis changes between the prevention of conflicts and the creation of synergy. The culturally intelligent leader will facilitate the merger process by planning the mechanisms and strategies to develop a common culture for the new enterprise. This will put into words the good aspects that are being transferred from the old enterprises, as well as the social rules for the new enterprise. A company culture cannot be decided in any one part of an organization. Culture, as we have seen, comes out of shared history and a shared approach, shared beliefs based on solving problems together, rather than some dictates from the leadership, however well intentioned.

Culturally intelligent leadership is perfectly aware that it takes time for a new culture to manifest itself and that the development of new norms of behaviour should not be left to itself. Leaders will make sure to evaluate the culture, to support its productive features, to model the values and reward behaviours that foster collaboration between different constituencies. Leaders must be open to debate and difference. We believe that using the three dimensions of cultural intelligence will broaden the debate and enable differences to be negotiated continuously, whether the emphasis is on prevention of conflict or the creation of synergy.

Project groups

Cross-discipline and cross-organizational groups are increasingly used to foster innovation, and consequently it is important to obtain synergy in the encounter between contrasting differences. It is equally important that cultural misunderstanding does not lead to unproductive conflict in the group. The culturally intelligent project manager will, for instance, ascertain that such project groups start out with a focus on the cultural differences and similarities and they will be able to improve their level of functioning from the beginning of the project using cultural intelligence methods and ideas. The participants will be able to discuss how their collaboration can be managed based on their knowledge of strengths and

weakness and how they might contribute with their individual competences during the various phases of the projected work.

It is a well known fact that different professions use different terminology, but it is even more important to discuss the reasons behind the participants' different priorities, methods, viewpoints and favorite ideas. Only with an understanding of this background will it become possible to embark upon productive knowledge sharing and to create those unorthodox approaches that may lead to innovation. Culture is not 'done' in the beginning of the project. The development of cultural intelligence within a group requires the group to learn by reflection on what is working and what is causing problems so that they can adapt and improve. The issues of differences have to be kept alive through conversations during the whole project process in order for the group to get the best from the individuals and the group.

It is important to learn from experience, to develop Cultural Intelligence in thinking and acting so that intercultural teams have the best chance possible to succeed in building relationships that create new paths and new solutions. The cultural intelligent leader knows that the HOW is just as important as the WHAT, this is where Cultural Intelligence comes to the fore and delivers results.

A broader definition of cultural difference

We believe it is helpful to think about cultural differences in as broad a context as possible in order to move away from a tendency to define cultural differences in too concrete and fixed a way. As well as national culture and organisation culture, there are differences between different disciplines within an organisation, for example between the accounting department, marketing department and production. These differences operate in a complex system where the differences in outlook and priorities meet and sometimes clash or synchronise. For us Cultural Intelligence is about understanding what happens internally and externally when we meet people who have different ways of thinking and acting. Cultural

intelligence gives us a framework and language to understand and capitalise on the differences rather than tolerate or ignore the (potentially creative) friction caused by difference.

An example of where cultural difference comes into play is when companies decide to merge. Such mergers frequently fail, at least in part, because the cultural aspects, organisational and national, of the merger are either ignored or underestimated. For example when a Swedish production company decides to merge with a French company and an American company, they discover that they have different priorities and different timescales. The American manufacturer thinks in terms of yearly or quarterly results while the Swedish manufacturer thinks in terms of technological innovations over a 20-year period. The French partner thinks that design is the most important factor and timescales are not a priority although they have to operate within a timescale. Here we can also notice different ideas on what matters most strategically and differences in national culture and business culture. These differences could be a source of mutual advantage if they are surfaced, acknowledged and used to gain market advantage through a technologically advanced, design driven product that can be brought to market in as short a time frame as possible. In this particular case the differences prevented an integration of core-activities between the three companies.

In most of the research into why mergers failed to deliver the successes that were promised, it has been discovered that outright failures or disappointing results were a result of the lack of attention given to differences in organisation culture in the early stages, from planning to implementation. As business gets more global and partnerships become the way to get advantage then the potential to succeed or fail depends on the ability of organisations and leaders to understand and become competent in cross-cultural communication.

The following are some examples of the drivers for cross cultural knowledge or cultural intelligence.

- **Innovation** - cross-professional teams are called together to come up with new solutions to well-known problems and are expected to break new ground with innovative ideas.
- **Global Focus** - Cross-national and global collaborations are sought to combine different expertise, experience and to deliver access to new national and regional markets.
- **Strategic Alliances** - many important issues today call for crossing the boundaries between different disciplines and different sectors. There is a growing need for strategic alliances between private companies, public sector organisations, academics and NGOs.

The precondition for crossing these borders is the ability to establish productive relationships between people who think and act differently. In some situations the cultural differences play a vital role in the communication and in other situations the differences are not important. The problem is that it is not easy to predict how relationships will develop and how misunderstandings occur. Our actions and re-actions are often irrational. The cultural aspect of relationship building comes from pre-conceptions and assumptions which we barely notice but which affect our spontaneous communication. We need to be able to step back from the action to reflect on our assumptions and mental models in order to be able to listen and respond to difference, so that something new can emerge in the space between different viewpoints and objectives. To do this people in organisations need to develop the skills and attitudes of cultural intelligence.

Paradoxically culture is both neglected and exaggerated. Culture is tied up with our identity and is fundamentally about belonging to a group. Culture can be defined as a set of shared practices that a group develops over time, involving specific ways of talking and acting. One has several cultural backgrounds – a nation, a profession, an organization, a role(s). Different contexts evoke responses which arise out of the mental maps we have from our different cultural backgrounds.

We take own culture for granted as the natural and right way to behave or think, and consequently we fail to discover the existence of cultural differences. Culture is the water in which we swim and just like fish we

don't know what water is, we take it for granted. We often do not acknowledge how much our thoughts and behavior are influenced by our various cultural backgrounds. It is only when we are confronted with something different that we are able to see culture in operation. An example : In a cross professional group where, say, social workers, psychologists, police officers and teachers meet to solve a problem they discover that "urgency" means something quite different and that they have different priorities which have to be discussed and bridged.

In an international group it is a case of cultural blindness to interpret the lowered eyes or direct gaze of a colleague as a sign of lack of confidence or aggression, without considering that eye-to-eye contact means different things in different cultures. At other times cultural differences are exaggerated and are used as a way of avoiding other types of conflict, perhaps interpersonal or inter-group. We often hear the phrase "It's a cultural issue" when in fact it may be something about power or lack of clarity about role. This is a way of not taking responsibility, an easy way out. Talking about culture is difficult unless we are willing to look at the different cultural backgrounds we all carry with us. Cultural intelligence gives us a vocabulary and a grammar for understanding this aspect of everyone.

Different views create energy

A big charge of energy is created when people with different backgrounds come together, however, this can be both positive and negative. To get the most out of difference and the excitement it causes we need to be able to confront the differences and use them to positive effect. We find unexpected responses emerging when we are questioned from a person who has a different perspective. Even disagreements can be very illuminating and bring about new knowledge but only if the communication is not destroyed by the fear of difference and our stereotyped ideas about 'the other.' The tension or friction created when differences emerge can result in creativity and innovation and in fact it is only when different things come together that new life is possible.

Culture codes: birth of a notion

Clotaire Rapaille

I carry on the discovery sessions the same way I did the first time for Nestlé, more than thirty years ago. Five principles direct my methodology to disclose the cultural Codes, and the knowledge of those principles will help you to understand the way of thinking that penetrates each discovery.

The best way of exemplifying these principles is that of replacing them in the context of an exploration meeting. In the following pages I am going to take you to the discovery of the American Code for cars. I did this many years ago for Chrysler, after the work I did for them on the Jeep Wrangler. They were getting ready to launch a new model and they hired me to understand what people wanted in a car. At that time, the sales of sedan cars decreased as the Americans were more and more fascinated by 4x4, mini vans and pick up vans. A certain number of people in the industry even suggested that the public was not interested any more in sedan cars. This exploration meeting was therefore decisive for Chrysler for many reasons. If they found out that sedan cars did not appeal to Americans any more that would change drastically the choices of the company.

Principle 1: you cannot believe what people say

What did Americans want in a car? I heard many answers when I asked that question. Among them: a good rating on the subject of safety, a high ratio between gasoline consumption and performance, good running on the road, among others. I did not believe one of them. Because the first principle of the cultural code is that the only efficacious way of understanding what people really want to say is to ignore what they are saying. I am not saying that people lie intentionally or that they give a false impression of themselves. But when you ask them direct questions on their interests and their preferences, people have the tendency to give

the answers that their interlocutor wants to hear. Once again, it is not because they want to deceive us. It is because people answer the questions with their cortex, the part of their brain that controls intelligence rather than emotion and instinct. They examine a question, they digest it, and when they give an answer, it is the product of this deliberation. They think they are telling the truth. A lie detector would confirm that. Therefore, in most of the cases, they don't say what they really want to say.

The reason for that is simple: most people don't know why they do what they do. In his classical study, Jean-Martin Charcot, the scientist of the XIX century, hypnotised a patient, gave her an umbrella and asked her to open it. Then he brought the woman back from her hypnotised state. When she came to herself, she was surprised at the object that she was holding in her hand. Charcot asked her why she kept an open umbrella inside the house. The woman was completely disturbed by the question. She had no idea of what had happened to her and no memory of Charcot's instructions. Confused, she looked at the ceiling. Then she looked at Charcot and said: "It was raining."

The woman certainly did not think that she had an open umbrella in the house because it was raining. Therefore, when he asked her the question, she had the feeling that she had to find an answer and that was the only logical answer that came to mind.

Even the most introspective people are rarely in contact with their unconscious. We have little interaction with that powerful force that guides so many of our actions. Thus, we give answers to questions that seem logical and that are those that the asker expects, but do not reveal the unconscious forces that condition our feelings. That is why polls and market studies are so often false and useless (and why the managers at Chrysler had received bad " answers " about the Wrangler). They reflect only what people say rather than what they want to say.

During my whole career I have understood that if I wanted to help people to identify what they really wanted to say, I need to take on the role of " the foreign professional ," the visitor from another planet of whom I spoke above. I had to convince people that I was a complete stranger who

needed their help to understand how something worked, what could be its attraction or what emotions it could trigger. What do you do with coffee? Is silver a form of clothing? How do you make love work? That allows people to start the process of separation of the cortex and to advance towards the source of their first meeting with the object in question.

During the third hour of an exploration meeting – the moment in which the participants lie on the floor with pillows and listen to soothing music – people really start confiding what they really want to say. This process helps them to listen to another part of their brain. The answers that they give then come from their reptilian brain, there were their instincts are "stored." It is in our reptilian brain that the real answers rest.

Many people remember their dreams very well for five or six minutes after they wake up. But if they don't write down the details of these dreams, they lose them forever. That because, in that state between sleep and wake, we have a better access to our memories and to our instinct. The process of relaxation used during those sessions allow the participants to have access to this state and therefore to bypass their cortex and connect with their reptilian brain. Regularly people state that memories that they had forgotten for years come back during those sessions.

The answer I got initially came exclusively from the cortex: a good consumption, safety, mechanical reliability, and all that we have learned to say on the subject. Of course, I did not believe them. As the sessions progressed, I started understanding other things about the cars: the memory of some different cars, like the Mustand 1964 ½, the original Beetle, and the Cadillacs of the '50s with their enormous wings; stories of feelings of freedom that came with the first turning of the key; and shy talk about the first sexual experience that took place on the back seat of a car. A little at a time, the idea of what the American consumer really wanted from a car started emerging. They wanted freedom. They wanted a sensual experience.

The car that emerged from these discovery sessions was the PT Cruiser, a car with a very strong looks and a very strong message.

The reaction to this car was equally strong. Some of course, hated it. Every distinctive feature is completely repellent for some, even for people of the

same culture. That is because of the tensions that define cultures. I will speak of that amply in chapter 3.

However, others adored the car, in such measure that it became an enormous commercial success. Its launching was the most successful introduction, these past years, of a new model. Some paid up to 4000 dollars more to be put on a waiting list. Was this wave of enthusiasm caused by the fact that the PT Cruiser exhibited what people said they wanted in a car? No, the evaluation of its consumption and of its safety, were not better that those of other sedans, and it was not more reliable from a mechanical point of view. But it was unusual, aggressive and sexy. It answered to what people really wanted in a car, rather than what they said they wanted. If we had listened only to what people said, Chrysler would have created another ordinary, efficacious sedan, and people would have shrugged their shoulders.

Listening to what they really wanted, Chrysler had created a phenomenon.

Principle 2: emotion is the necessary energy to learn

The discovery sessions for cars aroused some strong emotions. Les gens, vinrent à moi après la troisième heure pour me dire que les souvenirs les avaient amenés au bord des larmes, les avaient remplis de joie ou même qu'ils les avaient dérangés. People came to me after the third hour to tell me that their memories had them almost in tears, they had filled them with joy or even that they had upset them. This is not unusual. In fact, that takes place under one form or another during almost all of my sessions even those organised for office articles or toilet paper.

Emotions are the key of apprenticeship, the key of impression. The stronger is the emotion the clearer the experience will be remembered. Think again about that child and the burning frying pan. Emotions create a series of mental connections (I call them mental highways) that are reinforced by repetition. They are the way between our experience in the world (like, for example, touching a burning frying pan) and a useful approach to the world (avoid all burning objects in the future).

We realise the vast majority of our apprenticeships when we are children. At the age of seven, most of our mental highways are built. But emotions keep on giving us new impressions during our entire life. A great number of Americans of the generation of the baby-boomers remember where they were and what they were doing when they learned that John F. Kennedy had been murdered. Almost all the Americans now living can relive with intensity the experience of the collapse of the towers of the World Trade Center. This is true because these experiences are so powerful emotionally that they are effectively engraved in our brain. We will never forgive them and just remembering this subject sends us back to the moment when we had engraved them.

In Normandie, the peasants have a strange and unpleasant ritual that shows an innate understanding of this concept but at the same time a bad way of using it. When the first son of a family turns seven, his father takes him to the land that he owns and walks with him to the four corners of the property. At every corner he beats the child. Although this practice is shocking and probably does not improve the tie between father and son, it creates in the child a very strong connection with the limits of the property. The father knows that the child will remember his whole life the borders of the land he will inherit one day.

I had an uncomfortable experience with the learning of a sentence in American, when I started teaching at the university Thomas Jefferson, a little after arriving in that country, in the year 1970. I was just starting to learn to speak American. My class was held in a big conference room without windows, and the first day, when I was about to explain my objectives for the class, one of the students screamed: *Watch out!* I had never heard such an expression and therefore I had no idea of what the student wanted to tell me. Immediately, my brain looked for a definition. *"Watch"* meant " watch." *"Out"* could mean "out." The students wanted me to look out? But I couldn't because there were no windows in that room. Of course, all of that took place in a fraction of a second after which a piece of the ceiling fell on me and I felt suddenly lying on the ground, bleeding, waiting for the arrival of the nurses.

At least, I now know what " watch out " means. In fact, every time I hear it, I look immediately at the ceiling, just in case it is about to fall on me.

During our exploration sessions on cars that led to the PT Cruiser, it became evident that the emotions associated to the possessions of a car were very powerful. When the people spoke of the moment they had been allowed to drive for the first time, one had the impression that their life had started just at that moment. In the same way, when old people recalled the moment when their car keys were taken away from them, they remembered of having had the feeling that their life had ended. The first sexual experiences that take place, for many Americans, on the back seat (more than 80 per cent of Americans have made love for the first time in this way) reflect a very strong emotional message on their cars.

It became evident to me, as the emotion connected to driving and since the fact of having a car was so strong, that the PT Cruiser needed to be a car that would create a strong reaction in people. The model needed to have a particular personality to justify such feelings. To create a strong identity and a new model at the same time, we decided to touch on something that already existed roughly in the culture, a reckless, familiar structure. We chose a gangster car, the kind of car that Al Capone drove. That became the signature of the PT Cruiser. That gave the car an extremely strong identity – there is no other car like that on the road nowadays – and the consumer answered. Once again, if that Cruiser had just been another sedan, the public probably wouldn't have noticed it, but its difference touched something very emotional.

Principle 3: the structure is the message, not the matter.

Differently from the sessions I had carried on for the Jeep Wrangler, this new discovery had a relationship with cars in general. In a predictable way, the participants had spoken of all kinds of cars – minivans and roadsters, Model T and concept cars. How could I lead them to some conclusions on the Code when the participants had in mind a very vast range of cars? I could do this by looking at the structure rather than the matter.

In the work *Cyrano de Bergerac,* of Edmond Rostand, Cyrano has a dramatic duel scene. The story of Cyrano has been re-written in the film of

1987, *Roxanne,* with Steve Martin. The personage of Martin, C.D. Baies, has a similar encounter, but he uses a tennis racket. When one looks for some unconscious message, the difference between a sword and a tennis racket is irrelevant. They are only the matter. One can tell the same story with a sword or with a tennis racket, which means that the matter is not essential for the meaning. One can say the same thing of *West Side Story,* in which the "matter" is different from that of *Roméo and Juliette,* but that tells the same story.

What is important is the structure of the story, the tie among the various elements. For Cyrano and for C.D. the fight is a question of honour. The need that lead to the duel is the important thing to identify, and it is the same in the two stories, with different external signs. One can say the same thing of a melody. One can play the same melody in the morning or at night, on a piano or a violin, in summer and in winter. Even the notes are partly without importance, because a melody played in a different key or in another octave is still the same melody. All of the elements previously quoted are the matter. The structure is the space between the notes, the spectrum between each note and that which follows, and the rhythm.

The key to understand the real meaning behind our acts is that of understanding the structure. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss has studied the ties among people, saying that he was not interested in the people but in the relationships among them, "the space between the people." An uncle does not exist without a niece; a wife, without a husband; a mother without a child. Le lien est la structure. When we try to know why people act in a certain way and do some things, we must look beyond the matter, in the structure. In all situations, there are three structures at work. The first is the biological structure, the DNA. Apes, human beings, cows and giraffes are made of the same matter. However, each species is different because the organisation of its DNA – its structure – is unique.

The structure that follows is culture. All cultures have a language, an art, a habitat, a history, and so on. The way in which all these elements, this matter, is organised, creates the unique identity of each culture.

The last structure is the individual. In the DNA that makes us human, there are infinite possibilities. Moreover, each of us has a unique relationship with his parents, his brothers and sisters, his family, which define our individual mental schemes and create our unique identity. Even identical twins end up by having particular identities. One was born first, the other second. They will never be in the same place at the same time and, a little at a time, they start developing different outlooks on the world. They start with the same matter, but develop structures that are their own.

When I read the stories told by the participants after the third hour of the discovery sessions, I lend no attention to matter, but I concentrate exclusively on structure. In the sessions organised for Chrysler, it had no importance that a participant tells the story of a sports car while another speaks of a family sedan and a third has nostalgia for his Packard 1950. Whether they use their cars in town, on country roads on or out of highways, it had no importance. What counted was the tie between the driver and his car, between the driving experience and the feelings it provoked. These connections – these structures – have given us a clear idea that the Americans get from their cars a strong feeling of identity, and that has led to the conception of a model that will reinforce this identity.

Principle 4: there is a time window for imprinting and the meaning of imprinting varies from one culture to another

Most of us imprint the meaning of the most essential things of our life at the age of seven. Because emotion is the central force of children under the age of seven (if you need evidence, look at the changes of the emotional state of a young child in one hour), as, later on, they are guided by logic (try to discuss with a child of nine). Most people are exposed to just one culture before the age of seven. They spend most of their time at home or in their environment. Few young Americans are exposed, in any important way, to Japanese culture. Few young Japanese are exposed to Irish culture. As a consequence of that, the extremely strong imprintings integrated into their unconscious minds at a young age, are determined by the culture in which they were brought up. For an American child, the most active

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learning period takes place in an American context. The mental structures formed in an American environment fill his subconscious. Consequently the child grows up an American.

That is the reason why people of different cultures have such different reactions to similar things. Let's take, for example, peanut butter. Americans have a very strong emotional imprint towards peanut butter. When you are little, your mother made you a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and you associate love and affective nourishment. As I was born in France, where peanut butter is not a common product, I have never established such connection. I discovered peanut butter after the closing of that time window during which I could have established a strong emotional association with this product. As it did not carry the weight of my mother's love, it was for me only a food product. I tasted it and I did not find it special; and certainly, I haven't loved it. Cheese, on the other hand, that occupies a prominent place in all French houses, is a different thing. I cannot taste cheese without my subconscious adding to this taste emotional connections coming from my infancy.

My teenaged son, Dorian, is, for these considerations, an American. But as he has always spent some time with me in the house I own in France, he has learnt some things like a French child. Champagne is an example. In France, people drink champagne, like all other kinds of wine, for its taste, not its alcohol content. We almost never drink wine to get drunk, but to appreciate its taste and for the way it enhances food.

The little French children taste champagne for the first time when they are quite young. They put some pieces of sugar in it or cookies and, doing that, they learn its taste and its qualities. Dorian often drank a drop of champagne with us in France. He has also learnt to appreciate it and to associate it with a feast day, as in France we often open a bottle of champagne when we celebrate something. One day, we went to an American restaurant for a special occasion and we ordered some champagne. Dorian, who was seven or eight at that time, asked for a glass and the waiter made fun of him. When I told the waiter that I agreed, he did not believe me (or he felt he had the legal obligation to ignore me). He mixed some fizzy water with a bit of orange juice in a champagne glass and gave it to Dorian – who tasted it and refused at once because he knew very well the taste of champagne.

The first imprint of alcohol with most Americans is when they are teenagers. It's a time window very different from that in which the French discover alcohol, and as a consequence, the tie established has nothing in common. For most Americans alcohol has a function: it makes you drunk. Rarely American teenagers think about the aroma of the beer they are drinking. Several of Dorian's friends have already had problems connected with drunkenness because they associate alcohol and intoxication and not taste. They understood that alcohol could intoxicate them; and nothing else. In fact, most of them react to alcohol like I react to peanut butter – they find the taste little attractive – but they go on because they know that doing it they will change their state of mind.

To go back once again to our sessions for the PT Cruiser, I learned that cars were an essential element of American culture because, although American children did not know the thrill tied to driving at an early age, they memorised the excitement associated to the car at a young age. Americans love cars and love going out in them. During the exploration sessions, the participants spoke of the feverish state of their parents coming back home with a new car, spoke of the pleasures and the ties created in the families that travel together on the week-end, of the euphoria of the first trip in a sports car. American children learn from their tenderest age that cars are an essential part of family life; that they bring joy, pride and even that they unite the tribe. When the time comes for them to buy a car, that emotional tie drives them in an unconscious way. They want a car that seems special to them. As the different character of the PT Cruiser gives them that feeling, they have welcomed it in their garage and in their life.

Principle 5: to understand the meaning of an imprint in a culture, you must learn the code of this imprint

The PT Cruiser was an enormous success in America. Yet, before it was launched, the new managers of DaimlerChrysler had predicted that it would be a failure. Why? Because different cultures have different Codes.

Even our most unreasonable acts are the result of the voyage we take on our mental highway. We take it hundreds of times a day, when we decide

what to carry, what to eat, where to go, what to say in a conversation, and so on. What most people do not realise, on the other hand, is that to take these trips you need a particular code. Think of a Code like a combination that opens a door. In that case we must not only enter the numbers, but also enter them in a specific order, at a specific speed, with a specific rhythm, etc. Every word, every action, every symbol has a Code. Our brain supplies these Codes unconsciously, but there is a way to discover them to find out why we do what we do.

As I have already shown, the exploration sessions that I carry on for my clients allow us to learn what a thing really means to the participants. When my group and I analyse the answers, a common message emerges. We find out the Codes when we find those common messages.

For example, I have organised some exploration sessions on cheese in France and in America. The Codes we have discovered could not be more different. The Code of the French for cheese is LIVING. This is very understandable when one considers the way the French choose and keep their cheeses. They go to a cheese seller, feel the cheeses and smell them to find out their age. When they have chosen one, they take it home and keep it at room temperature under a bell shaped glass.

The American Code for cheese is, on the contrary, DEAD. Once again, this is understandable in the context. The Americans "kill" their cheeses with pasteurisation (non pasteurised cheeses are not allowed in that country), choose pieces of cheese that has been pre-packaged –mummified, if you like, in a plastic container (like bags for the dead), and keep it, still packaged under vacuum, in a morgue, best known under the name of refrigerator.

There is a movement in Europe (started by some bureaucrat in Brussels) that is trying to impose pasteurisation in the whole European Union. Knowing what you know on the Code of the French for cheeses, do you doubt how they reacted? Their answer was so violent that there were even demonstrations in the streets, the idea of forcing the French to pasteurise their cheeses is completely " outside the Code."

This outlook is valid for foods of all kinds. The Americans are very worried about food safety. They have regulation committees, expiration dates, and a great variety of health checks that protect them from dangerous foods. The

French, instead, are much more interested in the taste than in safety. In France, there is a preparation method known as faisandée. They hang a pheasant (that's where the name comes from), or another wildfowl, from a fang, till it gets old – till it starts to rot, literally. While most Americans would be worried, the French chefs use such a method because it improves the taste of the bird. Safety is not such a worry for them or for the people they cook for. De telles explorations culinaires ont évidemment un prix. There are every year many more deaths connected to alimentation in France than in the United States, although they have a population five times higher.

Let's go back again to our example for the PT Cruiser to show how these different cultural Codes affect out responses. My reading of hundreds of stories told by the participants during the discovery sessions revealed that the American code for car is IDENTITY. The Americans want cars that are different, that, on the road, are not taken for another model and that trigger the memory of Sunday trips, of the freedom you feel when you are behind the wheel for the first time, and the excitement one feels in adolescence. A car with a strong identity, like the PT Cruiser, or, as I showed above, the American Jeep Wrangler, has much better chances of having exceptional sales rather than a sedan commonly equipped.

However, this Code is far from being shared by all cultures. The giant of German cars, Daimler-Benz, has redeemed Chrysler in the moment when the PT Cruiser went into production. When the German managers who had arrived to the commands of the company saw the car, they were dismayed. Why? Because the Code for cars in Germany is completely different from the American Code. The German Code for cars is TECHNOLOGICAL. The German designers are proud of the quality of their technology and this pride is so deep that those who are brought up in that culture think of technology first when they think of cars. The initial principles of the PT Cruisers were not models of technological excellence. Their engine was not particularly powerful or efficacious, the design was all but aerodynamic, their roadholding was mediocre and their petrol consumption as well as their safety assessment were only medium. The new executive group of Chrysler, referring to their own cultural Code, was persuaded that the PT Cruiser would be a marketing disaster. They relegated its production to a factory in Mexico.

This revealed itself as an enormous mistake (more than understandable). The German executives had answered in a negative way to the medium quality of the technology of the model. The American consumers answered positively to the very strong identity of the car. The factory in Mexico was not equipped to satisfy the demand, and it had long waiting lists. If the new managers of Chrysler had understood the American Code for cars, if they had trusted it rather than their own Code, they would have avoided the many problems that they had in launching on the American highways all of the PT Cruisers wanted by the consumers.

A notion was born: to discover the cultural unconscious

The principles cannot be attributed either to the Freudian individual unconscious that leads each of us in a unique manner, or the Jungian collective unconscious that leads each of us as members of the human species. The principles bring out an unconscious that lead each of us in a unique way according to the culture that has produced us. This third unconscious is the cultural unconscious.

This notion and these principles are the irrefutable evidence that there is an American spirit, just like there is a French spirit, an English spirit, a Kurd spirit, a Latvian spirit. Each culture has its own way of thinking and that teaches us that we are profound in our ways.

I am going to guide you now towards the two dozen most important Codes that I have discovered. These Codes will show how the cultural unconscious affects our personal life, the decisions that we take as consumers, and the way we act as citizens of the world. I will also contrast these Codes with the discoveries I have made in other cultures with the purpose of showing how the same thing can have a very different meaning somewhere else. There is more than a " wow " in this paper. There are also some revelations that will help you to behave, to do your business and to see the others with a new sharpness.

Go and get yourself a new pair of glasses!

The importance of culture in daily work and life

The French will remain French, and the Americans will remain Americans. And if you make the mistake of thinking the French are Americanized, try calling a few of the French "American" and see what happens. (And be ready to duck out of the way before they give you the verbal beating about the ears you deserve!)

What is cultural intelligence?

Brooks Peterson

The use of the term *cultural intelligence* is widespread. A Web search will find scores of pages containing the exact term *cultural intelligence*. Maybe it's because the term is in such common use that several attempts to register it as a trademark have failed. Nobody owns the term or the concept behind it; certainly nobody holds any kind of monopoly on it. The term has been used in military settings, by non-profit organizations, and by companies, consultants, and so forth. It has been interpreted in myriad ways.

I first used *cultural intelligence* in a training program in the late 1980s, and I'm sure it was coined before I started introducing it back then. I am glad that the term is widely used today.

What about the term *cultural competence*, which is also in wide use? I shy away from the term *competence* because it's not something we should ultimately strive for but rather, should excel beyond. Imagine an employee performance review or letter of recommendation in which you are described merely as competent. What an insult (especially to Americans, who prefer overstatement rather than understatement)! In some fields, such as medicine, incompetence can be clearly recognized. In others, such as academics, it cannot always be detected. It follows that doctors carry malpractice insurance, but professors do not (though some perhaps should). While competence suggests meeting at least basic minimum requirements, intelligence suggests more highly developed abilities. So rather than dealing with competence versus incompetence, I propose people take on the higher goal of demonstrating cultural *intelligence*, which might imply some savvier insights and wiser actions.

Defining cultural intelligence

In Part 1, I discussed how the word *culture* is used widely and with multiple interpretations. As I begin to define and examine *cultural*

intelligence as it relates to this book, I will first point out that the word *intelligence*, like the word *culture*, is subject to numerous interpretations as well as considerable debate and controversy.

People disagree about how IQ should be measured and whether it can be increased. Some question the validity of standardized IQ tests because they may contain cultural bias (an IQ test with a picture of a coal scuttle or a story including mittens will certainly be confusing to people who know nothing about coal furnaces and who live in climates where there is no need for mittens).

Another potential difficulty with the concept of intelligence stems from the fact that it is quantifiable against a standard (resulting in an "IQ score"). Scores or grades can be perceived as having a sense of permanency to them; this can sometimes be problematic when such labels lead people to believe that intelligence can be boiled down to an IQ score. Imagine that you are of at least average intelligence but you take an IQ test that wrongly pegs you as "below average" (maybe it was a bad day when you took the test). You may wear that albatross around your neck your entire life. I would much rather see a person obtain a false *high* score on an IQ test and then spend the rest of his or her life believing (and

You've got a CQ of 149!

acting like) the label fits! I propose that we focus on defining and then increasing cultural intelligence quotient (CQ), not measuring it. What's the point, after all, of walking around announcing, "I've got a CQ of 149!"? I don't use catchy initials such as "CQ" either, because I want to avoid falling into the over simplification trap that can be a risk any time one labels a complicated concept. While there is no one correct definition of *cultural intelligence*, some readers may find it helpful to see some kind of written definition, so let's begin with this one:
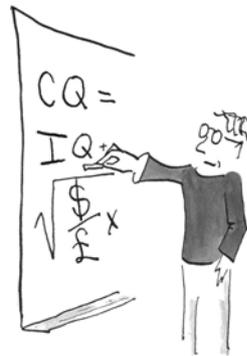
Cultural intelligence is the ability to engage in a set of behaviors that uses skills (i.e., language or interpersonal skills) and qualities (e.g., tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility) that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts.

Several concepts contribute to the various parts of the definition above. The material in this part examines those and helps you through the process of learning how to increase your cultural intelligence.

Multiple Intelligences theory factors in

The psychologist Howard Gardner started people thinking differently about intelligence. He coined the term *multiple intelligences* and suggested that there is more to being intelligent than the logical, verbal, or mathematical intelligence typically measured on standard IQ tests.

For example, a musician might be a genius on the piano but have very low math or verbal skills. It would be wrong to label a musician as "not intelligent" because of a low score on an IQ test. A dancer or a karate master might have great skills relating to movement and space but might know nothing about a piano. A genius on an IQ test may not stand a chance when sparring with a karate master. The basic idea is that there's more than one way to be smart, and Gardner offers some useful categories for defining intelligence.

Here are Gardner's categories of multiple intelligences and the occupations that are the most closely aligned with each.

Measured by standard IQ tests:

1. Linguistic (language teachers, interpreters, and editors)
2. Logical–mathematical (computer programmers, accountants and scientists)

Not measured by standard IQ tests:

3. Spatial (engineers, surgeons, sculptors, and painters)

4. Musical (Mozart, Hendrix, Pavarotti)

5. Body/kinaesthetic (dancers, athletes, and surgeons)

6. Interpersonal (salespeople, politicians, teachers, negotiators, and capable leaders)

7. Intrapersonal (authors, actors, inventors, and entrepreneurs).

In 1995, Daniel Goleman put forth the idea of *emotional intelligence*, or "EQ." In very simple terms, I see emotional intelligence as similar to Gardner's intrapersonal intelligence. It means knowing who you are, being centered, balanced, in touch. We have a lesson to learn from Gardner and Goleman when we consider cultural intelligence.

I propose that *cultural intelligence* is a unique and vital thread that runs through (and then beyond) various aspects of multiple intelligences theory and emotional intelligence theory, especially in the following four areas: linguistic, spatial, intrapersonal (or emotional), and interpersonal intelligences.

Linguistic intelligence

Interacting successfully with people from other cultures whose native language is not English requires language skills. The salesperson that can interact with clients in the clients' native language has a much better chance of charming them and closing the sale. The customer service person or front-desk receptionist who can speak even a little bit of his or her customers' native language stands a better chance of making a positive impression than one who cannot. Consider the opposite: how would you feel if someone you were going to buy something from couldn't even pronounce the name of your city correctly or, more importantly, couldn't pronounce your name correctly? (In a sense, a person's name is the most important thing you can know about an individual!)

The more you are involved with your international counterparts, the wiser it is for you to learn as much as possible of their language. What higher compliment can you pay a business partner than to demonstrate a genuine interest in something as personal as his or her native language by making the effort to learn it? And what greater insult can there be than not bothering to learn even a modicum of it?

Some argue that everyone worldwide speaks English and there is therefore no reason to learn foreign languages. Wrong. Although it's true that many do speak English, it's only because they have invested significant time and money to learn it. But your knowing something about your international counterparts' or customers' native language remains important; foreign language proficiency may not be necessary for you to communicate, but it can give you an undeniable edge over your competitors. Linguistic intelligence can also be demonstrated even if English is the only language used. You can be more successful if you know how to effectively use what I call "international business English." There are tips for doing this in Part 6. I also suggest specific strategies in Part 6 to help you make the most of a second language, even with a limited vocabulary.

Spatial intelligence

Spatial intelligence is probably the most straightforward of those that I propose as being important components of cultural intelligence. When we interact with people from other cultures, at a minimum we should know the proper behaviors to help us get through an introduction, a business meeting, a meal, or other scenarios without making fools of ourselves. In this context spatial intelligence relates to simple things such as how close people stand to one another in conversation, where the most important person sits at a meeting, how chairs are arranged, whether people bow or shake hands or touch each other, and the ability to understand and anticipate and sometimes appropriately imitate body language.

For example, when South American men talk to me, they sometimes pat me firmly on the upper arm or shoulder to show friendliness or closeness. When we shake hands, they may use two hands to show more warmth and sincerity.

Nothing remotely like this has happened to me in Asia. If I patted an Asian man on the arm or shoulder the way South Americans have done to me to show closeness, it would definitely not bring us closer or build trust in any way! In contrast, Asians have adeptly shown me courtesy by opening doors for me, bowing slightly, stepping back out of the way so I can pass into the room first, and so on. South Americans would probably find it ridiculous if I showed such obsequious behaviors around them.

Here's an example relating to space: Americans do not hesitate to sprawl in their chairs or put their feet up on train benches. This makes sense considering that the United States is a vast country with wide open spaces; our cars, streets, houses, and refrigerators are all bigger than almost anywhere else. When Americans sit or stand or make gestures, they take up more space than most others.

In a typical interaction, a Colombian graduate student approached me during a break in the first session of a class I was teaching. He had the syllabus in his hand and wanted to ask a question about it. As he talked to me, he stood much closer than I would have chosen to stand to anyone in that kind of situation. As you might guess, I stood my ground because I knew that if I backed up to leave more space, he might close the distance again and we might end up tangoing across the floor.

The various ways of using body, voice, or space are not inherently good or bad; they merely represent differences. The ability or failure to adapt our spatial behaviors can make our international counterparts comfortable or ill at ease, which in turn can contribute to various levels of success or failure in face-to-face cross-cultural interactions.

Intrapersonal intelligence

Of the four of Gardner's intelligences that contribute most to cultural intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence risks being the most nebulous. But what I mean here is basic: you need to know your own cultural style. If you are aware of your own cultural style, you can more easily compare yourself with others, and you will then be able to adjust your behavior to be compatible in cross-cultural settings.

Self-awareness as an aspect of cultural intelligence could be based on all of the categories and themes that I touch on in various parts of the book. In the Introduction I shared my perception that most people may see themselves as "cultureless," when actually everyone has a culture. I also suggest debunking this myth in Part 5 when I address the question, "What Is Your Cultural Style?" In my work and research, I have found that people are rarely aware of how the bigger themes (the part of the iceberg that is under the water) relates to their own culture.

Knowing yourself is of course a lifelong lesson involving constant practice and evolution. I find it difficult to offer general advice in this category beyond encouraging people to keep learning about themselves because every person is unique in many ways.

Interpersonal intelligence

Successful interaction with people from other cultures is the heart of cultural intelligence. Knowing facts about another culture is helpful, but your approach can't be only academic or intellectual; you need to know how to interact successfully with people. Do you charm people from other cultures or do you turn them off? Can you modify your behaviors in appropriate ways when you are with clients or colleagues from various cultures?

Gardner suggests that interpersonal intelligence is the ability to respond appropriately to others. He cites Helen Keller's teacher Anne Sullivan as an example of an individual with the ability to reach out and communicate with someone even when the use of language was not possible. Though Helen Keller's blindness and deafness represent extreme communication barriers, those in cross-cultural interactions face not entirely dissimilar challenges due to the difficulties when the two sides do not share a common language, communication style, or worldview. I'm not exaggerating with this comparison; I see it as a useful metaphor for cross-cultural interactions, but I encourage you to recognize the ways in which not only your international counterparts but especially *you* may be metaphorically somewhat blind or deaf to cultural differences.

Gardner further suggests that interpersonal intelligence is something beyond the language aspects of communication and beyond communication

itself. He describes interpersonal intelligence as the ability to "read the intentions and desires of others, even when they have been hidden." Gardner explains that this skill may be highly developed in therapists, teachers, and political leaders (among others). The ability to "read" people and anticipate their motivations and desires is an aspect of interpersonal intelligence that is crucial to professionals in international interactions. This is the skill of the emergency room doctor who can deduce what is wrong or what a family desires, in spite of language barriers. This is the skill of the international sales representative who can anticipate what will close a sale when negotiating with people from other cultures.

This is another area where general advice is difficult to give, because human interactions are unpredictable and there are limitless specific scenarios in which intercultural relationships are enhanced or diminished.

Perhaps the best way to coach you toward increasing this aspect of cultural intelligence is to suggest that you closely examine your motivation for learning about other cultures. I have noticed, especially since September 11, 2001, that more Americans are asking, "Can't we all just get along?" and "Why do they hate us?" By broadening our worldview and learning how others perceive us, we will begin to appreciate the reasons why others may feel uncomfortable with us. I highly doubt that the September 11, 2001, terrorists considered themselves or their act as *evil* any more than the American leadership considered itself evil for the subsequent American-led war against Iraq a few years later. There was worldwide outrage against both actions. Yet almost certainly a small number of actors on both sides were firmly under the impression that their cause was noble and their intentions were good. The U.S. has been articulately and legitimately criticized, from without and within, for exercising military and business might. While individual citizens may not have any say over general United States military policy or American business practices, each of us can work to improve relations at the individual level. This is impossible without first understanding what motivates people other than ourselves and upon this understanding can then be built the skills of successful interaction.

I first lived abroad as a teenager during the time when the United States was bombing Libya. On foreign news broadcasts I saw coverage of President Reagan being burned in effigy, of American flags burning, and of Libyans gathered in the street chanting and shooting machine guns into the air. I'm not sure if this was my first exposure to such images due to my youth, or because of different reporting practices by U.S. media, but my

eyes were opened for the first time to the reality that the U.S. is not automatically and universally well liked or respected everywhere. It motivated me to do all I could to enjoy the best possible relationships and interactions with people from other countries.

Whether the motive is to work for peace, for profit or for international understanding we must find our own reason for developing our interpersonal intelligence across cultures.

I find that Gardner's multiple intelligences theory offers some simple but rich categories for examining cultural intelligence. My focus on the above four of Gardner's categories could be boiled down to this extremely oversimplified sentence: To interact well with people from other cultures, it helps to (a) speak a bit of their language, (b) know how closely to stand (and other nonverbal behavior), (c) know about your own cultural style, and (d) know how your cultural style meshes with those of others.

Considering all four of these categories is a good start toward defining cultural intelligence, but more than these categories of skill areas is needed, and the next section expands our definition of cross-cultural intelligence by describing the characteristics of the culturally intelligent professional.

The culturally intelligent professional

Haven't we all encountered people who are good at the various skills required by their work but who are not happy with their job and are perhaps a bit "unpleasant" to work with? I have known people who are skilled but who probably would not do well overseas simply because they prefer the comforts (physical and psychological) of staying home. Naturally, part of cultural intelligence must involve some kind of willingness—and intention—to do well in international situations.
So, characteristics such as open-mindedness or the desire to try new things are also important parts of the cultural intelligence equation. Following is a table with various traits that can lead to greater cultural intelligence. How would you rank yourself?

How do you rank yourself?	Needs improvement	Strength	Significant Strength
Open-mindedness			
Flexibility with attitudes and behavior			
Ability to adapt your behavior			
Appreciation of differences			
Comfort with uncertainty			
Ability to trust when dealing with the unfamiliar			
Win-win attitude			
Humility			
Extroversion			
Creativity			
Tactfulness			
Willingness to have your own views challenged			
Ability to make independent decisions when you are far from your usual resources			
Being invigorated by differences			
Ability to see a familiar situation from unfamiliar vantage points			
Patience when you are not in control			
Ability to deal with the stress of new situations			
Respect for others			

Willingness to change yourself as you learn and grow (versus changing others to fit you)			
Empathy			
Sense of humor			

How did you rank yourself on the above table? How would you rank your colleagues? How would they rank you? The above table can be used as a tool for 360-degree feedback; see if you and your colleagues agree with how you rank yourselves and one another.

These characteristics are some that experienced international businesspeople in my cross-cultural programs and throughout my cross-cultural career have reported to me as being particularly useful in international mixes, both domestic and overseas. Other international business writers and researchers propose similar lists and include other sets of traits.

Some of these characteristics are useful in *any* setting, but they become even more important when you are working in an internationally mixed environment because more of these traits are likely to be required of you simultaneously than in any other setting. And you are less likely to be able to predict what will happen next to tax your patience or require you to be flexible.

Let's consider an example from the list—humility—and see how it might be more important in international mixes. In your own country you can do just about anything you need for daily living and for work. You know where to buy stamps, you know how much gas costs and the places you prefer to buy it, you know how to get groceries or any household supplies you need, and you know how to do the various functions of your job. In an overseas setting, all this familiarity vanishes and you are left feeling not quite so confident. You might command an entire department or division in an important company at home, but abroad you can't even buy a stamp or find your way to a gas station. This is naturally humbling. Those who go brashly crashing through foreign lands without humility are at risk of being perceived as Ugly Americans (or Ugly Japanese, etc.). Humility and the

ability to change from the role of expert to the role of learner suddenly become distinct advantages in international settings.

The need for humility can also arise in international interactions in your home country. I suppose you could go brazenly bumbling through interactions with international clients or customers at home, but this is no way to gain trust or keep business. If you want to market your services or products to the Latino community at home, for instance, you'd better not only understand Latino sensibilities but also respect Latinos. Knowing about them, interacting with them, and keeping them as customers require more effort than dealing with the mainstream. Because it involves more learning and more exposure to the unfamiliar, you can't be cocky experts at dealing with Latinos or Asian Americans or foreign personnel even in your own country, and you would do well to approach the situation with humility. Unless your international customers have nowhere to turn but to you, you risk losing them to the competition if you don't treat them with respect and humility.

Can cultural intelligence be increased?

I've seen lots of tests, including IQ tests, with varieties of puzzles and problems, and I know that it's possible to learn how to take these tests and improve my score. I've also interacted with people from lots of cultures, within the setting of their own cultures, and I know it's possible to improve interpersonal relations skills. There's nothing wrong with "studying for the test" when your business is at stake, pass or fail.

Appropriate conduct in a mixed-culture business meeting can be learned, as can many other cross-cultural skills. A significant industry has emerged to train businesspeople and other professionals in intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Such training, along with reading on your own (see Recommended Readings for suggested books), can help you increase your cultural intelligence.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that your cultural intelligence cannot decrease. Yes, it can slip! Ask most people who studied a second language in college how much of it they can speak today.

New and existing intercultural skills, just like a foreign language, must

be practiced to be retained.

Gaining cultural intelligence - a process

Earlier I used the example of juggling to propose that we need to increase not only our awareness and our knowledge but also our skills to truly learn something about cultures. Increasing your cultural intelligence takes time, just as learning to juggle does. Consider your current job and all the skills it requires. You were of course hired, not born, into the organization you work for, and it took you time to build familiarity with it and to be effective. You have learned a variety of things, right down to where the memo pads are kept and where you can get something photocopied.

Remember the seemingly overwhelming amount of information you had to absorb as a new employee in order to function as you do in your job? The process of building cultural intelligence is similar. People who arrive in a new country where they will be staying for an extended time typically want to know everything and want to be able to do everything immediately. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to accomplish everything in one week—from establishing your new telephone service to making new friends to learning how to conduct a meeting with new cultural rules?

Unfortunately (or fortunately!), it doesn't work that way. Even though it's sometimes frustrating, I think it's fortunate that life and learning aren't easy. One of the first things I enjoy doing when I arrive in a foreign city is exploring the streets in bigger and bigger concentric circles, starting from my hotel or my base. Even if I could have a city map or navigation system magically zapped into my head, I wouldn't want that! The messy, tedious process of getting to know a place is what makes me remember it and get to like it. The same is even truer of people, languages, and cultural differences.

Many ways to view the world

One of the ways people inevitably increase their awareness when learning about other cultures is to move from thinking "My way is the only way" toward thinking "There are many valid ways" of interpreting and

participating in life. And the process involves more than changing your thinking; it also involves adjusting your behaviors.

ONE WAY ←—————————————————————→ MANY WAYS

ONE WAY	**MANY WAYS**
My way is the only valid way.	There are many valid ways.
I refuse to adjust.	I am prepared to adjust.

Of course culture plays a major role in how people participate in and interpret the world and life, and the more you explore other cultural viewpoints and practices, the more you will see that there are multiple valid perspectives.

It's natural to start out somewhere toward the left side of the scale above, because you know only your own worldview until you see that of others. But do you stay toward the left of the scale, or do you move toward the right? That's the critical question.

As you learn, evolve, and gain perspective, it becomes possible for you to move toward the right of this scale. I say it's possible and, as you might guess, I think it's desirable. But it's not at all guaranteed. My optimistic side would say that it's natural for your mind to open as you learn more about others. But as you experience more of life, it's also natural to find things you prefer and others you dislike. Those preferences and dislikes can become fossilized. Couldn't happen to you, you claim? Have you ever found yourself thinking, "Oh, I'd *never* drive a Chevrolet!" (or: "Oh, I *only* drive Chevrolets!"). I think it's natural to stop looking for solutions and new perspectives when you feel you've figured out how things work and how to get through life in a way that satisfies you. Just as you don't keep looking for your car keys after you've found them, your natural tendency might be to stop looking at other cultural perspectives when you think you've got a perfectly workable cultural style and way of interpreting the world. In fact, I might go further and say that when we think we've found the answers, we might naturally be highly resistant to anything that challenges those comfortable answers.

I will admit that my bias, or my point of departure in thinking about cultures, is that multiple perspectives and the ability to adjust to multiple

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ways of life are desirable. But I am not blindly optimistic to the extent that I think people want to naturally expand their worldview; it can be a difficult process. I believe that to successfully progress toward the right on the scale requires deliberate and conscious effort. How you get there (assuming you want to) is up to you. What I will do below is examine ways for describing what happens to us as we move from the left to the right on this scale. There are other theories that can contribute to the discussion of this process, but for simplicity's sake, I offer very brief discussions of only three of them.

Intellectual and ethical development

The psychologist William Perry proposes the following framework to describe the evolution of our thought processes, and here's how I would apply it to the "One way/Many ways" scale above.

Dualism—We only see the world in black and white terms. For example, this could mean "our way" versus "their way," the "American way" versus the "Swedish way," or the "capitalist way" versus the "communist way." This level of development would be located close to the left end of scale. At this phase, we would not be willing to change our behaviors toward what we perceived as an inferior way. Further to the left, perhaps even off the scale, is the stage where people do not even see the existence of other ways. This is where people might innocently believe "My way is the only way."

Multiplicity—As we move toward the right on the scale, we begin to acknowledge that there are diverse perspectives and begin to accept some of them. If we have not progressed very far to the right, this stage can look like dualism if we quickly abandon our original perspectives and adopt or idealize some new perspective. In plain English, this is what happens when people travel abroad and "go native;" an American might discover the Italian way of life, decide it's wonderful, and have nothing but negatives to say about the American way of life. New perspectives can be recognized as legitimate at this stage, but the view that one way is better than another can persist.

Relativism—Shifting further to the right, we accept that there are multiple ways of seeing the world and living life. Here we can appreciate other

cultures and all that they entail. At this stage we can recognize multiple perspectives as being valid and are not likely to negatively evaluate a cultural trait without careful thought.

Committed relativism—Finally, at the right end of the scale, the most advanced stage, not only do we see that there are multiple valid ways of living and thinking, but we are able to make an informed decision about what ways are best for us. We recognize that other ways may be better for other people, and in fact we may understand exactly why they are better within certain cultural contexts, but we can commit knowingly to ways that make sense within our own lives and our own cultural context.

Milton Bennett has aptly applied Perry's thinking to cross-cultural issues using the labels "ethnocentrism" (toward the left) and "committed ethno relativism" (on the right).

Lawrence Kohlberg proposes seven stages of moral development that relate to how people make decisions about right and wrong; these could be applied to the "One way/Many ways" scale. On the left would be Kohlberg's lowest stages, where we think in terms of right and wrong, good and bad, and rules. This is not unrelated to Perry's dualism and the idea that cultures can be seen as black and white. In terms of our cultural intelligence discussion, this is where we would label other cultural perspectives as bad, backward, even abnormal.

Moving toward the middle, Kohlberg's stages involve decision making based on societal pressures and the desire to fit in with social norms. In other words, we decide what is right or wrong based on how other people might perceive us. This can only happen with the realization that there are such social norms to conform to and an awareness that others can perceive us and make judgments about us. This could be related to Perry's multiplicity stage. Cultural intelligence is somewhat increased here in that we have at least a beginning awareness, if not acceptance, of others.

On the right, we might be able to slot Kohlberg's highest stages, where people make informed decisions autonomously after considering multiple perspectives. This would not be dissimilar to Perry's committed relativism in that we choose our own solution after considering other options.

Whether you relate more to the terminology of Perry, Bennett, Kohlberg, or someone else, the basic idea is that development of cultural intelligence

entails moving from left to right on the "One way/Many ways" scale: (1) from black and white thinking and the refusal or inability to accept other ways (2) to dealing in gray areas and being open to differences (3) to being able to adapt successfully in any cultural environment (4) to, finally, making informed decisions of our own.

Attitude and behavior change

What we are changing as we move from the left to the right is at question here. As I proposed in the juggling metaphor, we can learn *about* something or we can learn to actually *do* it. Of course most learning will involve some level of both. I propose that we have to challenge our thinking (our attitudes and values in the much bigger bottom portion of the cultural iceberg from Part 1) before we can change our behaviors (which are above the waterline of the cultural iceberg).

The simple point here is that the process of learning about other cultures first involves learning about new attitudes and values, but eventually we must put them into practice by adapting our behavior to fit our cultural environment—abroad or with internationals at home.

Toward the left of the "One way/Many ways" scale we may become aware of different attitudes and values, and as we move toward the right, we can accordingly practice changing our behavior in ways that allow us to operate effectively in other cultures and/or with people from other cultures.
To tie in Perry's concept of "committed relativism": at the right end of the scale we would see that there are many legitimate culture based values to choose from, we would know clearly what our own culture-based values are, and we would be able to adjust our behaviors appropriately to be effective within a given cultural context. The previous sentence is quite close to the definition of cultural intelligence that I offered at the beginning.

The cultural adjustment process

The simple point I want to make here is that no matter how you define cultural intelligence for your own professional circumstances and according to your own development, working toward it is a process, not an instant fix.

You might have picked up the impression that I'm pretty optimistic about other languages and cultures and that I embrace opportunities to learn about them. That's mostly true—most of the time. But I will confess here that I sometimes dread the process, and I dread it because of my familiarity with culture shock.

Everyone is familiar with the term *culture shock*. I don't like the expression because it implies a jolt or sudden zap of some sort. It might better be called "culture ache" or "culture blues," because it often comes from the long and frustrating process of adjusting to another culture. There are, in fact, predictable cycles of ups and downs that people go through when they relocate to other cultures. Just as you don't increase your cultural intelligence overnight, you don't experience all the frustration of international living or intercultural interactions overnight either.

"Culture shock" should be "culture blues."

Of the places outside the United States I've traveled, lived, or worked, I have spent the most time so far in France, and I'm quite familiar with the French and French culture. French is the language I speak most fluently (after English). In spite of these facts, each time I travel to France I am frustrated for some new reason. I have done plenty of muttering and grumbling to myself while living in France because it has seemed to me that whether I'm setting up a bank account or asking to buy something, the French seem to start with "*Non*" or "*C'est impossible*" and then slowly move toward "Yes" and "I guess that will be possible." Americans often do the opposite; they start by thinking that anything is possible (the can-do people) and then try their hardest to find a way of accomplishing the

impossible. Once it took me eleven days to set up a certain type of bank account in France. I later timed it on a stopwatch and found that it took me eleven *minutes* to set up a similar account in the U.S. The list of frustrations I have had in various countries could go on and on. I have been irritated by the clogs of scooters and the air pollution in Asian cities, the resigned acceptance of violence and extreme poverty in Brazil, the "strange telephone system" *called* in (well in any variety of places!).

When I find myself muttering about things like this and missing things from home such as the efficient American banking system, the scooter-free streets, or the familiar and easy telephone system, it helps me to remember that I am experiencing the cultural adjustment process. Though I have had my glimpses of the right end of the One Way/Many Ways scale, it's in those moments that I realize most I am always at risk of slipping back toward the left end, toward Perry's dualism stage of development.

At those times, I try to remind myself that the French way of being cautious with risks and of engaging people in argument and dialogue works wonderfully in France, and scooters are the *perfect* way to commute in densely populated tropical cities where it never snows, and every country's telephone system is, quite logically, the right (or at least the best possible) telephone system for that country at that time.

If I can see things that way, I am more able to accept the fact that there are many valid ways of living, working, talking, being, and doing. I might not choose to do things that way in my own culture, but I can certainly see why things are done that way in another.

The process of increasing your cultural intelligence is just that, a *process*. It is sometimes analogous to walking uphill in sand: two steps forward, one step back.

To close this part on a step forward, I will encourage you to stick to the process of increasing your cultural intelligence and recognize that it involves ups and downs, moving forward and sliding back, no matter who you are, no matter which culture you are dealing with, and regardless of whether you are dealing with it in "their" country or your own. I believe that, as with any learning experience, the enrichment you find at the end does justify the toil of getting there. And as with any journey, getting there can be half the fun if you can just remember that it should be!

Anthropology and epistemology for "glocal" managers: understanding the worlds in which we live and work

Fernando Salvetti and Barbara Bertagni

0. Point zero: introduction and overall vision

Speed, interconnection, immateriality, net-economy, global and local worlds... To increasingly global interconnections are associated some increasingly local and localized differentiations such as: differences in the style of consumption, tastes, fashions and style codes, as well as in the models of behaviour and social actions. The increasing globalisation also brings with it a rise in the differentiations, not just in the homologations.

Therefore it is better to talk about '*glocalization*' rather than globalization: global integration and micro-territorial fragmentation are two complementary processes. We live within a society that is based on multiplicities, often very different among themselves, but with some lines of convergence.

The new markets are local worlds: in order to make business in new places, it is better to have the tools to understand how to act in these new worlds and not behave in the same way everywhere without seeing the many local factors that answer to an embedded code, rooted in the fields of meaning that orientates the thoughts and actions of people, that conditions their visions, that shapes their views and shapes/deforms the lenses of their glasses. Cultural intelligence, just like the anthropology of awareness, opens up important dimensions to us, not only in terms of comprehension and analysis of the world in which we live, but directly in terms of management and business development.

This is the key that allows us to 'listen' and understand behaviours, habits, contexts and markets that are different from our own. Increasingly in our organisational contexts we live on different levels of reality, as if we were within the lithography of Escher's stairs; each one of us obliged to ascend or descend our own stairway as if it were the only correct perspective. But

there are many perspectives and levels do not always intersect in an intelligible way.

If we work in internationally-active companies and organisations, we are part of work groups in which the concepts of service, team-work, hierarchy, time, quality, etc, are the most diverse.

Working in intercultural contexts means taking into account different cognitive paradigms, relational set-ups and reference values. We look at things from different points of view that maybe almost overlap, but belong to different worlds (inflexible worlds? Not necessarily....).
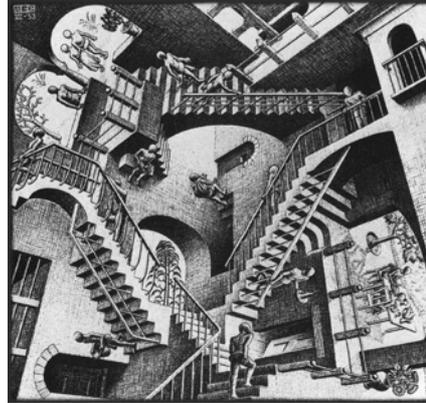
How can we find a common meeting point? Some research conducted over the past few years shows that while around 90% of the large multinational companies develop activities "*to take advantage of distributed skills, around-the-clock operations and virtual team environments,*" less than 1/3 of the same companies has been able, until today, to consolidate good procedures even just to make the job easier for the project managers and the work groups made up of people who mainly work from a distance and in environments with a high multicultural rate.

As the great anthropologist Edward Hall once said, the greatest barrier that often comes between us and a successful business is that made up of cultural difference. In order to do global business effectively a lot of cross-cultural intelligence is needed, the ability to really 'get to grips' with the local context and the most widespread thought systems: with the awareness that the meaning of our messages is that perceived by the receiver, who could be much more different to us than we intentionally realise (*the receiver, not the sender, defines communication*).

Dealing with *global business* also means that misunderstandings, ambiguity, mistakes are always around the corner. What we need are ways of thinking and acting that are able to make us understand and frequent the many particularities, contrasts and differences that characterise the many local markets in our increasingly global world. In other words, we need cultural anthropology, epistemology and therefore both elements of

philosophy in science as well as common knowledge, we need a little social (and not only) psychology: in daily concrete, operative and useful terms... both to ask ourselves the 'right questions' as well as for looking for the suitable answers for their complexity.

1. Net society, global world, local worlds

Speed, interconnection, immateriality, net-economy, global and local worlds…

The revolution of information technology and communication and the consequent social transformations have marked an epoch-making caesura in the way of developing human societies. It is a change of paradigm. A change in the common experience of time, reorientation and reorganisation of space based on the logic of fluxes of the internet society, the *networked society,* which communicates and consumes through the web, based on processes that instantly spread symbols and knowledge – deeply altering the cultural expressions and radically changing the forms of political power and social mobility[1].

The growing globalisation of the economy (information) and communication is accompanied by the multiplication of cultural differences and divisions. The increasing globalisation brings an increase in the differentiations: increasingly global interconnections are associated with increasingly intricate divisions[2].

The current age is characterized by the contradiction between economical and technological interdependency and political fragmentation, between social interconnection and cultural heterogeneity. Globalization is the world's 'new disorder.' There is no unique and inevitable form of globalisation; the configuration that this may assume and the positive and negative effects that it may produce depend on the methods of regulation and government of the process.

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[1] Castells (2002, pp. 1ss., 499ss.): in the networked society, networked job, networking and networkers, the control of the the new global *élites* is exercised trough the control and management of the value chain. It was created and placed around the information , finance and production networks which connect and disconnect whole geographical area and social categories in real time, determining exclusion and widespread disparity.
[2]Geertz (1999, pg. 57); Martinelli (2008, pgs. XII and ff.)

Globalisation: this term is totally different from the term universalisation, which was once at the core of the modern discourse on global affairs, but by now is no longer used and has been more or less forgotten. Universalisation transmitted the hope, intention, and determination to create order, while we today do not have the possibility of obtaining the means to programme and follow actions on a global level.

The global aspects of finance, commerce and the information industry depend, for their freedom of movement and for their full possibility of following their aims, on political fragmentation, on the 'fractioning' of the world scene in states and countries. More than globalisation, *glocalisation*: global integration and multi-local and micro-territorial fragmentation, synthesis and dispersion, are all complementary processes.

'Glocal' is a neologism that is becoming evermore relevant in our vocabulary[3]. Every part of our world is increasingly interdependent with many others. Glocalisation is a multidimensional process. The 'global scene' can be considered as a matrix of possibility, from which highly varied choices and combinations can be, and have been, produced: through the choice and combination of the global theme of cultural symbols, separate and distinct local identities are woven together[4].

We live within a society based on multiplicity[5], which are often very different from one another but with some converging lines of trend: shopping centres as 'place-but-not-a-place'[6] that tend to be everywhere (starting from the 'margins' of misery up to the centres of metropolis), the

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[3] Martinelli (2008, pg. XVI).

[4] Bauman (2005, pgs. 337ss.):the connection between the clearly universal availability of cultural symbols and the increasingly diverse and territorial uses that are made of them, has by now become one of the main arguments of study and sociological discourse of our times. Globalisation does not mean cultural unification: the mass production of 'cultural material' does not mean the production of something that can seem 'global culture.' The community, rediscovered by the reborn romantic admirers of the *Gemeinschaft* (that they now see threatened once more by the insensitive, subverting and impersonal forces, but this time rooted in the universal and global *Gesellschaft*, is not an antidote for globalisation, but one of its indispensable consequences: products and conditions at the same time.

[5] Marquard (1991). Cf. also Beck (2005, pgs. 15ss. and 29ss.) who writes of the eloquent example of a formation of the identity that substituted the 'aut...aut' logic with the 'as well as' logic of an inclusive distinction. An entire conceptual universe, or rather that of the 'national view,' is disenchanted, that is de-ontologised, historised, stripped of its intrinsic necessity.

[6] Augé (2005) defines non-places in comparison with the anthropologic places, intending all those areas that have the prerogative of not being identifiable, relational or historical. Non-places are both those structures necessary for the accelerated circulation of people and goods (motorways, interchanges, airports), as well as transport, large shopping centres, refugee camps, etc. Areas in which millions of individuals meet without entering into relationships, driven out either by the frenetic consumption desire or to accelerate the daily operations or to make a change (either real or symbolic).

rejection of the meaning horizons centred on stability and duration, the river of time dried up in an irregular variety of puddles, the absolute fungibility of the 'goods,' health which tends towards fitness, channel-hopping as the maximum expression of freedom, the progressive 'fluidisation' of the socio-productive processes (just like the consumer goods, which increasingly become 'experiential,' not durable and immaterial losing the typical characteristics of 'Fordism' – rigidity, standardisation – in order to take on the main traits of 'post-Fordism,' or rather flexibility, innovation, personalisation).[7]

What is a universe of meaning? That is rather shaky, inhabited by emblematic figures such as the player (on the stock market or the lottery), the tourist, the rootless person, the 'collector of sensations' and., above all, the 'foreigner.'[8].

This is a universe in which it is not easy for people to orientate themselves. But this is exactly why in a universe where it is important – firstly for us consultants and shapers, maybe also educators – to have the courage to be illuminists, to bring some 'logos' to categorise the 'chaos.' What is illuminism? We reply with Ulrich Bech's cosmopolitan view: "Have the courage to use your cosmopolitan view, or rather to adhere to your multiple identities, uniting to the shapes of life linked by language, skin colour, nationality or religion the knowledge that in the radical insecurity of the world we are all the same and we are all different"[9].

What we need - in universities and business schools, but mainly at the managerial level of public and private organisations, active both in the

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[7] Codeluppi (2005, pg. 7ss.) also notes how the "increasing success reserved by Western society for experiential goods actually defines a new economic and social model that is mainly based on the purchase of the possibility of access to something" (the model defined by Jeremy Rifkin of cultural capitalism, given that the consumption of this type of goods/experience is that which most characterises it).

[8] " Si la société de consommation ne produit plus de mythes, c'est qu'*elle est à elle-même son propre mythe*. Au Diable qui apportait l'Or et la Richesse (au prix de l'âme) s'est substituée l'Abondance pure et simple… La Consommation est un mythe. C'est-à-dire que c'est une *parole de la société contemporaine sur elle-même*, c'est la façon dont notre société se parle. Et en quelque sorte la seule réalité objective de la consommation, c'est *l'idée* de la consommation, c'est cette configuration réflexive et discursive, indéfiniment reprise par le discours quotidien et le discours intellectuel, et qui a pris force de *sens commun »* (Baudrillard, 1970, pg.1ss). On the subject cf. also Bauman (1999), Sloterdijk (2006).

[9] Beck (2005, pg. 3): from the times of Ancient Greece cosmopolitanism has been a controversial rational idea. Today however, it should be recognised that the very reality has become cosmopolitan , in a process that constitutes a social effect unpredicted by the actions computed in the network of globalised risks.

profit markets as well as in non-profit contexts - are new ways of thinking, able to frequent particularities, individualities, strangeness, discontinuity, contrasts and singularities.

Ways of thinking which help us to understand the variety, the plurality of belonging and the ways of being of the local worlds in which we live, study and work[10].

Inhabitants of the technologically advanced cities and country side areas, regular visitors to the increasingly inter-connected urban and rural landscapes, electronic navigators and pleasure and business travellers, we need sufficiently fluid categories in order to understand the variety of the worlds in which we live – also for exploring the expressive, cognitive and imaginative possibilities of our times[11].

We find ourselves in a situation in which the national state is increasingly besieged by a planetary interdependence, by some ecological, economical and terrorist risks which link the separate worlds of the under-developed and developed countries. And insomuch that this situation is reflected in the world's public opinion an historically new element emerges: a cosmopolitan view (sceptical, auto-critical, disillusioned) in which human beings consider themselves contemporarily part of a world at risk and part of its history and their own local condition.

2. Science, epistemology and cultural anthropology

Contemporary science offers a complex image of reality, characterised by an extreme variety of objects and a great richness of their interactions. It is useful that we therefore train ourselves to vary and enrich our patterns of explanation, thought and action.

We must learn how to quickly ascend and descend many scales of reality, to see, and reconceptualise, reality (or the realities) from different viewpoints. To reach our objective, and to do it in an efficient way, we propose a double opening and a double exposition: to science (via epistemology) and to cultural anthropology.

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[10] Geertz (1999, pg. 21).
[11] Calvino (1988, pg. 3).

For that concerning science, its forms of research and conceptualisation, the why, in our opinion, is simple: it is the maximum intellectual and social capital that we have[12]. Concerning cultural anthropology, it is useful to remember that, among living beings, humans are perhaps the only ones that actively build their environment and for whom environment is a cultural building.

Culture shapes both our eyes as well as the lenses of our glasses, as well as their shape. In some ways, the culture to which we belong is like a prison, unless we know there is a key to open it, *cultural intelligence*, which allows us to build bridges between different cultures.

The term 'culture' indicates both those socially learnt and acquired traditions, as well as the ways of living of the members of a society – including their structured and reiterated manner of thinking, feeling and acting. It is enough to think, for example, of the perception of time and its management; the epistemology and cultural anthropology.

Otherwise inside the universities and business schools, but above all within the administration councils and the board rooms of the organisations, we risk living like the ancient knights – simplifiers and simplistic (decision-makers) – the challenges of an era in which we are urged to practice methods aimed at making us see the links, the connections, solidarity, implications, articulations, interdependences, complexities.

We need to frequent the crossroads between cultural anthropology and epistemology. We need to think and see the world with the eyes of an anthropologist of knowledge which allows us, as Montaigne said, to "rub our brains up to that of others." We need to learn a potentially relativist (though not destructive or nihilist), relational and knowledgeable thought of ourselves, of our own assumptions and unspoken thoughts. A thought that is able to consider the cognitive restraints that make it up, that sometimes command and control it in a blind and fideistic way.

An awareness that knowledge is a mix of rationality and rationalisation, of true and false intuitions, inductions, syllogisms and paralogisms, ways of saying and doing things, personal opinions and shared beliefs[13].

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[12] Cf. Cerroni (2006).
[13] Morin (2008, II).

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Anthropology allows for many paths aimed at increasing this type of both critical and flexible thought. And today cultural intelligence is the main challenge: the cognitive paradigms, the relational patterns and the value systems vary significantly, not only among different cultures, but also among people who work in the same organisation.

For example, people with different cultural *backgrounds* show different attitudes towards gerarchy, the ambiguity of interpersonal communication, orientation of the objective, time management and group work. Are you able to understand the basic assumptions, implicit or explicit, that rule people's behaviour in different geographical areas of the world? Are you able to interpret the explicit regulations and the reference guidance values that are characteristic of a society different to your own?

Starting a group discussion with these questions, or with other similar questions, we are able to trace a useful pattern in order to understand a new business context and, at the same time, we can enrich our cognitive maps: in other words, we can develop our intellectual flexibility, our creativity and our propensity to innovate. Now more than ever, to be innovative and creative (cognitively flexible) we need to learn how to think and act as *outsiders* able to see things from different viewpoints – an *Out-of-the-box approach*. A mix of cultural anthropology and epistemology is vital in this approach.

3. An example of a seminar dedicated to cross-cultural intelligence: lost in translation

A short seminar for the personnel managers, structured with two '*peer-to-peer*' testimonies and a series of, also multimedia, contents introduced by the initiative's coordinator, Professor Gabriele Gabrielli, and guided by an expert (Fernando Salvetti). Below is the invitation with the meeting's structure:

There are many keys to interpretation proposed to the participants, among which a 'cultural wheel' that is often used with people professionally active within the organisations insomuch that they help to systemise, in an intuitive and concrete way, their own experiences:
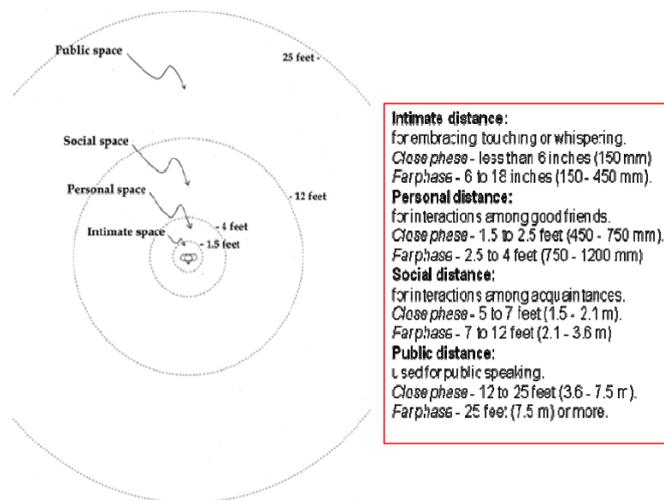
Culture-Wheel

Facts

Facts

Identity & relationship styles

Rituals & superstitions

Thinking & learning styles

Values, norms and world view

Heroes & myths

Core cultural assumptions

Organization & work styles

Symbols

Communication styles

Taboos

Subjective culture

Objective culture
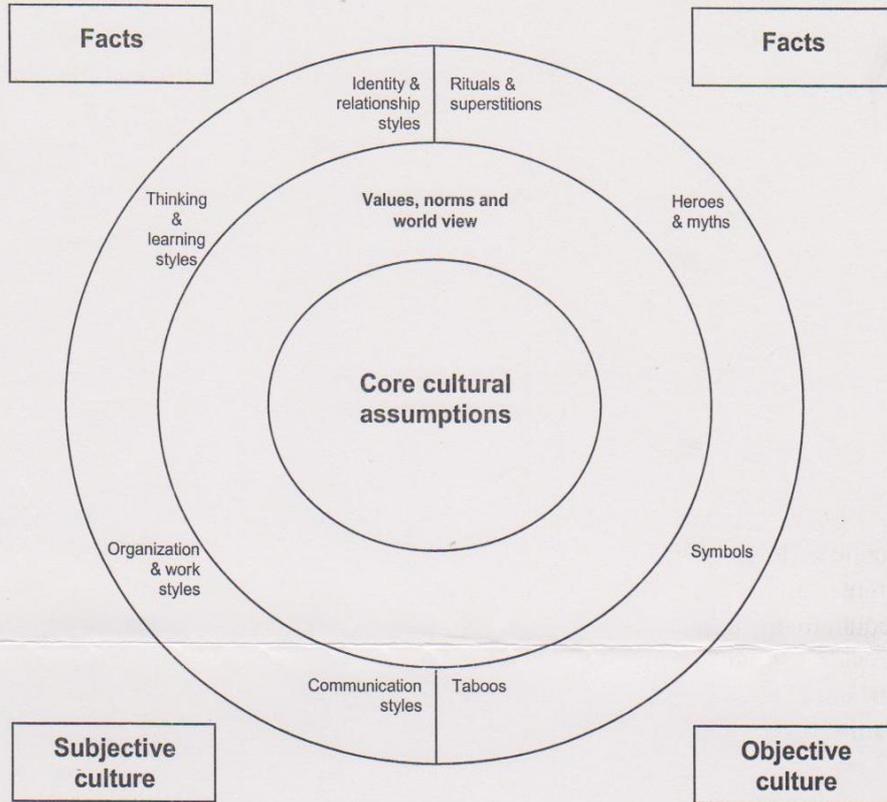
My four top tips for doing business with people from .... are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

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Further examples: the different interpersonal distances that characterise the different cultures, through the extrapolation of a well-known chart which was elaborated in a famous book by Edward Hall.

Intimate distance:
for embracing touching or whispering.
Close phase - less than 6 inches (150 mm)
Far phase - 6 to 18 inches (150 - 450 mm).
Personal distance:
for interactions among good friends.
Close phase - 1.5 to 2.5 feet (450 - 750 mm).
Far phase - 2.5 to 4 feet (750 - 1200 mm)
Social distance:
for interactions among acquaintances.
Close phase - 5 to 7 feet (1.5 - 2.1 m).
Far phase - 7 to 12 feet (2.1 - 3.6 m)
Public distance:
used for public speaking.
Close phase - 12 to 25 feet (3.6 - 7.5 m).
Far phase - 25 feet (7.5 m) or more.

Different cultures maintain different standards of personal space. In Latin cultures, for instance, those relative distances are smaller, and people tend to be more comfortable standing close to each other; in Nordic cultures the opposite is true.
Realizing and recognizing these cultural differences improves cross-cultural understanding, and helps eliminate discomfort people may feel if the interpersonal distance is too large ("stand-off ish") or too small (intrusive). Comfortable personal distances also depend on the culture, social situation, gender, and individual preference.

In other words, curiosity and learning pills are usually used to activate cognitive representations and conceptual systemisations that are different from usual. Anthropology is used to ease the development and the articulation of more or less usual cognitive maps; as it could also be through the use of figurative, plastic or literary arts: contrary to a certain image rooted in common knowledge, even if the scientific dimension constitutes the paradigm *par excellence* of knowledge, it is not the only one.

The arts, like human sciences and anthropology, should be taken into no less consideration than the sciences insomuch as they are methods for discovery, creation, broadening of knowledge, as works of art hold a very dominant role in our fabrication of worlds (that we inherit from scientists and historians as well as narrators, dramatists and painters). Cervantes, Bosch and Goya, no less than Newton and Darwin, inherit, undo, redo, replicate real worlds, rehandling them in important and sometimes obscure ways, that however leave them recognisable – that is to say *re-knowable[14]*.

4. Epistemology: an occasion to *'pour penser autrement'*

Like anthropology, epistemology can also help managers (and also students in universities and business schools) to develop ways and processes of thinking that are characterised in terms of multi-perspectivity, wealth and cognitive flexibility. The reflection on knowledge of our 'Western' cultural context is largely characterised by the analysis of the structure of the theories that are proposed and discussed in the various disciplinary ambits of the science.

These structures are usually less articulated: scientific knowledge is problematical and the result of theories that tend to configure general regularities (laws, structures, models...) and to explain its own investigation subjects ascribing them to categories of experiences that are repeatable and therefore can be controlled by anyone[15].

Without forgetting that the configuration of scientific knowledge is different insomuch that it is connected with the approach to reality of each culture: in German-speaking countries the word science (*Wissenschaft*) is traditionally used to imply any serious or rigorous discussion. In the rest of continental Europe, we tend to indicate with the term 'science' any doctrine based on controllable statement, even though they lack empirical confirmation. In English, the word 'science' traditionally indicates only

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[14] Goodman (1988, pgs. 120-123). To quote Goodman, however, does not mean sharing every aspect of his thinking: in particular it seems unable to share his propensity to the 'radical constructionism' – cf. For example Goodman (1987) – according to which it is not possible to say that the world has, in itself, a structure, as this would on the other hand depend only on our conceptual representations.

[15] Robilant (1990, pg. 23). In principle, moreover, we cannot exclude a dispute on the same criteria, based on which to then decide if a determinate phenomenon can be considered 'reproduced.'

those disciplines in which the role of observation and experimentation is decisive[16].

Working in the field of meta-theory, or rather of the disassembly and reassembly of the theoretic meanings used to give scientific body to the theoretic paradigms of reference, allows us to view different levels of reality through the very analysis of the explicative meanings and the supporting components of the theories (explicative patterns, representations and figures, models, etc.). Below is an illustrative representation:
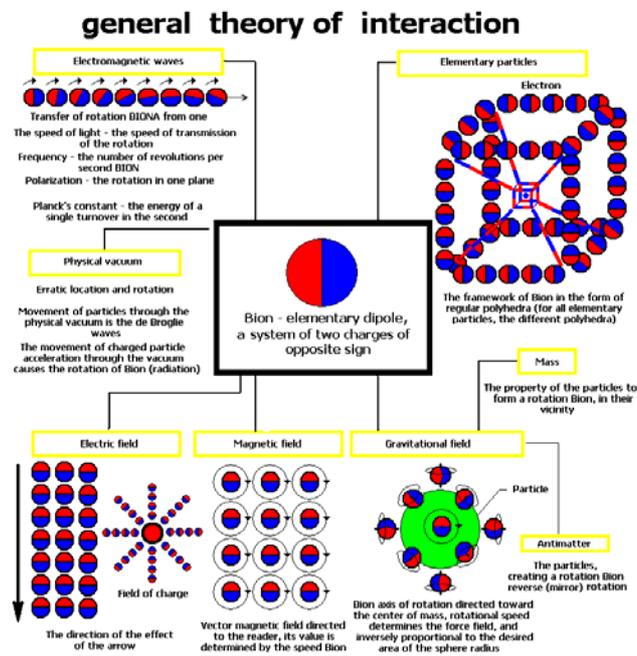
Theories are nets cast out to capture what we call the world: to rationalise it, explain it, dominate it[17]. It is in fact an illusion to think that we can have anything to do with 'reality' without the selective and reconstructive mediation of the theoretical meanings. To forget the complexity of things brings the risk of confusing them with the necessarily schematic and reductive idea that we have of it. Theory, like the theatre, is above all

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[16] Licci (1996, pg. 136).

[17] Popper (1984, pg 43). For Einstein (1956, pg. 323), science's theories represent the "attempt to make the chaotic variety of our sensorial experience correspond with a logically uniform thought system;" *a propos* cf. also, for example, Holon (1983, pgs. 295ff.) and Atias (1990), who particularly underline the role of theorisation as a means for reducing 'free will' and chaos.

fiction and an invention of reality and not imitation: in the theatre we reinvent behaviour and words, with theory we rebuild and re-elaborate figures of reality.

The theories with which we look out at the world are ideal meanings made up of classifications, patterns, categories, models: they are artificial constructions, invented, aimed at getting a reasoned knowledge of reality (or realities) and are in contraposition with other theories.

Theories are the result of the invention of some explicative schematics and, and the same time, of the relevant 'data' selection for the problem in consideration by the theory itself. In other words, they help us to understand that there are no subjective descriptions insomuch that there is no such thing as an innocent eye just as there is no such thing as an absolute fact, as every description – as with every perception – is connoted by *selection* and *classification*. In other words, the innocent eye is blind and the virgin mind is empty[18].

The mind works as a lighthouse that selectively illuminates in a certain direction and certainly not like a *tabula rasa*, or rather a container that gathers pure data that comes from the world: an observation is a planned and prepared perception, in that man does not live in accordance with the dictates of the dogma of the immaculate perception[19].

Therefore, we can talk more of artefacts than facts: the connections and individual relationships (or rather, institutions) among the elements of some kind of reality are such in function of a specific problem, and not in absolute. The horizon of expectations, more or less aware, plays the role of a reference frame: our experiences, actions and observations are given sense and meaning only if they fit in this frame[20].

Working on the epistemological level (in the first place with training visits at research structures, brief seminars, and multimedia *learning pills*) means

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[18] Goodman (1976, pgs. 12-13): "When the eye is put to work, it is always ancient, obsessed by its own past and by the suggestions, both old and new, given to it by the ear, nose, tongue, fingers, heart and brain... It chooses, refuses, organises, discriminates, associates, classifies, analyses, builds. It doesn't reflect, rather than gather and elaborate."

[19] A propos cf. Bertalanffy (1971); also see Hayek (1990), Popper-Eccles (1981), Gombrich (1978), Argenton (1996).

[20] Popper (1983, pg 451); also cf. Polanyi (1990). For Hayek (1990, pg 238), for example, "every sensation, even the 'hardest,' must be considered as the interpretation of an event in the light of the individual or the species' past experience."

increasing precisely this awareness via the analysis of how scientific theories are structured. And then an *excursus* relative to the acquisitions that accompany our training work in the field.

5. "Theory" as a contemplation and modern science

Theory, for the ancient Greeks, is a kind of knowledge that is translated in the viewing while participating in an event that is offered to all as a common gift. The *theorós* not only observes, but becomes part of being 'real': its view is one that results from *suffering*, that is from being 'kidnapped' by a contemplation that does not allow the distinction between knowing subject and object of knowledge. It is exactly this 'belonging' of the *theorós* to the object that allows him to understand the ultimate essence of things[21].

The lexical and temporal distance of theory of our theoretics could not be larger, especially in the ambit of contemporary science where the idea of passivity and 'belonging' of the knowing subject to the object of the knowledge, as means for a 'rediscovery of true being' of things, cannot be justified. Rather, the observation is 'participation' in the sense that it is selective and full of theory and, instead of restoring the object of the investigation in its ideal purity, constitutes the product of interaction between the conceptual and linguistic patterns of the knowing subject and reality (or realities).

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[21] Gadamer (1982, pgs. 33 and 58; 1989, pg. 40 and 1994, pgs. 157, 524-526), who reminds us that the Greeks "do not make the effort to found the objectivity of knowledge starting with subjectivity," in that their thought is recognised "as a moment of being itself" for which "a subject that is for itself and that puts everything else as an object" is unthinkable. As Toraldo, for example, notes (1986, pg. 16), "the modern acceptance of the subject-object couple had a lot of difficulty in imposing itself and to find it clearly affirmed we should at least wait until the end of the 1600s." Gadamer (1994, pg. 467), furthermore, is critical of the Greek conception of knowledge as a pre-linguistic activity, that postulates Man's possibility of carrying out reality without conceptualising (or mediating) it linguistically. On theory cf. Vattimo (1982, pgs. 13-14); on the evidence of classical metaphysics cf. Arata (1964, pgs. 70-71) and Severino (1995, pg. 49); on the supremacy, in Greek culture, of contemplation compared to active life cf. Arendt (1989, pg. 13). For a synthesis on knowledge and epistemology cf. Pasquinelli (1964, pg. 19ff.); for a historical *excursus* cf. Tagliagambe (1992, pg. 3ff.).

Furthermore, the history of science is not linear and many problems and forgotten ways of thinking can be found in it, even if in the context of a very different intellectual horizon. And so, also in modern science, the laws of nature – that have, in some way, taken the place of those that were the contents of ancient knowledge of celestial phenomena inspired by mathematics – seem, at least in part, to assume the descriptions of certainty that originate from passively seeing what something really is.

The mathematical reconstruction of the cosmos and the world became, between the 16th and 17th centuries, one of the most characterising traits of scientific knowledge (or, at least, of its philosophical idealisations): for example, Descartes believed that science is only possible if the object of the investigation can be mathematised; Leibniz goes so far as to elaborate the idea of a *mathis universalis* as task, trend and destination of human thought. Generally speaking, therefore, the post-Renaissance scientists and philosophers search for the conditions for an exhaustive explanation of reality in a universal science built on a mathematical basis: the phenomena are such only in the measure in which they can be reduced to a mathematical order, expression of constant and unchangeable structures.

Reason, in other words, increasingly defines itself as a math ratio. The figure of Galileo represents and incarnates the tension towards the mathematical rationalisation of the physical world and the cosmos, brought to light by a conception of nature as an entity that is in itself mathematical: the 'great book of nature,' for Galileo, cannot be read unless we understand maths, which allows the ultimate essence of reality (that is, the objective qualities' of bodies, both quantitative and measurable) to be reflected and expressed. Following this, however, with Newton, maths becomes intended above all as a tool that allows the extraction of laws from the phenomena that rule them (and so on, over the centuries, among disputes and debates)[22].

On the relation between a scientist and nature as the object of his study, various metaphors are proposed: from that of the book on nature and from the scientist as its reader to that, proposed by Bacon, of the scientist as

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[22] On the mathematisation of natural reality in modern science cf. Husserl (1961), Gadamer (1989, pg. 35) and Arendt (1989, pg. 197); cf. also Giorello (1992, pgs. 12ff.) and Bellone (1990, pgs. 13ff.) with specific reference to Galileo. On the book of nature Husserl (1961), Gadamer (1989, pg. 35) and Arendt (1989, pg. 197); cf. also Giorello (1992, pgs. 12ff.) and Bellone (1990, pgs. 13ff.) on the laws of nature cf. for example Harré (1994).

object that – as if it were a *theorós* – writes a *historia naturalis* under dictation, as if nature itself told us of its own history demonstrating its own order.

However, during the age of Bacon and Galileo the observation of nature became increasingly *active*: instead of limiting itself to the classification of the study object according to an Aristotelian perspective – in which everything has its natural collocation that is demonstrated by an immediate and intuitive observation – we proceed in asking questions that are to be experimentally monitored.

Scientific activity is increasingly connected to experiments carried out in the light of hypothetical suppositions, aimed at reproducing in a laboratory the conditions that are necessary and sufficient to check a phenomenal fact. Experimental techniques and research instruments generate new methods of experience, far from a direct observation that is accessible to the senses.

Scientific research is definitively intended as a means for discovery of regulations and general laws under which to trace back a variety of particular cases. From the renaissance and pre-scientific cosmos of similarity, the correspondence between sign and designed object, the centrality of the categories of the *aequalitas*, the *consonantal*, *similarity* and *analogy*, the scientific world of order takes over, where writing ceases to be the prose of the world for which the scientist cannot compose a *historia naturalis* under dictation insomuch as the relationship of correspondence between words and things is no longer guaranteed by the order of things themselves (in themselves unknowable)[23].

As for modern times, the object of knowledge is no longer given by the immediacy of viewing – being as it is rather hidden behind appearances and resulting knowable only thanks to experiments carried out in the light of hypothesis – it is however common belief that a truthful, or at least suitable (especially for operative and technological reasons), representation of the laws of nature and the other elements that structure the (presumed) order of the world and universe is possible. Modern science emerges as the form of rational knowledge *par excellence,* thanks to its privileged access to reality – as well as its technological potential – and of the demonstrative ability that the experimental method gives it: whatever the configuration according

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[23] Foucault (1967, pgs. 31-63-79). Furthermore, as noted for example by Prigogine and Stengers (1981, pg. 262), the complexity of the history of science challenges any schematic description.

to times and thought currents, the method is that which allows science to be (considered) thus.

6. Language, theories and reality

We observe only that which is made relevant to us by our problems, by our biological situation, our interests, our expectations and our programs of action[24].

Just as every perception and description are steeped in theory and therefore connoted by selection and classification, also language (both daily and theoretical) has a relationship with the realities of the world that is certainly not a mere reflection: only a naive realist could assume an already-organised reality in the same categories of objects that any language then represents, in that every language constitutes in itself a system of categorisation and classification.

Language is not only a tool to convey meanings, but also a means to build experiences and for the re-elaboration of figures of reality (as well as a type of glasses that we use to look at the world). That which seems to present itself in a spontaneous way, as a mere fact, whether obvious or natural, is in effect the result of a process of abstraction that we continually carry out using language and that we have learnt to realise by learning to talk.

Every 'thing' constitutes a wide range of potentially infinite objects: the objects of science become such only when a thing or phenomenon is analysed according to certain methods that presuppose the assumption of a specific prospective.

In science, as in daily life, we cannot do without a criteria of fact selection, that cannot but be constituted by the problem at the base and by the attempt at a hypothesised solution. The inductive method used by the infallible

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[24] Popper (1985, pg. 84) as well as Popper and Eccles (1992, Vol. I, pg. 167), according to whom our senses are products of adaptation and it could be said that "they are theories or that they incorporate theories: theories come before observation, for which reason they cannot be the results of repeated observations." The theory of induction by repetition is therefore to be replaced with the theory of variation for attempts of theory or programs of action and their critical control, which is realised via their use in our actions."

Sherlock Holmes, according to whom building theories when facts are missing is a serious mistake, therefore denotes all its ingenuity and unfeasibility.

Experience, in fact, should not be considered the primary source of knowledge, but rather – as for Oscar Wilde - the name we give to our mistakes. In science (as in life), the starting point is not theories but problematical situations and a basic knowledge that, among other things, contains theories and myths and prejudices that are more or less shared by a community.

Scientific theories, however, are distinguished from myths, and from many prejudices rooted in common sense, at least because they are programmatically criticisable and susceptible to alterations in light of criticism. Whatever its origin, a conjecture that has resisted strict monitoring can be accepted, even if only temporarily (even if indefinitely) in that within scientific dominions no truth can ever be completely confirmed.

Reality, for science, is not an ensemble of hard facts but more facts that have already been interpreted, or rather mediated and dependent of the theoretical context of reference as also of the language that expresses them[25]. As written by Pirandello, a fact is like a sack: if it is empty it won't stand up.

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[25] Cf. Fleck (1983), Hempel (1951, pg. 74), Villa (1985, pg. 394), Vozza (1990, pg. 73), Pizzi (1992, pgs. 195ff.), Licci (1996, pg. 142). Furthermore, as Popper (1984) rigorously underlines, the dependence of (already interpreted) facts on the theoretical context and the linguistic framework that makes them expressible is not the only difficulty: we should not forget, in fact, that in selecting 'data' as a starting point, the researcher also works in light of the objective that he wants to deliver. As Atias (1990, p.48) for example notes, "in all sectors of knowledge, the answers obtained largely depend on the questions asked," in that "it is rare that elaborated theory allows an explanation or justification of solutions that are radically different to those that had caused the initial reflection."
On the character 'orientated' by presumed philosophers, by the methodological options and cultural tradition in which the process of scientific research is 'placed' cf. Fleck (1983, pg. 75), according to whom "there is no such thing as a generation that is unaffected by concepts, but these are, shall we say, determined by their antecedents;" Polanyi (1979, pg. 17), Robilant (1990 - Le teorie, pgs. 25ff.) and Licci (1996, pg. 238). However, Antiseri's thesis (1981 and 1995, passim and partic. pg. 45) does not seem compatible with this, and Vozza (1990) seems to agree – saying that the "hermeneutic cycle" (at least in Gadamer's prospective) and critical Popperian rationalism are "the same thing": in fact, as Vattimo underlines (1994, pgs. 3 and 142 - note 5), even if we can talk of "many significant analogies" between Popper and hermeneutics, the differences however can be found and should not be destroyed to avoid contributing to the "dilution" of the philosophic meaning of hermeneutics (which tends to assume a physiognomy that is increasingly generic and vague). On the "hermeneutical turning" of much of the epistemological reflection cf. Hiley, Bohman and Shusterman (1991), Lavoie (1990) and Ferraris (1988,

In order for it to stand up we must first involve the reason and the sentiments that determined it[26]. Facts and phenomena are recognisable as such only in light of some theory, as it is the conceptual categories that allow isolation of certain aspects of a reality and hypothesis of significant connections between phenomena.

Thought categories, in their turn, assume a logic and conceptual grammar that is the expression of a way of viewing the world that is typical (and specific) of every linguistic system[27]. The thought and perception of the surrounding world are strongly conditioned by the nature of language, in that the real world is largely subconsciously built on the linguistic habits of the group (for whom even relatively simple acts of perception are conditioned much more than could be imagined by those social models called words).

The categories and ideal types which we isolate in the kaleidoscopic flow of impressions and phenomena with which the world is presented are not found 'out there,' because we are the ones that cut out nature, that organise it in concepts and give meanings based on subconscious, or in any case implicit conventions, that connote the linguistic systems in which we are immersed (and to which we completely belong?)[28].

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pgs. 311ff. and 1986, pg. 214) who stresses that "the question of epistemological-hermeneutical relations is not that easy" also because "there is not one hermeneutical tradition, but many."

[26] Pirandello (1981, pg. 71). On the inconsistency of pure 'objectivity' in Pirandello cf. Querci (1992).

[27] Cf. Orestano (1985, pgs. 461ff.), who remembers that the logical structure of European languages, while presenting some differences, largely derive from the Greek-Latin tradition (further strengthened by the Medieval thought and by humanistic education), which, from generation to generation, has imprinted forms of ideation and expression, didactic and stylistic procedures and the same formation of grammatical and syntactical rules. The vision of reality subtended to the structure of such languages so continues to still be that – at least mainly – that was analysed by the so-called Aristotelian logic.

[28] Cf. Sapir (1948, pg. 162) and especially Whorf (1956, pg. 252), whose contributions derive from a series of research on the languages of the Native Americans with which he tried to demonstrate that the representation of certain realities such as time, space or movement is different depending on the structure of the language in which we learn to perceive and think. Cf. Shotter (1994, pgs. 99ff.), Searles (1989, pgs. 471ff.) and Langer (1942, pg. 55), who reminds us that already the philosopher Russell, in one of his writings in 1900, had expressed himself in similar terms to those of Sapir and Whorf. Furthermore, one of the main inspirational sources of said prospective is made up of the thought of the linguist von Humbolt who, in 1800 (the century of the appearance of languages), re-elaborates the romantic conception of the language as a cultural wealth of popular origins and believes that *die Sprache ist das bildende Organ des Gedanken*: that is to say that language is the organ that shapes thought and therefore shows the world vision that is typical to every national community (a propos cf. Gadamer, 1994, pgs. 502ff. and Mounin, 1981, pgs. 170ff.). On the question of "do we speak or are we spoken?" cf. Aime (1996, pg. 12): "Is it language that speaks people or is it who speaks that uses language? The structuralism, Lacanian psychoanalysis and hermeneutical ontology of Heidegger and Gadamer support the first hypothesis. It is the symbolic and linguistic theme that the subject speaks, and

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Language, therefore, is not simply a means of communication, but tends to constitute the horizon and the limit of our thinking and perceiving the world: the images of reality that give life to our knowing are conditioned above all by the language that we use, that is inextricably linked to our way of life (without meaning necessarily that man is a prisoner of language)[29].

As men and women, therefore, we produce symbols that allow us to attribute a sense to the magmatic and indistinct variety of events; thanks to our aptitude to establish connections between phenomena to bring them back to explicit categories, we are able to represent things in an abstract, or rather symbolic, way, via thoughts and concepts that distance us increasingly from the immediacy of the nat201ural and sensitive fa[30].

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way beyond simple conditioning. On the other hand, a minority, it is stated that the priority of the speaker over the message or, as Levinas says, the Speaking over the Spoken. The relation precedes the very content of the message. Maybe it is not so much about choosing as if faced with an alternative; in any case, neglecting the second possibility perhaps puts in perception the speaker as a person" (contrary to the idea of the subject being totally spoken cf. Chomsky 1991). More generally, on language and homo loquens cf. Hacking (1994), Hagège (1989), De Mauro (1982) and Ponzio (1976); for a synthesis of the main reflections on language, with particular reference to the psychological aspects cf. Galimberti (1994, pgs. 545ff.), Capello, Imbasciati and Galati (1986, Vol. II, pgs. 181ff.).

[29] In these terms cf. Maturana (1992, pg. 112) or Winch (1972, pg. 26), who are inspired by the Wittgenstein of Philosophical Research according to which the limits of our language are the limits of our world in that language and way of life are inseparably linked, the one constituting the other and vice versa. For Wittgenstein (1983, pg. 117, par. 241), "true and false is that which men say; and in language men agree. And this is not an agreement of opinions but in the way of life." For Shotter (1994, pg. VI), "we constitute both ourselves and our worlds in our conversational activity," just like for Harré (1983, pg. 58) "the primary human reality is persons in conversation" (cf. Harré and Gillett, 1994; Harré, 1992; Ruesch and Bateson, 1976; Bateson, 1976 and 1984; Ugazio, 1995, pgs. 258ff.; D'Ambrosio, 1995, pgs. 247ff.). As stressed by Tagliagambe (1996, pg. 91), furthermore, the literary theorist Bachtin, already in 1920, elaborated the idea that "to be is, fundamentally, to communicate, and to communicate in a dialogue with others but also within ourselves... This same idea constitutes today the bases of Dennett (1993)'s theoretical foundation." In other words – as Aime (1996, pg 10) remembers "upon suggestion of Benveniste and Ricoeur" – language is "a mediation between man and world (reference), between man and man (dialogue), between man and himself (reflection).... In language we speak the world, we establish relationships, we express ourselves." Also Gadamer (in Dutt, 1995, pg. 39) declares himself "fully in agreement with Wittgenstein's famous expression: there is no such thing as a private language... language is an Us, in which we are associated with each other, in which the individual has no set limits." However, Gadamer (1994, pg. 508) stresses that modern philosophic anthropology (Scheler, Plessner, Gehlen) has elaborated "a doctrine of the specific position of man in the world, showing that the world's linguistic structure does not in any way mean that man is a prisoner of a rigidly schematic environment of language."

[30] Cf. Eco's synthesis of the "symbol" (1981, pgs. 882ff.), Galimberti (1994, pgs. 875ff.) and Trevi (1986, pgs. 1ff.). On man as *animal symbolicum* cf. Cassirer (1961, 1968, 1971), Goodman (1976) as well as the authors quoted in note 4 of par. 6. For a critique on the discourse of Cassirer cf. Ricoeur (1991, pgs. 19ff.) and Vattimo (1994, pg. 8).

Our relationship with reality cannot but be indirect, postponed, selective and above all metaphorical as it is mediated linguistically and conceptually (already on a preverbal level abstraction is a characteristic of the categories that the mind works with). However the link between words and concepts, between linguistic symbols and conceptions of the world does not necessarily mean that every form of knowing is totally enslaved by the symbols contained in the terms in which it can find expression.

At least in the dominion of the scientific culture, theorisation does not seem to be limited to a linguistic cage without exit towards reality (realities): in Japanese, for example, there is no such thing as an absolute 'no;' and yet, the formal logic of Japanese researchers does not seem different from the Western one and also contains negation.

More generally, we can maybe say that language, at least daily language, is not so limiting in the construction of scientific theories, not does it particularly condition conceptions of the world – at least not those received or suggested by scientific theories.

This does not mean that the languages of science, compared to the ones for daily use, can be constructed "in a laboratory," formalised and transformed into neutral tools able to guarantee some kind of correspondence between words and things.

Quite the contrary, metaphors (such as vagueness and polysemies) are plentiful everywhere – and therefore also in the linguistic and theoretical dominions of science. That which is most important is that science is not only made of words and discourses (communications, articles, monographs and various texts), but also – especially in the 'mature' sciences – of

As Rocher for example stresses (1991, pg.74), the aptitude to "manage symbols has allowed man to broaden, in a much wider way than other species, his inventive capacity and finally his power over the rest of the world." The extension of the symbolic capacity has brought about "the development of certain physiological parts, especially of the brain, the cranium, the face and also the hands;" moreover, the symbolism "that gives man his power over the world is not only the result of biological evolution but also a social evolution. Only via social interaction has man been able to develop his aptitude in manipulating the symbol while society became the depositary of accumulated symbols." For Gardner (1987, pgs. 320ff), particularly attentive to analysing the emergence of symbolic competence in man, symbols served to filling the divide between "the nervous system, with its structures and functions, and culture, with its roles and activities... As well as denoting or representing, symbols transmit meanings in a different way – equally important but often unappreciated": that is, a symbol "can transmit a certain state of mind, a certain feeling or a certain tonality" of emotion.

experimental procedures that allow us to interrogate reality and listen to the answers.

7. Theory: mirror, tool or symbolic structure?

Science captures and re-elaborates reality via theoretical networks that can be conceived as thought structures; that is symbolic complexes constituted of hypotheses, axioms, postulations, more or less implicit premises, suppositions, calculi and models from which to draw deductions or other inferences, theorems, explicative patterns and possible previsions. The configuration of scientific theories varies depending on the various eras and traditions of thought.

Until the early 1900s, for the largely dominating conception, scientific theories were ordered systems of true propositions, aimed at more or less faithfully describing and therefore explaining the facts (natural phenomena, in the first place). This image of theory as a system of true and certain propositions, able to reflect the elements of reality, tends to dissolve above all with the non-Euclidean geometries and the disputes on the foundations of mathematics, Einsteinian relativity, quantum physics and the discovery of irreversibility of thermodynamic processes.

In place of the mirror-theory the alternative of instrumentalism is consolidated, according to which the theories are firstly prediction tools: in the hard versions, in particular, theories tend to no longer have any descriptive-explicative function, being merely useful inventions – in that they are mathematical tools – for the prediction of experimental results. In other terms, such a prospective beings with it a logical-mathematical axiomatisation of theories, that are so intended as a unit of significant (and therefore scientific) propositions – that is linguistic entities - in that they are translatable in *asigmatica calcolosa* that directly relate to an Empiric reality constituted by non-interpretative facts.

The many versions of instrumentalism have been submitted to numerous criticisms especially from 1950. An alternative conception of scientific theories is the structural one. Theories, that is, can be configured not as a simple set of hypotheses or in any case propositions, but as a *whole structure*, or rather structural totalities made up of a constellation of

premises and assumptions of various origins and nature (metaphysical, epistemological, methodological, experimental and so on), explicative patterns, graphic or conceptual models, possible calculi and equations.... In other words, *abstract entities* that do not just relate to units of propositions that are directly translatable in *axiomatic calculus*, given that in this prospective the heart of a theory is an extra-linguistic structure.

Therefore, scientific theories are, above all, a means to impose "law and order" to the world, in other words for reorganising a field of phenomena worthy of explanation in an intelligible (but not exclusively propositional) structure. In a certain sense, theories express conceptual prospectives in the long term, through which a certain field of experience is interpreted, structured and established around entities, natural genres and processes whose configuration depends – at least partly – on the particular way of viewing reality that is typical of a determined prospective.

8. Theories and symbolic representation of reality

In synthesis, a theory can be defined as a micro-institution, or a systemic structure, that tries to establish an explicative order among the elements that make up the object of its field of attention. Theorisation is a cognitive process via which we try to build a configuration of the reality that offers answers to questions and that reduces particular phenomena and aspects to general patterns and abstracts open to some kind of proof (different according to the research sectors).

Theoretical knowledge is selective, problematic, abstract, significant and reductive as it is based on a selection of elements of reality and interrogations. It is a knowledge that avails itself of abstract patterns, in that, as such, they are not present in the empirical reality; it reduces a variety of phenomena to a unitary pattern (for example, in natural sciences, laws).

And, finally, theoretical knowledge has a particular importance, in that it aims at presenting a significant frame of reality from which very different

aspects and levels can be found, according to the case: natural ones, social ones, psychological and so on[31].

A theory always contains the formulation of a legality, or rather of an anomic pattern that installs an order: to explain, therefore, means above all establishing correlations and connections, that is to build a network of relationships in reality (without, however, being able to supply explanations, and even less so descriptions, that are true and sincere or with absolute claims of validity in every time and place).

Such reconfiguration of the explanation requires three implicit premises which, due to their impact on science and scientific culture, must be taken into consideration if we wish to clarify the character of theories and their meaning: the first premise, an expression of a realistic (if critical) metaphysics, is that in reality there is an order; the second is that the order of thought can be in some way able to represent the order of reality; the third is that the representation of the order of reality allows an understanding of reality[32].

Here, for example, is the anomic pattern that is usually used to explain the social network phenomenon, or rather a group of people connected between themselves by various social links that range from casual acquaintance, to work relationships to family connections.

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[31] Robilant (1995, pgs. 543-544; 1976, pg.473), who stresses that four aspects of reality have a particular importance, as they constitute a specific object of traditionally distinct types of research: the world of nature, that of subjective states and psychological belief, the world of theoretical problems, theories and art creations, that of economic, professional and technological operations. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that different figures can be given of the same reality according to the level of investigation reached (and obviously, according to the theoretical patterns used).

[32] Robilant (1990 - Le teorie, pgs. 36ff.), according to which the explanation of the theories, from time to time, seems to give itself three distinct objectives: to explain how a reality is made up, or how a phenomenon develops; to explain from where a certain reality derives; to explain what happens if a specific condition proves true. In the ambit of these three objectives, however, we can identify distinct procedures of explanation, which metascience has occasionally accentuated. Four procedures take on particular importance for their implications and their meaning: the regulative and taxonomic explanation, the functional one, the genetic one and the consequential one (mainly indicated as causal). On explanation cf. Robilant (1976, pgs. 510ff. and 1995, pgs. 548ff.), Ruben (1993), Miller (1987), Schulz (1986, pgs. 116ff.), Ziman (1987, pgs. 33ff.), Ferraris (1988, pgs. 346ff.), Veyne (1973, pgs. 278ff.).
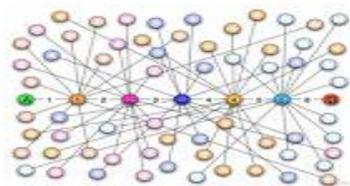
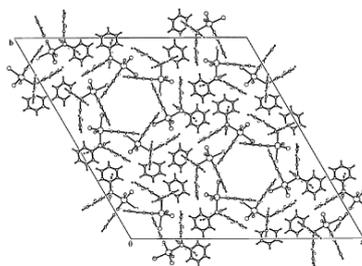Or, as another example, here is an anomic pattern from a study in the bio-chemical field.

Figure 2. View of the unit cell of **1** in the direction [001].[14] The molecules are linked by H-bonds of the type N-H⋯Cl, forming channels in the crystal structure, which are parallel to the crystallographic c axis. N(1)-H(1) = 86.0 pm, H(1)⋯Cl(1)$^{(x-y, x-1, -z+1)}$≈232.6 pm, N(1)⋯Cl(1)$^{(x-y, x-1, -z+1)}$≈317.6 pm, N(1)-H(1)⋯Cl(1)$^{(x-y, x-1, -z+1)}$≈ 169.76 °.

In this prospective, the traditional distinction between the typical explanation of natural sciences – intended as a form of generalised knowledge, aimed at viewing from the outside phenomena ascribable to categories of repeatable experiences – and the specific comprehension, on the other hand, of the humanistic disciplines – intended as a form of individualised knowledge, the outcome of an immersion in a particular and unique context to be sensed in its uniqueness.

In fact we can say that the most important aspect in theorisation is not so much the quantitative dimension and the *ad libitum* repeatability of the phenomena, but more the elaboration of explicative networks, correlations and links among the reality subjected to the theory. This also, however,

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implicated the distinction of knowledge produced by the theories compared to a 'knowing' that professes itself as a merely objective expression of some ineffable individualism that do not trace back to any kind of regulation[33].

The main aim of theories, in general, is a representation that is as explicative as possible of reality: moreover, the representation that theories offer is not descriptive-imitative but schematic, carried out via theoretic tools that generate something new compared to the reality.

The explicative representation is based, therefore, on the selection of some elements of reality, which establishes an order that links them and that counts not only for the case under observation but for all analogue cases. In other terms, if on one hand the knowledge produced by theories is something less than a mirror-like reflection of reality, on the other it is also a *quid pluris* compared to a pure mirroring as it is the construction of an order of reality. The ultimate product of theorisation is, therefore, something different from that reality that we want to represent: or rather a

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[33] Cf. Popper (1983, pgs. 239ff.): "I am opposed to the attempt to proclaim the method of comprehension as that characteristic of humanistic disciplines, the brand with which we can distinguish them from natural sciences... Science, after all, is a branch of literature; and scientific work is a human activity such as building a cathedral. There is no doubt that there is too much specialisation in contemporary science which makes it inhuman; but this is unfortunately true also in contemporary history and psychology, almost as much as natural sciences." Cf. Albert (1973, pgs. 167ff. and 1975, pgs. 184ff.) and Hayek (1986, pg. 25). For an *a propos* synthesis cf. Licci (1996, pg. 146): in the second half of the 1800s, in particular in Droysen's conceptual system, the distinction is articulated within a triple order of concepts, that is to explain (*erklären*) to know (*erkennen*) to understand (*verstehen*); this is then resumed and studied in depth by Dilthey, who places it in the dichotomy between natural sciences (nomothetic) and sciences of the spirit (ideographic). Then the tripartition is reduced to the conceptual couple that opposes the explanation of natural sciences (*erklären, explanation*) to the understanding of moral sciences (verstehen, understanding); Simmel, in particular, aligns said bipartition in a psychological key: that is, verstehen is intended as Einfühlung or rather as re-creation of the intellectual atmosphere, of the cultural meaning and motivational processes. The distinction has been resumed, in the last century, by many authors, among whom Von Wright (1988) who aligns two different ways of looking at science, referring back to the Galilean and Aristotelian traditions. As Ginzburg for example remembers (1979, pgs. 92 and 70), the 'quantitative and anti-anthropocentric' trend of the science of nature from Galileo onwards "would have been able to take on the motto *individuum est ineffabile*, 'that which is individual cannot be discussed' as his own. The employment of mathematics and the experimental method, in fact, implicated respectively the quantification and repeatability of phenomena, while the individualising prospective excluded the second by definition and admitted the first only with auxiliary functions." On the theme cf., according to different prospectives, Dilthey (1973, pgs. 5ff.), Weber (1974), Marrou (1962, pgs. 16ff.), Robilant (1968, pgs. 140ff.), Veyne (1973, pgs. 161ff., 249ff., 280ff., 308ff.,), Antiseri (1981, pgs. 98ff., 219ff., 295ff.), Ferraris (1988, pgs. 149ff. and 176ff.), Morin (1989, pgs. 166ff.), Ricoeur (1989, pgs. 174ff.), Gadamer (1994), Trevi (1993, pgs. 59ff.), Galimberti (1994, pg. 728), Masullo (1995, pgs. 9ff.).

figure, produced by the abstract and also symbolic schematisation of the elements (considered) particularly relevant of reality itself.

That which happens in caricatures (in which sometimes just a couple of lines are enough) that in natural reality does not exist, highlighting someone's face and expression, happens in all figures, some more or less. Only a minimum part of the elements of reality, in fact, is taken into consideration of the figures, and is rendered with expressive means that, as such, are different from the elements of which natural or social reality is constituted (without forgetting, moreover, that the theoretic representation does not translate itself into a graphic one)[34].

Theories, therefore, produce a double cognitive effect: firstly the direct one, made up of the explicative representation that they propose and, at the same time, expose to criticism and confrontation with concurrent theories. Then there is the mediated one, made up of figures generated by the representation of the relationships that exist between the elements of reality taken into consideration by the theories themselves (which does not mean, however, that the figures generated by theories have the same reliability as the explanations)[35]. Here below are some examples of figures generated by theories.

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[34] Robilant (1990 - Le teorie, pg. 21). As Licci stresses (1996, pg. 237), the representative patterns of reality do not seem to be ascribable to mirror-like imitative portraits of reality itself, but rather they are the result of a process of abstraction of elements considered important by the theory constructors, in function of their theoretical assumptions. Cf. Robilant (1983, pg. 73; 1982, pgs. 269ff. and 1976, pg. 533ff.), according to whom a theory, in that it is a self-expressive construction - or rather demonstrative of its own structure and process, and therefore of its own internal normativeness – alludes to something that goes beyond its informative content." With a metaphor, it could be said that the structure of theory intended as its 'form' generates "a meaning that does not identify itself with the informative one that theory has. In other words, in theorisation figures and forms make up an inseparable pair in that creating figures means creating forms, meaning entities that have an autonomy, that sets aside the cognitive or practical objectives they may have and that consists in the relationships in which their single elements are found and in the unity they produce. As Licci again stresses (1996, pgs. 238-239), the figuration procedure reflects one of the basic mechanisms of the human being's vital experience. As such, it is connected not only to the creative mechanism in the artistic and scientific meaning of the word, but even earlier, to the very psychic procedures of perception and configuration of reality.
[35] Robilant (1990 - Le teorie, pgs. 42-43): the figures generated by theories "are the elements with which the overall frame of reality is built, to which man aims, even if he doesn't always realise it, and without which he cannot cognitively own reality itself." For Robilant, the figures show above all their allusive triple potential: aesthetic, in that they allude to forms of reality that are susceptible to an aesthetic evaluation; significant, in that they allude to meanings that certain realities have for man and his existence; and finally theoretical-operative, in that they allude to possible ways of formulating, imposing and resolving problems (both theoretic or pragmatic-technological).
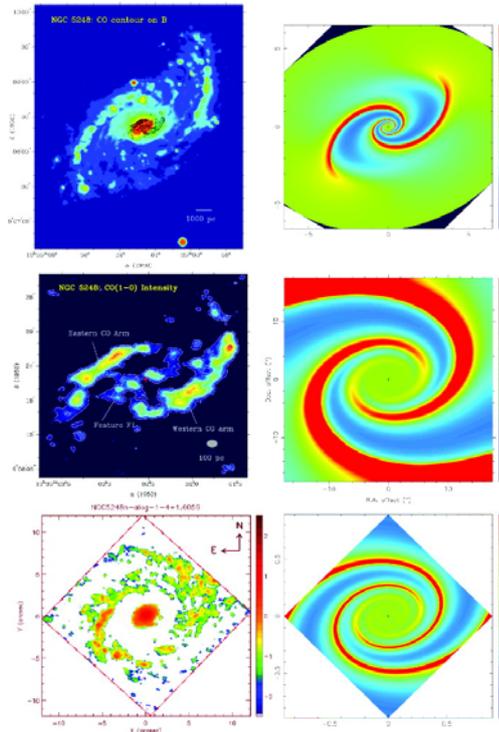
9. Theories and the scientific dialectics

The explicative representation that results from theories consists in the construction of a network of relationships between elements of reality aimed at aligning, with artificial (invented) patterns and categories, connections, functions and processes. One of the main aspects that distinguish – especially scientific - theorisation from other forms of knowledge is precisely the elaboration of a network of relationships and connections: or rather the abstraction of the immediate fact, aimed at constructing an anomic order of reality and a general picture of it.

The 'inventions' and 'construction' which mainly build up the pathways of science do not however bring about exclusion, for the explicative patterns, of a base in reality: quite the contrary, the elaboration of the theoretical networks happens bearing in mind real facts and admits, therefore, a trial of

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reality, even if they're not always exhaustive. In fact, the factual premises on which the construction of relationships can be subjected to a trial process that tends to corroborate or falsify (a procedure that is anything but simple).

Obviously data and facts cannot be conceived with the precision and the body that the common way of thinking may assume, in that they are in any case constructed under the conditions of paradigms prevalent in the scientific culture of the times: this does not however mean that the result of theories has already been preconditioned by paradigms, as a superficial, sociological relativism can be persuaded to claim, rather that the current paradigms in a given scientific-cultural context exercise a certain pressure on the new theories – which however, at least in some cases, can be outdated (for example, with the trend towards a new conceptual frame)[36]. In other words, theories deal with problems for which they represent attempts at solution aimed at reaching (or, at the very least, searching for) a reasonable agreement in the scientific community of reference: in fact, (also) in science no fact is manifest if there is no agreement about it. However, in science, compared to other ambits of 'knowing' (or 'being able to,' it is not – or it should not be – the pure consensus of the majority to award the victory of a theory on the concurrent prospectives: the methodological limits or, rather, the criteria of scientific 'dialectic' (shared in a specific era within a specific scientific dominion) are – or should be – the effective, relevant factors to establish that which can be accepted as scientific knowledge.

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[36] Robilant (1989, pg. 143 and 1976, pg. 485), who also underlines that " the fact that the data is a result of a construction, and therefore theoretically conditioned" does not necessarily mean the "inexistence of some 'neutral' reality...that precedes knowledge, even if it's never knowable in its neutrality." Cf. Robilant (1990 - Le teorie, pg. 28), where it is said that paradigms are meant in a similar but not identical sense to that intended by Kuhn, that is, as (exemplary) ways 'of flexion' of the scientific discourse: the term 'paradigm' indicated "the type of problem, pattern and procedure with which science, or the scientific culture, avails itself in a certain moment of its historical evolution.... The phenomena of reality or the themes that are subjected to research by the theorists may vary, but there are some common criteria for leading the discourse of theories. This does not mean at all that the individual methods used are always the same. Even paradigms lead to determining the character of theories and their structure." On the other hand, with specific reference to Kuhn's prospective (1969 and 1977) and his 'inspiration' Fleck (1983), author in 1935 of a study in which he underlines the importance of considering the impact of the 'collective' in science, seen as a unit of activities led by exemplary ways of conceptualising and operating, cf. Bicchieri (1988, passim and partic. pgs. 14ff., 35ff. and 47ff.).

More than a stable and coherent unit of beliefs (both justified and founded), in this prospective science is configured as an endless elaboration process of reasons to believe: reasons that are not comparable to an abstract logic of justification, that are not a set of criteria or explicit, coded and invariant rules; rather they are often tacit rules that cannot be formalised other than locally, in that they inspire and guide specific scientific activities.

Basically, these reasons to believe are internal, contextual, local and are the background in reference to which the scientific statements or facts become such.

In other words, the idea of a scientific community that is universal by nature that reaches a consensual opinion after a critical discussion is a notion that is just as idealised as that of the scientist who carries out exemplary investigations and reaches rational conclusions via an irrefutable logic. In this prospective, science transfers itself from the realm of demonstration to the field of argumentation. Every scientific theory is nothing but a human hypothesis that, to be fruitful, must necessarily overstep the facts of experience and it is neither evident nor infallible: if the guarantee that God gives to evidence is lacking, every hypothesis cannot but be discussed and possibly accepted in that it is supported by good reasons, recognised as such by other men, members of the same scientific community – while waiting, however, for a possible future disapproval.

10. Theories between prejudice, habits, rules and values

Scientific theories can be considered as the result of our more or less casual (or maybe historically determined) prejudices and of the critical elimination of error: discussion, confrontation and criticism are in fact the best method available to us to try and resolve the problems at the base of, and to which they try to give an answer to, our theories[37]. The comparative evaluation

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[37] Popper and Eccles (1981, Vol. I, pg. 182).

between alternative theoretical prospective and the research for good reasons take the place of certainties and absolute evidence.

The arguments of science do not oblige, as if they were sources of absolute truth, and neither do they simply persuade, as if they were advertising. Rather, they aim to convince, in the sense that the persuasion of the speakers cannot (or should not) set aside the evaluation of the thesis in discussion in light of the specific factors of scientific dialectics: that is of that set of behaviour and criteria, practices, regulations, ways of thinking, forms of argument and beliefs that feed a tradition of research. Consequently, a cognitive claim can be considered (temporarily) true or correct if it is rationally acceptable at the end of a debate. Rational acceptability, in its turn, depends on the respect of the specific scientific dialectic conventions and criteria of every research context.

Any choice of conceptual pattern and every symbolic representation of reality presupposes some customs of thought, criteria and common values: in other words, that which counts as a real world depends on our values – in the sense that among the components that make up a fact, or a theory, metaphysical assumptions and methodological principles are discovered that express the epistemic values of a scientific community. Therefore, no fact can call itself manifest if no agreement is reached about it: a fact is not there at everyone's disposition, ready to be cultivated by just anyone like an apple from a tree.

'Objects' do not exist independently from the conceptual frameworks, in that we are the ones to cut the world up into facts and objects: consequently, between realities and facts (or rather artefacts) only relations of similarity or allusion can be established as a fact alludes to an element of reality, it evokes it, it alludes to it, but it does not denote it in real terms. Every 'thing' is a range of potentially infinite objects: scientific objects become such only within particular prospective of analysis that bring about, in their turn, the employment of specific research methods and the consideration of particular levels of reality.

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On being international: reflections on living an international life – with observations and suggestions

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When Fernando and I discussed this project, he suggested that I write about my experience living an international life: someone who has traveled extensively, done business in many countries, lived in two, and emigrated from the United States to France. I suggested that we could go further. I suggested that there are points that we might learn from the experience; points about the international and immigrant experience, points about learning, and indications for organizations who seek to have people succeed in this modern world environment.

First a story – my story

I live in France, just outside of Paris. There I am a professor of business and management, professional trainer in people management, and consultant. I am dual-national French-American. This means that I have two passports, file two income tax declarations, and get to vote – twice. In a sense, my life is in two places. My business card says Boston & Paris.

But that is not how I started – neither the place nor the profession. How I got here is part of the story and sets the basis for the observations. I need to begin at the beginning.

I was not always French and, in fact, did not even think about it. I was born in the United States in Buffalo, New York. As a child, we moved several times around the northeast of the United States as my father obtained promotions in the company where he worked. After Buffalo, we lived in Detroit, Cleveland (twice), and then to Connecticut where my parents have lived to a very old age.

Moving around a lot as a child has advantages and disadvantages. A disadvantage is that I never had the chance to develop those long lasting childhood friendships that form anchoring points of reference. We were never in one place long enough. As a child, when I started to develop friendships, we moved. Certainly, I am not alone in that respect. Many others live that experience – especially children of military families.

An advantage of having strong childhood friendships is that it can give one a strong point of reference and the comfort zone of a strong support group to fall back on when needed.

But, not having that also has advantages. Not having that strong peer group means that one is not confined by it. One is forced, by necessity, to define themselves as "self" – to struggle and decide without the "comfort" of being told what to do, to think, to believe. One develops the ability to decide for themselves. One develops the ability to define things on their own terms.

Moving around a lot also meant that I did not have fixed definition of place and how things are done. Every time we moved, things were different. The rules were different. How things were done was different. When we moved to Connecticut, I was picked on because my Ohio accent was different. This meant that I had to explore to understand the rules and how things were done.[38]

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[38] Even the education systems were different. One day in High School, my math instructor called me into his office and told me that he had done some research on my background and the school systems that I had been in and understood why I was so bad at subtraction. I had never had it in school. The school systems in Detroit and Cleveland taught subtraction in different years and, by moving back and forth between them, I had missed it. He told me that it was OK and proceeded to give me a one session quick tutoring on survival subtraction. Years later I earned an advanced diploma in engineering with a specialty in applied mathematics and published in the field. Today, even though I moved into other fields, I still feel comfortable with conceptual mathematics – and I still cannot do subtraction. My head does not do memorization at all. I understand that I am not alone in this – in fact that I am apparently in some very good company in this regard.

On reflection, I think that this may have put in place a base of skills that were then useful to me in my international life and later as an immigrant.

I have the ability to accept that things can be done differently and with that, an acceptance that there can be different ways to do things.

I also have an ability to observe and learn how things are done – to determine the "rules."

I have an ability to adapt; I have a pronounced flexibility that when things do not work in the way originally planned to find alternatives.

The ability to tolerate that one does not completely understand what is going on – and certainly cannot control it.

I also have the ability to have self-confidence in self and one's ability to survive and achieve.

These are not always easy but they put in place a foundation of skills that maybe were to be subsequently important to me in my international life. I will talk about this more later.

Boston

Why Boston? The answer is very simple – that is where I went to university. When I was finishing High School, my father and I did the traditional visits to various schools. I selected Northeastern University in Boston and in 1961 started in their program in Electrical Engineering. This was a five-year program for the BSEE diploma with alternating periods of study and work in industry – an excellent program where student learn practical skills and gain credible work experience.

I didn't always follow the rules. In that program, they preferred that students accept the co-op jobs that the school has found. I didn't. I wanted a

co-op job where I would live at home in Connecticut. So I went and found my own co-op jobs. I had learned the skills of cold calling and selling.[39]

Northeastern is a large urban school in the heart of Boston. I remember that first grand convocation of the entering freshmen at which the President of the school[40] told us, "Look to your right. Look to your left. Two of you will not graduate." I almost failed out at the end of my freshman year but recovered. When I graduated in 1966, I was known (positively) by most people in the department and had free run of the computer system[41] at night for doing my projects.

As an urban university, Northeastern had few dormitories for the male students. There had been a small freshmen dormitory and, when I started in '61, they had just opened a second freshman dormitory in a converted apartment building. I was put in there for my first year. After that I, like many other students, got together a group of friends to find and rent apartments to live in. There was a series of several apartments around the Back Bay section of Boston that I lived in. This was a good first experience in finding apartments and negotiating co-lease agreements.

After that first diploma from Northeastern, I stayed in the Boston area and "settled down." I continued my studies to receive a Master's of Science diploma in Electrical Engineering from Northeastern and worked at Raytheon as an engineer – first as a graduate co-op job and then full time while I finished my last courses in the evening and completed my thesis in numerical analysis at night[42].

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[39] I had already been doing cold calling and selling since the age of 10. I had a series of my own jobs in the neighborhood: mowing lawns, selling subscriptions, delivering newspapers, etc. My first official job was at the age of 16 at the local Radio Shack store on a part-time base as a sales person.

[40] Asa Knowlls. He was president for many years and there is now a building that is named after him.

[41] An IBM 1600.

[42] This time, I had access to a significantly more powerful computer – a CDC-6700 Cray computer.

I worked at Raytheon as an engineer for several years. However, I started to feel the need for change. One reason is that although I knew how to function within the rules and knew my way around in the company, I did not really fit with the highly structured military style rules oriented corporate culture of the company. (I got in trouble for breaking the rules a few times.) More importantly, the early 1970s were turbulent times. We were in the height of the Viet Nam war with which I began to feel increasingly uncomfortable with as an immoral war and with my role in it designing military systems. With Daniel Ellsberg's publication of "The Pentagon Papers"[43], my crisis of conscience was brought to a peak. A number of people with whom I worked with in the department simply walked away from their jobs even if they did not have another job to go to. I was unable to do that. But I knew that I needed to change.

While at Raytheon, I had started getting involved in projects that involved my having direct interface with the customers in Washington and with the factory in Tennessee. This analytical engineer discovered the word "Customer" and found that he liked the interface with people better than machines. That started my mutation to marketing and sales.

With the aid of a career counseling company, I was able to mount a job campaign[44] and ultimately, just after my first European trip to Sweden, I resigned Raytheon and joined Digital Equipment Corporation in Maynard in the role of an Application Engineer in their Special Systems Group – a good way of combining my experience in engineering, with computers, and with customers.

The first two years at Digital were very difficult. I had stepped off the earth and landed on the moon. The corporate cultures were diametrically

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[43] The highly secret set of documents known as "The Pentagon Papers" was leaked to the New York Times and first serialized in part in the New York Times in 1971 followed by the Washington Post and several other newspapers. The book form was published in 1972 under the title "Papers on the War" by Daniel Ellsberg, Simon and Schuster. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Ellsberg.

[44] The technique is well documented in the book "What Color is your Parachute?" by Richard Nelson Bolles.

different. I had moved from one company that was rules based and had procedures for everything – even forms for getting another pad of paper – and changed to a company that (at that time) had few procedures and almost no rules. The famous primary rule was "Do the right thing." I spent many months feeling lost and wondering if I had made a mistake.[45] A number of times I had to validate my decision to leave my previous job. I had to think through that I had left for a reason, that the reason for leaving was valid, and to reaffirm my decision to make this change successfully. After two years, I did come to understand this new environment, to learn the culture, to know how to operate, to be assimilated, and to be comfortable in it.[46] [47]

That was my first experience being an "immigrant" – even though I still lived in the same house in Massachusetts near Boston.

Paris

By 1989, after succeeding in a series of positions in Digital, I had the good fortune to be nominated to participate in a custom designed executive program at INSEAD in France. There were around 150 of us, in three groups, and the program took place in three phases, an intensive program in Fontainebleau, a year doing a team project while still doing our regular day jobs (I was then the "director commercial" for the US Special Systems group.), and then two weeks back in Fontainebleau. The program had been designed by several people including Summantra Ghoshal and Mike Brimm. The objective was for us to understand strategy, teamwork, and the ways of organizing and working together in the new "Transnational"

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[45] To add to the ambiance, the roof even leaked over my desk. Drops of water would occasionally fall on my head.

[46] The "right thing" was never written down and never really explained. But, after a few years, one came to understand what the "right thing" would be. This is a good example of strong organizational culture – discussed later.

[47] I remained at Digital for almost 20 years and grew in level and experience through a series of jobs in marketing, sales, and management until I left in 1992.

organization. In that program, we had in front of us a long list of the great personalities of strategy and international business. It was intense and wonderful – one of the best experiences that I ever had.

One of the consequences of that intensive program was that it became very clear to most of us in the program that there were serious strategic problems in the company and that decisions needed to be taken. We became increasingly frustrated as we realized that the decisions would not be made and that company was at serious risk of not surviving[48]. One by one, most of the participants left the company. I left in 1992 – the same year that founding president Ken Olsen was fired.

But why France? On the surface, the decision to move to France would not appear obvious. Truth be told, I had flunked French in High School and had to take a summer course to pass to my 3rd year. But, my family roots were there. My paternal grandfather had immigrated to the US from Alsace in 1892[49]. There was identification with values that I had learned as a child. When in 1990 I visited Strasbourg, and especially the family village of Dambach-la-Ville, and met cousins, there was something that made me feel very comfortable – as if, in a way, I had "come home."

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[48] It did not. But that is another story.

[49] To clarify the possible question, Alsace was under German rule at this point but had been part of France since 1639. Alsace was incorporated into Germany when France lost the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. However, most Alsatians considered themselves to be French – a feeling that intensified as the German government intensified its imposition of control and programs of "Germanisation." A good description of this can be found in "My Father Spoke French: nationalism and legitimacy in Alsace, 1871-1914" by Bonnie Menes Kahn, Harvard Studies in Sociology, Garland Publishing, 1990. Alsace reverted to France at the end of WWI and Alsatians were reincorporated into France by decree. It was again annexed by Germany in 1940 and was liberated in late 1944 and again reincorporated into France. Alsace today, as part of France, has certain laws and regulations that are specific and different from the rest of France.
Thus, my grandfather, who was born and emigrated under German rule and who spoke Alsatian, French, German and then English, always described himself as *French*. Indeed, with the decree of reintegration, he was.

There was also a relationship that had started. That clearly helped motivate the decision to move and greatly helped with the transition. Neither the relationship nor my original business plans lasted. But here I was – in France. In 1995, when neither the relationship nor my business activities were working, I had a decision to make. The situation was getting critical. Should I stay or should I leave? As I went walking, I asked myself where did I feel more comfortable – more "at home" – and where did I want to be? My answer to myself was in France. "Then," I said to myself, "Figure it out and make it work."

Step by step, I did "figure it out" and gradually built my professional activities and became integrated in both the French and American communities and the French system. Gradually I found what worked for me, built my professional and personal situation to be where I am today. Certainly it was not easy. It required a lot of effort. Mostly, it required a lot of determination, flexibility, and an ability to sense and learn from the situation.

And, that brings me to where I am today.

Today

As noted at the start of this story, today I have a professional practice in training and consulting. I have recently retired from my position as Associate and Coordinating Professor in a large French school of management and continue with my professional activities – all taking advantage of my experience as a practitioner – having done what I speak of. I am pleased that my reputation has built to the point that I am well in demand for my services.

What have I learned from this experience?

The Immigrant Experience — Stages of Adjustment

I have observed, from both my experience and from discussions with others, that there is a series of stages of adjustment that an immigrant goes through. With variations for each individual, the experience seems to be universal.

- Initial: "This will be easy."

One arrives and begins to learn how to do the ordinary things. One can use the Metro. One can use the telephone. One can buy bread at the corner bakery. One is able to find an address and arrive there for a meeting.

The reaction is a feeling of euphoria. "This will be easy" one says to themselves.

But, this is a false euphoria. This is what I call the "tourist phase" — the enjoyable ability of a tourist to find their way around a new city that they are visiting.

The adventure has only begun.

- Growing discomfort: "Things are difficult. I don't understand."

Gradually an increasing sense of discomfort begins to be felt. There are occurrences & interactions where things do not go as well as hoped and it is not understood why. There are attempts to convince someone, obtain something, make friends or use humor where the reaction is negative – or none at all. In a way, one is being "frozen out."

There is a growing sensation that even though one can do the mechanical activities (metro, subway, etc) and even though the physical environment appears familiar (a western urban environment, for example), things under the surface are very different — and one does not know what they are or

why[50]. There apparently are rules of interaction (the local culture) that are very different and no one is going to explain them.

This tends to lead to a growing feeling of rejection and negative feelings about "them." One begins to say; "they are so rude. They are so cold."[51] (At the same time, they may be saying the same thing and wondering why the foreigner doesn't know how to behave.)

This is where some people begin to lose hope.

- Despair: A critical event. "I don't understand anything." A sense of incapability.

At some point, there may be a crisis — some interaction or event that calls everything into question. The event, on top of the growing sense of discomfort, is sufficiently severe that the person feels that they are incapable of succeeding in the new environment and looses their initial self-confidence. A sense of despair sets in — potentially even to the point of depression.

This is the valley of transition. Not everyone will have as much of a severe crisis. It depends on the person and the circumstance of country and culture as well as the presence or lack of a supporting network.[52] However, my

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[50] It is said that the most difficult situation is where the physical environment appears similar but the cultural environment is different.

[51] This level of difficulty varies by the country and cultural context. Some cultures are more open and accepting of new comers. Others, especially with older and deeply rooted cultures and having a higher degree of discomfort with uncertainty and difference (France, Greece, for example) and high context cultures are more reluctant to accept immigrants. Since the codes are much deeper (and they do not feel motivated to explain them), it will be more difficult for the new comer to find their way. (See the discussion and references concerning this later in this article).

[52] We are speaking of the immigrant experience here. The situation is different for the "expatriate assignment" - the topic of the next section.

observation is that everyone arrives at this point of serious doubt and self-questioning.[53]

This is the point where some people give up and "go back home" — if they have lasted this far. In the past people generally did not have that option and many still do not have it today. Immigration was very much a one-way ticket. However, today with ease of communication and travel, the possibility of giving up, of going back, exists and is considered.

That question needs to be faced and a decision made. Does one continue or does one give up?[54]

- Critical decision: "I am going to make this work."

It is a critical decision that is made — the decision to integrate into the new environment, to find one's way, and to succeed. Certainly that was the original intent when the person immigrated. However, with the fact that the results have not be as was originally envisioned, and faced with the critical event that has called everything into question, the person needs to make a positive decision; "This is where I want to be. I will make this work. I will find the way and succeed."

- Gradual understanding

With that decision made and strengthened by newfound determination, one becomes more observant and gradually begins to understand how things function and how to accomplish things. The process of assimilation into the new environment has begun.

- Gradual capability to do things

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[53] There is a useful treatment of the subject of transitions and the empty period in the middle that can be found in the book "Transitions: Making sense of life's changes" by William Bridges. My development of this model was partially inspired by my having read of that book some years earlier.

[54] "Giving up" can take several forms. Some people sell everything and call on the help of family or friends to repatriate back to their original country – burned by the experience. Others may escape into drugs or alcohol. I have seen variations of both.

With the increasing understanding of how things function, the rules, and how to operate, one becomes increasingly capable of doing things. This occurs in multiple dimensions, for example the public administrative functions, banks, telephone and electricity, getting a job and the administrative procedures involved, and how to behave in the job so as to keep it.

It is not uncommon in this phase that a person may have a series of jobs or different kinds of work[55]. This is part of the process of discovering their abilities and where they can best fit — finding their niche in the new system. They knew where they fit in their old system. But this new environment is different and this best fit must be discovered.

- Gradual acceptance

With increasing understanding of how to fit in the new environment, and with increasing capability to do things, one finds themselves to be increasingly accepted in the new environment. This is the reward for having learned the rules of how to behave. With this, the immigrant is seen less "foreign," less "offensive," and less "dangerous" and people in the environment respond accordingly.

I noticed this myself when people started to say to me; "Yes, but you are not really an American." They knew, of course, that I was an American but what they were saying is that I was not like the "ugly American" tourists or expatriates that they had met. In their eyes, I was acceptable – even interesting. They would start to ask my opinion on all sorts of things American.

- Integration

With acceptance comes the possibility for increasing integration. One becomes accepted into the local community and community groups — even sought after for what is viewed as one can contribute. It is understood,

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[55] In my circle of American friends who are professors in France, we discuss our shared experiences of working our way up through a series of schools, from lower level to higher as we gained experience and built reputation.

certainly, that one is from "someplace else" but that is no longer relevant.[56] One's accent remains but most people deal with it.

In my case, I found myself invited into neighborhood committees and participated pretty much like everyone else. I became part of the local scene. The same thing happened with the local merchants and in my job. I spoke in French and people accepted that I would get stuck on words and sometimes make errors in grammar. My accent was there (will always be) and people would tell me that it was "cute."

- Being "at home"

At some point in this process, one begins to feel sufficiently comfortable in the new environment that it is increasingly felt to be "home." When asked where home is, the impulse is to respond "here." One has arrived. One is at home.

I recall once when I went to the US and showed my American passport to the immigration control agent at JKF, he asked some questions, stamped my passport, and said, "Welcome back home." I smiled and said thank you. But, in my mind, I added, "well, actually, home is in France." And it was. While in the US, I felt comfortable – on familiar territory. But when I returned to France and went through French passport control, I felt back home.

The process is complete. The immigrant has transitioned and is at home. Still with an accent and still not understanding everything but integrated and "at home."

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[56] There is a well-known French song by Maxime Le Forestier titled "*Né quelque part*" or "(one is) born someplace." It is a song against discrimination – that everyone is born someplace and they do not decide where. When my accent troubles someone, I sometimes respond with a comment (in French) that "yes, I was born someplace." This frequently will result in a smile of recognition and acceptance by the other person.

This raises the question: Can one go "back home"? In brief, the answer is, No. Certainly, one can purchase a ticket, arrange for the movers, and go back – physically. But, one cannot "go home." This is for several reasons:

- Home is no longer there. It is in the new place.

- The old "home" has changed. While it may look familiar, things have changed while you have been away.

- You have changed. Your values and sense of identity have evolved and are now more aligned with your new home.

You can go back to visit and it will be familiar territory. It will feel comfortable. But, it will not be home. No, one cannot go "back home."

The Expatriate Assignment — sent on assignment in another country

Another form of the international experience is being sent by one's company on assignment to work in one of their operations in another country – either from the company's home country to a "foreign" subsidiary or from the subsidiary to the home office. (This might also be to a joint-venture or a partner company.) Because of the treaties between countries, these "expat" assignments are typically of a limited time – 2-3 years maximum[57]. Many of the expatriates who I meet are passing through and will leave when the time limit of their assignment is reached.

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[57] The tax and social security treaties typically allow someone on "temporary" assignment to continue to be paid in their home country and to remain in the tax and social security systems of the home country for up to a defined maximum stay – typically 3 years maximum. After that, the person would need to decide to change to the local payroll, become a local employee, and integrate into the local system of the host country. In the case of diplomatic staff (embassy or consulate), the rules are very well defined and with privileges – but again with very specific time limits.

The nature of this experience of someone on an expatriate assignment is very different from that of the immigrant. In some ways it is much easier while at the same time being at much higher professional risk.

- It is temporary – both in the time limit and mentally. The person will be on assignment for the 2-3 years and then will go back. Therefore, there is never that emotional decision to really understand and become part of the local environment. In essence, the person stays in stages 1-2 of the experience described above for the immigrant. There is nothing wrong with that, of course. It is just recognition that their situation is both physically and emotionally temporary.

- There is a round trip ticket. Even if the return ticket has not yet been purchased, the assurance of this ticket is part of the deal. Thus, the person (and their accompanying family members) has the security of that return path.

- There are large support resources.

  o The person and their family are moved over by a large company (or government organization) with a lot of their physical possessions – even sometimes their automobile. Housing is arranged and frequently paid for by the organization. (The expatriates who I know in this situation are frequently living in more luxurious apartments in the best parts of the city than most of us in the local system could ever dream to afford. But, that is part of the deal to get them to uproot and take the assignment.)

  o There is local support. The administrative details get done for them. The bank accounts, telephone, etc are all arranged. Place is found for the children in the appropriate international school and the tuition and transportation are paid by the sending organization. (This is critically

important.) The accompanying partner gets oriented to the local support groups and entry is often assured[58].

- o As part of this local support, there is local mentoring on how to do things and work within the local cultural environment. (This depends, of course, on the person being willing to listen and accept suggestions.)

- Thus, in a sense, the person on the expat assignment never fully leaves home. They may be physically in a new place but their mind-set and reference remains back "at home." They stay in stage one or two of the stages of adjustment described in the previous section. In a way, they are tourists.

But, the risk is very much higher – professionally. Their reputation and career are on the line. They have been selected and sent because they are "the best." Their home management is spending a lot of money in sending them on the assignment and has high expectations of results. If it works well, their career and reputation will be enhanced. If it does not work out, then yes they can go home, but their career will be significantly damaged – not to speak of the loss of the investment that the organization has made[59].

There are statistics that one sees quoted that indicate that a high percentage of expatriate assignments end in failure. I have tried to research real data on the real percentage of failure and have not been able to get reliable data. Nevertheless, whatever the percentage, it is too high. The reasons for

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[58] Accompanying partners typically cannot work. Even if they have professional qualifications in their home country, they do not have the needed working papers or professional certifications. That a working visa was obtained for the employee on assignment generally does not extend such rights to the accompanying partner. In certain cases, this has been handled by bilateral agreement between countries – notably between France and the United States for the accompanying partners of diplomatic staff.

[59] There is a wonderful case that was published in the Harvard Business Review that illustrates this. The portrayal is maybe extreme but it makes the point. See "The Case of the Foundering Expatriate," by Gordon Adler, 1 July 1995, Harvard Business Review.

failure need to be understood so that one can, hopefully, reduce the risk. After all, being on an international assignment can be a tremendously enriching experience. The objective is success.

Why do international assignments end in failure – or in "less than success"? To the extent that this happens, there can be many reasons. My observation is that some of the most common sources of problems are:

- The selection process itself.

Why was the person selected? Where the criteria appropriate for the nature of this <u>international</u> assignment? Too frequently, a person is selected because of their expertise in the technical aspects of the job. But, does this make them suitable for working in another culture. What skills are needed?

Related to this is the interview process at the destination. There needs to be a full circle interview process at the destination to assure that the selected person correctly understands the situation and will be accepted by the people where they are being sent. It would seem obvious and most organizations do this but it deserves mentioning just the same. Someone who is sent by the home office and imposed without the full involvement of the local organization will fail.

- The person is sent unprepared.

In addition to the internal functional meetings, was the person prepared for the international aspect of this assignment – the people, the culture, the language? Too many people are sent with little or no preparation.

- There is a lack of a secure return path

What happens at the end of the assignment? Too many times I have seen formerly high ranking expat managers of subsidiaries who return and are walking the halls of headquarters, hat in hand, looking for a job. Even before returning back, the anxiety about this can seriously dilute their attention and performance on the job.

Companies try to take care of this with various structures such as "home managers." However, while the person has been on their assignment, the company and people have changed. Their host manager has possibly changed jobs and has been replaced by someone who does not even know the expatriate. Despite best efforts, this continues to be a problem.

Too often, the result is that the person leaves the organization to work somewhere else – maybe for the competition. What a loss!

- There are no "what if" options

And what if it "doesn't work"? What then? Has there been any thinking of "Plan B"? After all, this person was one of "the best" resources of the organization.

- Family problems

Families are both a major support and, potentially, a major source of difficulty for the expat assignment. Some estimates state that family problems are the major source of problems. Some of the areas of difficulty can be:

- The accompanying partner who cannot work. As noted above, most countries[60] require that a work visa be obtained. The fact that the sending organization obtains the work visa for the employee does not grant the right to work to the accompanying partner – who may themselves be a highly qualified professional. What do they do after they have seen all the museums three times and had their fill of the afternoon social groups? I have seen this a lot here in France and it is a sad scene.

- The children have been uprooted from their circle of friends and maybe don't like it – especially teen-agers. It is a critical age of development for children.

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[60] Including the United States.

- And the children need to be in a school that is designed to be compatible with the home system of education and prepares them to integrate back into the system, or gain entry to university, when they return. Education systems can be very different. I have seen cases where a child who was an excellent student in their home system is failing miserably in the new system – and maybe becoming "dysfunctional" as a result.

These kinds of problems can put tremendous strain on the employee and seriously impact their performance.

Given the importance of obtaining success in the international assignment – for both the sending organization and for the employee, it is important to take steps to reduce the risk of failure. These are the responsibility of both the organization and the employee themselves. My observations are that attention to several aspects is important for achieving success.

- Organization attitude and intent set the base. The organization needs to want to be truly international. It is a mindset that is driven from the top and that needs to be internalized into the organization culture at all levels. Just because a company may operate internationally does not make it international. Is your organization truly international in its mentality?

- The selection process is critical. Too often people are selected for the wrong reasons. The international assignment requires special abilities that can be even more important than functional expertise. The assignment requires a real international aptitude and attitude. Some of the important characteristics are openness, flexibility, and sensing.

- Training needs to take place at two levels. First there is the training of the employee that is being sent. This can start

with an intensive preparation course prior to departure – in language[61], culture, history, and how things are done. The training can continue once the person has arrived in the new location. However, the training need is not limited to just the employee being sent. There should also be general employee training in areas such as international awareness, valuing differences, communicating across difference, and interpersonal skills. The openness to international needs to be part of the organization culture and value systems.

- The support mechanisms need to be in place and be part of the organization strategy. This includes management and HR involvement, local mentor support, and return home support. Many organizations recognize the need and make a reasonably good effort in this regard. However, I have seen cases where the employee is just sent and there is very little (or no) support.

- Management leadership is essential. It is the job of management, both in the sending organization and the receiving organization, to provide leadership and create the environment for international assignments to succeed. They are also responsible for coaching the employee to help them succeed. Sometimes the headquarter management was not there when the organization first went international and thus does not appreciate what is involved. Too often the local manager is too busy chasing sales (and their next

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[61] The organization may well operate officially in the language of the home country – English, for example – and we normally don't expect the expatriate employee to become sufficiently fluent to operate in the local language (some will). However, learning some of the language and being able to, at least, engage in some of the polite social interactions, is very important. First, it will give insight into the culture and help the person interact with some ease and self-confidence. Secondly, it will help them understand what is going on and what people are saying – to some extent. And maybe most importantly, the local people appreciate it because it says that the person cares enough about their culture to try. They may then respond in English because of your terrifying accent but it is appreciated and it builds a bond.

promotion) and does not get involved in helping the international assignment succeed. Both are neglecting that their real job is to provide leadership so that people are successful.

- The job and the expectations need to be well understood – from the beginning. This needs to be done by both the employee and management. In addition to the description of the job on paper, the expectations need to be explored and well understood – the expectations of management at both locations, of others in the organization, and of the employee. This is why it is very important that during the selection process the employee interview the management and the people in the organization at the destination. Naturally, the employee wants to win the job. They also need to be sure that they really understand it and can succeed. Sometimes it might be wise to decide not to accept the offer.

- The employee must take the responsibility to manage it themselves. Despite all the help from the organization, it is the employee's own success and career that is on the line. Therefore, they must take responsibility and be proactive in the management of their assignment. They cannot assume that things will happen automatically.

- And finally, since the family is such an important element in such assignments, the entire family (the children also) must be involved in the decision and enthusiastically agree to the adventure. If that is not the case, the employee should not accept the assignment and not worry about it.

But, with all this, I would want to encourage people to take international assignments. They are tremendously enriching – both professionally and personally. The key is to achieve success.

Living as an "Expat"

Sometimes I get asked for my advice as to how to survive as an expatriate – either as an immigrant or on the expat assignment[62]. Personally, I feel that the question is starting from a negative presumption. It contains the sense "This is going to be bad. I am not going to like this. But somehow I need to survive it." That is the wrong approach.

My view is that being international – living the life as an expatriate – is a wonderful experience. (More on this at the end.) To me, the question to ask is how best to find success and profit from the experience.

I have had the opportunity to observe and gather data on this question. Certainly, there is my own experience as an expatriate. But over the years I have also had the ability to observe, interact with, and interview many expatriates – here in France and in numerous other countries. From this, I can offer the following advice to people on how to achieve the best while living internationally:

- Integrate.

Don't stay in the ghetto of the expatriate community – the "American ghetto," for example. There are certain neighborhoods that tend to be popular with expatriates of one nationality or the other. There are certain associations, clubs, and social groups that tend to attract the expatriates. This is natural, comfortable, and indeed useful. But don't stay just there. Get out and mingle. Get out and integrate.

If you stay in the comfort of your cultural group, you are maybe physically in another country but not really there. It is like you stayed "home." What a shame.

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[62] The term "expatriate" covers both. The definition in Wikipedia states that "An expatriate (in abbreviated form, expat) is a person temporarily or permanently residing in a country and culture other than that of the person's upbringing or legal residence." The definition is quite broad. On that basis, even though my country of legal residence is France and I have French citizenship, I am an American expatriate – and always will be.

- But don't walk away from your past – your cultural heritage.

The same is true in the opposite direction. I have seen examples of people who, in their attempt to integrate, become "more French than the French." It comes across as very fake.

I have also seen cases where people reject their cultural origins and cut off all ties – Americans who walk away, for example. Sometimes individuals have their reasons. (The Vietnam War was a big one.) But that is hard. It is walking away from who you are. It's not needed.

- Be part of both.

The solution is to mix the two cultures (your original and the local culture) and to freely be a part of both.

In my case, I freely mix as part of the local French scene and the American/Anglo scene and am accepted as a part of both.

- Have mentors.

The importance of this cannot be over emphasized. One needs to have trusted local people from who they can get guidance – and who you can trust to tell you when you have done something "not appropriately." The key here is the willingness to listen to them and accept what they are saying.

- Learn to speak the language – or at least try.

Even the smallest amount gets big results in return. It may seem like a small thing but learning the words for polite social interaction (hello, please, thank you, where are the toilets, etc) is really appreciated by the people who you interact with. Even though your accent may be frightening, it shows that you care enough about them and respect them enough to try. I try to do this in any country where I go and can attest to the positive results. I have learned how to say hello or thank you in some 15 different languages – not always well but always with positive results.

When you do show the effort and try to speak the local language, the result is interesting. They may well respond to you in English. In addition to the fact that your accent is probably frightening, you will be surprised to learn that they speak English – maybe quite well – and would be delighted to practice. However, if you had not made the effort, they would not want to know you.[63][64]

There are other advantages to learning some of the language. With learning some of the language, you increasingly understand what is going on around you – and what they are saying. When I was doing business with our Chinese customers (a long time ago), I learned Chinese to be able to have the polite interactions. Although I always conducted business in English, I got to the point where I understood enough of what they were saying so that I understood the question before it was translated and also understood the essence of what they were saying among themselves. (I never admitted that, of course.)

So show the effort. Learn a few words. The results will be positive!

- Don't act that your way is the only way to do things – your way.

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[63] Some people say that The French are cold and rude. Not at all. This may be the issue. (See also "Ugly American" in the next point).

[64] When I first arrived in France, I met an American who had been sent to France by his American employer to supervise a large construction project. He boasted with pride that he never learned to speak any French. He recounted that when he telephoned someone, his technique to get past the blockage of the manager's assistant what to just keep speaking English. In desperation, the assistant would pass him through to the manager. At this level, it worked. But when the project was finished, he decided that he would like to continue to live in France. Amazingly (not really), no one would hire him. Ultimately he went back to the US – where he belonged. By contrast, another construction manager at the same project did learn to speak French. When the project was completed, he also decided that he would like to stay in France. He found that he was welcome here. He built a professional life, found (large) clients for his services, and has done reasonably well. He is now retired and still living in France.

Accept that there can be multiple ways and that their way may work equally well (or even better).

Americans get criticized for this – frequently with justification – and earn the term "Ugly American." However, they are not alone in this. French, British, and other people can be equally guilty.

The behavior is thinking that your way of doing things is the best way – the only way – and vocally telling people how to do things. Related to this is expecting that things will be done your way. ("Don't you accept Dollars?")

I have found that there can be more than one way to do things[65] and that these other ways may be equally valid – or even work better. Even if they don't work quite as efficiently as mine, they may fit better with the local culture and therefore, in the end, be more effective.

- Related to this, and key for success, are a sense of openness and the abilities of listening and sensing.

- Make the mental decision – a positive decision

One needs to make a positive decision and have the wish to make it work. One needs to have the willingness to invest the effort.

- And finally, view your international experience as an adventure. Be open, enjoy it, and profit from it.

There are probably other hints to getting the best from being international but these are the main ones that I have learned and can offer to you.

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[65] The American expression for this is "There are many ways to skin a cat." (the big wild ones). There are probably equivalent expressions for this in other languages.

Thoughts on Happiness and Unhappiness

Living an international life puts one into their private space. Done properly, one is in a space that they define – on their own terms. Certainly there are the usual daily pressures, but one has had the opportunity to construct, to some measure, the life that they wish. In many respects, this has been true for me.

This ability for the international person to define their life allows them to reflect on their views and values. In my case, I have had the luxury of been able to reflect of the meaning of "happiness" and "unhappiness."

We see many definitions of happiness. We probably all know people who are constantly seeking happiness through the collection of material possessions – the new luxury automobile, the latest home entertainment system, the new boat, etc. These are all the symbols of success that feed the ego. Maybe you do that. I know that I used to.

I have learned that these things do not bring happiness. Each new acquisition gives a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction but it is temporary. There is an underlying sense of unease that remains.

Through my experiences, I have learned a very simple definition of happiness. In my definition, happiness is having a sense of self and being at harmony with oneself. This means, knowing who you are (in at least a vague sense) and being comfortable with who you are.[66] You are not going to be the richest or have the largest swimming pool in the neighborhood (or even one at all) but that does not matter. It is not what is important.

In contrast, unhappiness is not accepting or not being in harmony with who one is – with one's self.

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[66] This includes knowing your shortcomings, accepting them, and being OK with that.

Happiness is not material possessions, fame, or power. Despite what the songs say, no one can "make us happy"[67]. It comes from self.

What does it mean to have an "international life"?

Having an "international life" does not mean moving around constantly. It does not mean being a "jet setter." Yes, one is mobile but it is more of a state of mind. In fact, one is in a multiple state of mind.

Depending on the extent of "internationalization" one has arrived at, having an international life will have a number of implications.

- One has not just a single frame of reference. One has multiple reference points. Mine are primarily France and the northeast of the United States.

One of the impacts is on the response to the standard question "Where are you from?" This is likely to merit a pause as one reflects on what answer to give. Mine is different depending on the circumstance. ("French-American," "live in France," "mostly from Boston")

- One has multiple official statuses. As I mentioned at the beginning, I have two nationalities, two passports, file two tax returns[68], and vote twice. My official residence is on one country but I have official status in both. For some people, that may seem strange but for those of you who are international, this is perfectly normal[69].

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[67] Although someone else cannot "make us happy," I would definitely agree that someone else can make one quite miserable. One can be happy to be <u>with</u> someone.

[68] Fortunately with the tax treaties between the France and the US, I do not pay double taxes. Most countries have such tax treaties.

[69] One of our friends has three nationalities – or maybe it is four. Since he has lived in the US for a long time and is a US citizen, he considers that to be his main nationality. But the others are there.

- One gets to have bank accounts in both places – and it is needed. Having two (or more) countries where one has official status means that there are bills that may need to be paid in the local currency of that country – thus a checking account. (Fortunately, the Internet and banking on line has made things a lot easier than it used to be.)

- One speaks two or more languages and floats easily between them. One thinks in two languages – depending. One has arguments with one's self in either language. Definition of language becomes a fluid reference.

Some of my American friends and I will sometimes switch to French when we are discussing something. Languages do not express concepts in the precisely same way and sometimes there is no direct translation that correctly conveys the thought. For this reason, we may have a thought in the head that cannot easily be conveyed in English and is more easily expressed in French (or vice versa).

- One mixes freely in the two communities – is a member of both.

- One uses multiple sources of information from multiple countries and considers it normal.

In addition to international newspapers and television on cable, the Internet with access to newspapers, radio, podcasts, and other sources has really melted away geographic boundaries.

My daily routine starts with the French news on the radio and then continues with podcasts from NPR, BBC Global, Business Week, and a long list of others.

- One is multi-cultural. When one travels, a certain amount of mental reprogramming is needed.

There are cultural differences in how one interacts and does business. When I travel (or interact with someone from another culture), I need to

reset a few switches in my head for the programming of how to operate. For example, in Boston the rule is *on time*, one generally gets down to business quickly, and the discussion is linear. In Paris 5-10 minutes late is considered polite, one needs to build rapport first, and the discussion may be on several topics at once. Elsewhere it is different.[70]

- One is "multi-currency." I myself function in both Euros and Dollars.

- One is multi time zone. The thinking "what time is it there" and when to call becomes automatic. Depending on the need, the working hours are shifted.

- One struggles with jet lag and learns to manage it. That is the negative aspect.

But those are some of the "mechanical" differences. The real distinction of being "international" is in the mind – an international mind set. When one is international, the limitations of specific country or location fade away. One views themselves as living in the world. One operates in their own space.

So, what might this indicate: for individuals and for companies?

From this, we can make some observations that can guide both individuals and organizations in their wish to achieve success – both with being international and with the international assignment.

First we can observe that there are environmental factors that will make some geographic locations relatively easier and others more difficult. Some cultures are more open to "newcomers" and will be easier for the expatriate

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[70] This is a topic to which we could devote an entire book – or several.

to find acceptance while others will be more difficult and will take longer[71]. Some general observations I would offer are:

- It will be relatively easier to break into and gain acceptance in "new" or "immigrant counties" such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and others. People in these countries are more accustomed to the idea that people are from someplace else and are newly arrived.

- In contrast, gaining entry and acceptance may be more difficult in countries that have long established society and structures. Examples of this would include Spain and France.

- Countries that have a low "uncertainty avoidance[72]" culture will tend to be relatively more open to people from different cultures – and thus easier to gain acceptance in. This would include Scandinavian countries (Finland, Sweden, etc), the United States, Canada, and others.

- Countries where the culture is high on the uncertainty avoidance scale will tend to be more difficult. A high uncertainty avoidance culture is less comfortable with risk and difference – to the point of "different is dangerous." France fits in this category and others will be even higher on this scale – Greece, for example. In these cultures, it will take longer to gain entry and be accepted.

Related to this, there is also a factor of the mix between the physical environment and the cultural environment, similar - dissimilar, that will

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[71] For the research data supporting this, see Geert Hofstede, "Culture's Consequences" 2001 (Chapter 4) or "Cultures and Organizations" 1991, 2005 (Chapter 5).

[72] Uncertainty avoidance is one of the cultural value dimensions defined by Geert Hofstede in his research. It relates to the relative ease or ability of people in a society to accept uncertainty, risk, and difference (or not).

tend to make it easier or more difficult for expatriates to understand and integrate into.[73] For example:

- An environment that is similar both physically and culturally will be relatively easy to understand and integrate into. This is probably why Americans feel relatively at ease in the UK – although they find some cultural difficulties nevertheless.

- The hardest may be where the physical environment is similar – looks almost the same – but the cultural environment is very different. An example would be Americans in France. France is a highly developed western country with large urban areas and a modern infrastructure. The arriving American expatriate feels at ease with the physical environment and relatively quickly learns how to use the metro, trains, etc. However, the cultural environment is very different and is hidden below the surface. Somehow the rules of how to interact and do things are different and not understood. The arriving expatriate is destabilized because they think that they understand the environment (physical similarity) but they clearly do not — and do not understand why.

- Maybe the easiest is the situation where both the physical and cultural environments are dissimilar to that of the expatriate's home. In such a case, the expatriate knows that things are clearly different and therefore is on alert to their need to work hard to understand this new environment. Examples for me have been China (in the early 80s) and Africa.

The strength of the organization culture comes into play. We know that all organizations have cultures – some strong and some weak. When an organization has a strong culture the expatriate, traveling or on assignment, will have a relatively easier time with their international experience. This is because inside the work environment the cultural rules - the how to be, how

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[73] Credit is given to Bernard Kaminker for having suggested this construct to me during a conversation in 2003.

to do, and what to expect – are familiar and comfortable. Additionally, organizations with strong cultures tend to (but not always) have good support structures for the expatriate. I think this is why my friends in the diplomatic services do relatively well in this regard. I know that during my years at Digital, when I traveled around the world (something that I did a lot), within the company offices I felt comfortable – even when the environment outside was a total mystery to me. We are all part of multiple cultures – national, organization, profession, etc. The research demonstrates that for organizations that have a strong culture, organizational culture will be even stronger and surpass the local national culture of the individuals – inside the work environment.

In addition to these environmental factors, there are personality and skill factors in the expatriate that will be important to their ability to succeed in the international environment (or their failure). Building on what has been developed earlier in this document I would highlight openness, sensing, learning, adapting, and a certain comfort with incomprehension. Since I am speaking to you as a person seeking to succeed in the international environment, I will address you in the direct singular on this – points for you to consider.

- Openness: How open are you to the fact that things locally may be different and that the local people have different ways of doing things? Can you accept that they have their different way of operating and be willing to work with that – or do you insist that your way is the only way? I know that you will likely respond positively on this but are you sure? On a relative basis, some people are and some people are not. This is something to think about.[74]

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[74] Unfortunately, Americans are at a real disadvantage in this regard. The United States is a very large country and even with significant regional cultural differences, there is a common base of the systems and the rules for how things are done. Additionally, Americans tend not to travel outside of the US. With such a large country, there is not the great need to do so. For a variety of reasons, the vast majority (more than 70%) of Americans, do not have passports and have never been outside of the United States.

- Sensing: How good are your antennae? How good are you at picking up that "something is different here" or that "something is not working." Can you sense that "we are no longer in Kansas, Toto"?[75] How good are you at observing how people are doing things and what does work. All of us have this ability to some greater or lesser extent. This is a skill that can be developed with practice.

- Learning: Children and adults learn differently. As adults, we learn from observation and experience – so called "experience based learning." But our ability to learn in this manner varies. It is strongly based upon our openness, observation ability, and our adaptability. How good are you at learning from your experiences? This is something that you can develop as you gain international experience. I myself was not very good at it when I first started.

- Adapting: With that, can you accept that things are different and adapt your way of doing things to make them work in the new environment? This is something that we (hopefully) learn in kindergarten.[76] But with age we tend to get rigid and expect that things will be done "our way." My wife reminds me that I sometimes tend to be guilty of this. This is a skill that we can and need to keep developing. How adaptable are you to different circumstances?

And finally,

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[75] Approximation of the famous quote from Dorothy speaking to her dog Toto in the movie: "The Wizard of Oz." Actually, maybe that is an interesting movie to see again from the aspect of cross-cultural integration.

[76] Kindergarten, école maternelle, play school, etc – that first year in school where children learn to get along together in society. There is an insightful and humorous book on this theme "All I really needed to know I learned in Kindergarten" by Robert Fulghum. (www.robertfulghum.com)

- Comfort with incomprehension: How well can you tolerate not fully understanding what is going on? You won't and you never will – fully – even after years of being there. This is something that you need to be able to accept. It is a personality factor. I have come to accept that I do not fully understand everything that is going on and it does not bother me. Can you do the same? And,

- Acceptance with lack of control: Related to this, you will need to accept that you will not be able to control everything. This is especially hard for people who have "high control" personalities. I have known a number of people who simply are not adaptable to the international experience – and do miserably – for this very reason. One needs to be able to let go and accept not being in control. You will need to be able to "go with the flow." It may be uncomfortable and difficult to develop. But this is a skill that can be developed. You can do it. If you can't (or don't want to) then you should not go international.

Early in this piece, I told you about my background in which I moved around a lot and had a lot of experiences where I was put into unfamiliar territory in which I had to sense, learn, and adapt. As I reflect on this, I think it was those experiences, whether moving as a child to a new city or hiking in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, where I learned and developed those skills that would prepare me for my international work and my later immigration to France.

All this suggests important implications for organizations that want to send people on international assignments and seek to have them succeed. These relate to building the culture and the selection process itself.

As was discussed earlier, organizations too frequently use the wrong criteria for selection of people for international assignments. The selection is frequently made on the basis of functional expertise, past success in the role *domestically* or worse yet, based on connections or simply who is available (or dispensable). But what is necessary for success in the

international assignment? The international assignment requires special skills over and beyond the functional skills of the job. In fact, the international aptitude and skill will be of greater importance. The person will need to have the characteristics and skills of openness, sensing, learning and adapting as well as a good measure of people skill and flexibility. Ability in language will be important but, with the right basic skills and characteristics, the language will be learned. I am a strong believer that in recruiting for positions, the manager needs to carefully think through what the situation currently is, what needs to be accomplished, and what skills will be needed to accomplish this – and then write the job posting and recruit accordingly. Not doing this leads to a great risk of failure – and the manager is responsible.[77]

And, once the person is selected, the manager needs to stay involved. It is the manager's job to assure that the person is properly prepared and has the necessary support resources. The manager needs to continue to be involved with overview and coaching – and intervention when necessary. Yes, managers, I know that you have a lot to do. But this is your job. You are sending someone to do a job for you, are spending a lot of money, and are placing the success of the organization on the line. It is <u>your</u> job to make sure that it works.

And finally, to aid this, the company needs to have a real culture of international. This is important for the assignment itself to succeed and also for the nurturing of a pool of potential applicants for these positions. This means that "international" needs to be built into the culture of the organization. The fact of operating internationally is not sufficient. It needs to be into the very fiber and spirit of the organization. Doing this and providing the leadership necessary is a major responsibility of management.

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[77] As an experienced manager, I am very firm on this. I have not always done it correctly myself but, in those cases, I recognize where the fault was – my recruitment process.

Companies that do it well achieve success in the world market[78].

Final reflections on being international: A double-edged sword.

No, once you have become international, you cannot go "back home." You no longer fit. It has changed. You have changed. It is no longer "you." It is no longer "home."

It is "*familiar but not comfortable*"[79]

I feel that way when I go back to the US – typically, several times each year. Certainly it is familiar. Certainly I know my way around and how to do things. But it is no longer me. I have been changed.

However, you do not fully understand the new either. There are aspects to it that are not understood and are not comfortable. But, it fits you better than "home" – the old one, that is[80]. It has become "home." I can personally attest to this. As I have already said, it is the feeling that I have when I return to Paris and show my French passport to the immigration agent at CDG – I am home. Welcome home.

In a way, you become "stuck in the middle" – neither completely here nor there. Where you find yourself is in your own space. You are in a space that is no longer defined by a specific location but by you and your internal references. This is where I am today – floating somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean – in a space called Mark.

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[78] Yes, they need to excel in other things also, but this is what we are examining here.

[79] A quote from my conversation with Bernard Kaminker in 2003.

[80] Some years ago, I worked with an English man who had married a French woman and lived in the north of France. In discussing this point, he said to me; "When one lives in their original place and does not feel comfortable but does not understand why, one seeks to move to a new place. There, they will still not completely feel comfortable but, at least, they will understand why." Thanks to you Chris for that insight. You see, it has been many years but I remember the conversation.

Being international is both a curse and a blessing. You see the negative aspects of both. You see the positive aspects of both. Your perception is enlarged. I myself see and can see the advantages and criticize the problems in France as well as those in the United States.

But at the same time, you have the best of both – and the ability to chose. You have become international.

In the end, it is tremendously enriching – and an adventure in the development of self. For any of you who wish to do it, and have the ability and opportunity, I encourage you to do so. It won't be easy. It will be enriching. Go for it and *bon courage*.

My hope in this work is that it is useful to the reader – individuals as well as organizations and their management. I welcome hearing from any of you who may wish to contact me[81].

And to all of you,

Welcome to being International.

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[81] Mark.Uhrich@muhrich.net or a web search for Mark Louis Uhrich.

France - US comparisons: some comparisons between France and the United States

Mark Louis Uhrich©

Here are a few general and relative comparisons between France and the United States.[82]

France	United States
Government Structure	
Centralized. Power is central unless delegated outward.	Decentralized. Default unit of authority is local unless centralized in states or in federal government. States are largely sovereign in many matters.
Legal Framework[83]	
Rule based with key legal	Mostly common law system with

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[82] Any broad comparisons that one makes have the risk of being superficial and verging on stereotyping. Both countries have regions that have their specificities. Both countries are filled with people who all have their individual characteristics. The subject is too broad to be correctly treated briefly. However, with that caveat stated, one can make some general comparisons between the two cultures. This chart contains a few that I would offer. Note that the comparisons are on a relative basis and are not absolutes.

[83] With thanks to Thierry Chaumeil, Avocat à la Cour.

principles set forth in codes (based on Napoleonic codes). The written rules express which things are either forbidden or authorized. Elements of jurisprudence / common law ("*precedents*") are beginning to be seen.

certain exceptions. Presumption that things are authorized unless forbidden. Court decisions based on precedents. Laws and penalties are specific to each state with certain federal laws.

Respect Based On

Status of diploma, school, social group, or family.

Accomplishments. Meritocracy.

Self vs. Society

More collectivist. People see themselves as part of their group and the overall society at large. Important values are equality and "solidarity." There is a sense of a "social contract" in the French society.

Individualist. People are expected to take initiative and take care of themselves and their immediate family. They do not expect to be taken care of by others.

Accomplishment & Materialism

One focuses more on relationships and ideas. People do have wealth and material objects. However, there is an emphasis on quality and showing off is considered poor taste.

There is a greater emphasis on struggle, accomplishment, and the rewards of success. Having the rewards and displaying them is a mark of success. An emphasis on material goods and position.

Sports

European football (soccer) and

Baseball, American football,

rugby are big. These are sports that emphasize teamwork. Somewhat less emphasis on star players.

basketball, and ice hockey. These are team sports but there is more emphasis on the star player.

Risk taking – Comfort with Uncertainty

Relatively risk adverse. Uncomfortable with uncertainty. Require more analysis and assurance before can make a decision. Fear of being wrong. This characteristic is positive for industries that require low risk such as high-speed trains, nuclear power, and aeronautics.

Relatively comfortable with risk and uncertainty. Able to make a decision quickly and then correct based on results. Failure is tolerated as a learning experience. This characteristic is positive for promoting innovation and new business creation.

Action vs. Reflection

High value on reflection, discussion, and debate to be sure before action can be taken.

Action oriented. "Shoot and talk later."

Facts vs. Context

Higher context culture. One needs to get to know and appreciate the other person and to trust them before discussing business.

Low context culture. Facts are more important than relationships. One will directly discuss business and then, maybe, become friends afterwards – but it is not necessary.

Personal Information in Conversation

Hidden. Personal information and views are kept personal. Do not ask about family, friends, or how much

Open. After two beers one knows almost everything about the other

they make. When speaking with someone, don't ask about the person with whom they are.

person.

But, don't discuss religion or politics.

Religion

Of relatively lesser importance. A nominally "Catholic" country where most people rarely, if ever, go to church. Religion seen as not relevant. Is mostly a celebration of family events.

Highly religious with pluralism accepted. Most people regularly attend church. Religious values are considered important in daily life by most people.

Time Parallelism

Moderately polychromic. Multiple tasks or conversations at the same time. Discussions and meetings are not linear.

Monochromic. One thing at a time and in sequence. Meetings treat one thing at a time to conclusion.

Being "on-time"

Arriving for a meeting 5-15 minutes late is acceptable – even considered polite. (Regional differences in accepted time.)

On time. Arriving for a meeting few minutes early is acceptable but never late.

Labor Relations and Social Conflict

Conflict. Strikes and demonstrations as tool of expression and to obtain what is wanted. Continuation of the revolution and the conflict between the workers and those in power –

More collaboration between management and employees. Employee engagement as an important force in theory of management. Involvement of people

but with complicity between the actors on both sides. Poor management of change.

in change.

Vacation Time and Productivity

Norm is 5 weeks of vacation plus holidays.

Two weeks of vacation – increasing to 3, or possibly 4, with seniority.

However, average hours worked and productivity is almost equal to that in USA.

Cultural Style

Style and elegance. Generally well educated. Cosmopolitan. Travel internationally – but frequently in groups.

Not very international. Majority do not travel outside of the US. USA centric.

Management Style

Top down.

Collaborative leadership. Delegation.

View of Life

Frequently pessimistic. "Things will not work and there is nothing one can do. Life is nothing more than absurdity and tragedy[84]"

Optimistic. Sense that one can take action and achieve results. Positive viewpoint.

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[84] These are actual quotes that I have been given.

Time Reference

Looking backward to verify correctness of thinking based on continuity of ideas. Validation based on historical reference.

Looking forward to future and possibilities without need to validate based on historical references.

Communication & Negotiation Style[85]

Verbose, eloquence, logic leading to clarity. High context. Personal information hidden.

Facts and clarity. Open.

Negotiation Style[86]

Impress with intelligence and eloquence. Overwhelm with logic. Will take longer. Need to build trust first.

Pressure and conflict. Concessions & conciliation. Seek quick results. Low tolerance of silence.

Patriotism — The Flag

The French flag is generally displayed only on government buildings. Flags are not displayed at private homes and companies (except international companies in France). Chauvinism yes but not the same aspect of pride in being French. Feeling of superiority.

American flags are widely displayed – companies and private homes in addition to government buildings. High level of patriotism — pride in being American. The decision to be American as a unifying element.

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[85] See Richard D. Lewis, Cross Cultural Communication – A visual approach, Transcreen Publications, 1999, ISBN: 0 95343981 0 2.

[86] Ibid

Countryside

|	
Highly agricultural with charming villages and large cities.	Big cities and large wide-open spaces.

These comparisons are deliberately described in simple extremes to illustrate the differences. They are general and do not take into account regional differences in both countries. There are many more comparisons that can be made, and explanations for each, but this list serves to illustrate the differences between these two brother cultures.

Skills for global business: cultural intelligence & business development

Fernando Salvetti

Cultural intelligence opens up significant dimensions to us not only in terms of understanding and analysing the world we are living in but also in direct terms of *management* and *business development*. This is the key that allows us to "listen" and understand habits, behaviours, contexts and markets that are different from our own.

Within our organizational contexts we are increasingly living at different levels of reality. Just as though we were printed on Escher's stairs, everyone is going up and down their own stair, believing that they are the only one with the correct perspective. But there is a huge amount of perspectives, and levels do not always cross in an intelligible way.
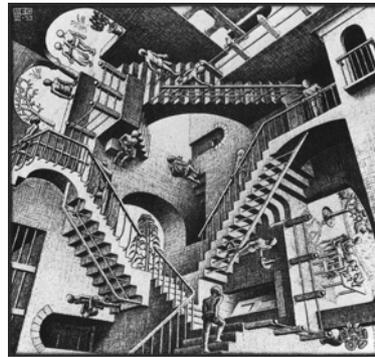
We belong to working groups in which the concepts of service, team-working, hierarchy, time and quality are so different. Working in intercultural contexts means facing cognitive paradigms, relational systems and different reference values. We see reality from different points of view and stairs that perhaps are almost touching but belong to different worlds (unconquerable? Who knows…)? How do we meet in the middle?

Some research projects carried out in recent years show that while about 90% of large companies develop activities *"to take advantage of distributed skills, around-the-clock operations and virtual team environments,"* less than a third of these companies have managed to consolidate good practice so far, even if only to facilitate *project managers* and working groups involving people who work predominantly from a distance and in environments with a high multicultural rate.

As the great anthropologist, Edward Hall, once said, the greatest barrier that often stands between us and a successful business is cultural difference.

Do you remember the film "*Red corner*" with Richard Gere as Jack Moore; a brilliant American lawyer who was on the point of signing a big trade deal with China? At the very beginning of the film Jack closes an important trade negotiation thanks to his intercultural intelligence.

It deals with the selling of some American TV programs that Chinese censorship is blocking because of its content; abundant references to sex, violence and corruption.

After being charged with immorality and typically western debauchery because of the video contents, Jack manages to reverse the situation, avoiding conflicts of value and culture.

His strategy is to force himself to "observe things" from the point of view of Chinese people that he speaks to and *reframing*. In other words he defends his case using Chinese arguments, values and words.

In one scene Jack shows his understanding of the political and linguistic culture of the people he is speaking to as he quotes a Mao saying in Mandarin Chinese.

This was sophisticated manoeuvre of *cross-cultural intelligence* which led Jack Moore to observe reality through the eyes of one of the characters that Escher painted walking on a different staircase. Jack adapts his language as far as possible to that familiar to the Chinese.

Rather than retrace the plot, I will jump directly to the final point. To quote Mary Douglas, another great name in the history of anthropology, we all "more or less force [our fellow citizens] to gulp down" our culture when we negotiate. When we make deals we exchange units of culture (far more than units of economy).After all, among living creates humans are perhaps the only ones that actively build their environment and the only ones whose environment is a cultural construction. Culture shapes our eyes as well as the lenses and the shape of the glasses we look through.
In some ways, the culture that we belong to is like a prison…at least we do not know that there is a key to open it. This key is *cultural intelligence* which allows us to build bridges between different cultures. A classic textbook definition would go something like: *cultural intelligence is the*

ability to bridge and benefit from the cultural complexity of people with different nationalities, professional backgrounds and fields, personalities and organizational cultures. Cultural intelligence combines the emotional, cognitive and practical dimensions of cross-cultural encounters and ensures more effective and fulfilling cross-cultural collaboration.

The term "culture" indicates both traditions that are socially learnt and acquired and the ways of life of a society's members, including their structured and rehearsed way of thinking, feeling and acting.
Just think, for example, of time perception and management.
What time is it? The answer depends not only on our clock but also on the time zone in which the person answering this question lives and works.
How do we manage the time? Here the answer depends not only on the time zone but also on the *local time* which we use to "re-time" the hands of our clock when we move through time and space. But first of all from the way we perceive time within our reference culture.

People's approach to time management (their own and of others) is very varied and depends on the culture in which we live. In extreme terms, time can be a straight line going one way, made up of an endless series of events or a curve that falls back on itself.

In other words, some cultures see time as a natural flow that we are subjected to while other cultures try to control it, plan it and measure it (but what is 'punctuality' as different cultures mean it?).

Not forgetting that our attitude (cultural *imprinting*) towards time can be monochronic if we try to structure the sequence of individual activities that are linked in time. At the same time it can be polychromic if there is a tendency to do lots of things simultaneously. For example, three of us are talking and doing a few other things at the same time while perhaps one of us sends an email to a fourth colleague who is not there.

This is why the past-present-future sequence is not the same for all of us. Simply carry out a small experiment to discover significant differences between colleagues who work in the same office.

I quote the original words of Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner who developed this theory:

Consider the relative significance of the past, present and future. You will be asked to indicate your relative time horizons for the past, present and future by giving a number.

7=years, 6=months, 5=weeks, 4=days, 3=hours, 2=minutes, 1=second.

My past started... ago, and ended... ago.

My present started... ago, and ended... from now.

My future started... from now, and ended... from now.

That's enough for now! Time is short and our available space is running out!

Some key questions to conclude; do we know how to contribute to the *business development* of active organizations in today's world that are *global and local* at the same time? Are we ready to identify new *business* opportunities in world markets? Are we able to sustain our *business*, ourselves and our colleagues with effective intercultural intelligence?

"Glocalizing" visual communication in organizations: when and how to adapt visual communication to local standards

Sabrina Bresciani and Martin J. Eppler

Visual communication is increasingly being used in organizations for its unique power to attract attention, engage the audience and enhance recall and comprehension. Business visualization is by no means limited to bar charts or flowcharts, but encompasses a wide variety of forms; from mind maps to visual metaphors and sketches to diagrams. Visual templates based on these genres can be used for supporting collaborative tasks such as strategy development, project management, knowledge management, learning, risk management or planning. Organizations are learning to exploit the power of visualization for communication and collaboration across organizations and often across organizational branches that are located in different countries. As the (business) world becomes more and more flat (Friedman, 2006, p. 376), visual communication can be particularly helpful for getting a message across various cultures, thanks to its ability to convey a message with symbols and pictograms that can be often universally understood.

However, the impact of cultural differences on visualization interpretation is frequently overlooked (Nisbett, 2005; Eppler & Ge, 2008). In this chapter we thus aim to give an overview of how visualization can be successfully used in an international organizational context by leveraging the universality of perception and in particular, by addressing the major differences in the cross-cultural interpretation of visualizations.

In the following section, the role of visual communication in organizations is addressed and contextualized. In the second section, we specifically focus on cross-cultural similarities and differences in the reception of visualizations and we provide a framework of seven crucial factors that

moderate the efficacy of visual communication across cultures, namely - (1) color, (2) direction, (3) humor, (4) signs and symbols, (5) visual metaphors, (6) focus and (7) analytic or holistic nature of thought. For each factor we provide a theoretical overview and explain its practical implications. Finally, the last section offers a set of guidelines for supporting visualization users and developers in the evaluation and creation of business visualization suitable for a global context, thus glocalizing it – adapting a global visual business language to local contexts.

1. Visual communication in organizations

The usefulness of visual communication in business is subject to a large corpus of anecdotal evidence and growing academic interest. Various classifications, taxonomies and frameworks have been developed to frame this interdisciplinary field (Tegarden, 1999; Eppler & Burkhard, 2007). The rationale for the use of visualization in various contexts including education, advertising and organizations has to be found in its ability to enhance our cognitive abilities. Paivio's (Paivio, 1969; Clark & Paivio, 1991) seminal work on Dual Coding Theory has lead the basis to the development, validation and increased use of visualization in education and several other fields including organizations. The assumption of Dual Coding Theory is that information is processed through one or two channels, the verbal (textual, auditory, sequential) and the non-verbal or imagery (visual, spatial) channel, and that using both the verbal and imagery channels together increases recall, engagement and attention.

Furthermore, Larkin and Simon (1987) and Tversky (2005) have stated that when visualization is used, cognitive abilities for reasoning, evaluating and solving problems are enhanced. O'Donnel et al.(2002) report that visualizations "reduce cognitive load, enhance representation of relationships among complex constructs, and provide multiple retrieval paths for accessing knowledge." The advantages of visualization for various cognitive tasks are to be found in its ability to structure and organize information and to provide salience (Green & Petre, 1996; Suthers, 2001). Salience describes how a representation facilitates focusing

and processing certain information at the expense of others. Images also have an impact on the emotional attitude of the reader by providing engagement and motivation (Huff, 1990; Buzan & Buzan, 2002). In the field of advertising, the affective qualities of visualizations are well known and widely exploited to communicate and convince. From a more pragmatic perspective, Tufte's popular books (1986, 1997) are a source of numerous valuable examples of information visualization use in real life with a historical coverage from the medieval time to contemporary use.

In the specific context of organizations, visualization can be employed for *communicating* and *collaborating* effectively for the above mentioned reasons which include among others, superior recall, engagement and attention compared to textual or verbal communication. For instance visualizations can be used to communicate the company's strategy, coordinate a team project, visualize competences and decision making (Lurie & Mason, 2007). In addition, resent scientific evidence shows that visualization can be successfully used for supporting collaborative tasks (Fong et al., 2007), as for example, strategizing (Platts & Tan, 2004), knowledge sharing (Bresciani & Eppler, 2009), planning (Phaal & Muller, 2007) and collaborative social network analysis (Isenberg et al., 2009). Eppler and Burkhard (2005) outline six main advantages of visualization in business collaboration with the acronym CARMEN - Coordination, Attention, Recall, Motivation, Elaboration, New Insights.

Tegarden (1999) provides an overview of *information visualization* techniques that can support business problem solving by leveraging on human visual/spatial abilities like metaphors, radar charts, parallel coordinates, scatter plots, line graph, Volume rendering, floors and walls, maps and surfaces. Similarly, Eppler and Burkhard (2007) developed a framework for the use of visualization in knowledge management, reviewing conceptual diagrams typically used in the business domain. Examples of business conceptual diagrams include classic pie charts, bar charts, parallel coordinates, Venn diagrams and also less popular diagrams such as Ishikawa (also known as fishbone), synergy map, networks and so forth. A pragmatic and detailed classification of visualization methods used in business is compiled in the Period Table of Visualization Methods

(available at www.visual-literacy.org). The periodic table's classification is a visualization itself, an example of how a visual metaphor can be used to convey insights on the represented information based on the reader's previous knowledge and association with the metaphor employed (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Several types of *metaphors* are utilized in business to communicate messages and emotions, particularly in strategy communication. Visual metaphors fulfill a dual function; they position information graphically to organize and structure it and "they convey an implicit insight about the represented information through the key characteristics (or associations) of the metaphor that is employed" (Eppler & Burkhard, 2005, p. 5). For instance, a widely used metaphor for strategy is *war;* the company takes the role of the conqueror where the competition is the enemy and the product/service market is the aspired territory. Marketing campaigns become weapons and external changes (such as in the regulatory environment) can be visualized as adverse weather, rain and thunderstorms. The communication of the strategy to the employees becomes immediate and appealing and can lead to a higher commitment to the strategy plan. *Sports* are often employed metaphors for conveying the company's future plan. *Soccer* and *baseball* are among the most popular because they are suitable to describe the company as one team playing against another team (typically the competition). The excitement for sports game participation can be transferred to the organizational aims; the company's employees are represented as a team with defined roles for each member and the team has a game strategy based on the strength and weaknesses of the competing team to achieve the "goal." The visual metaphor projects qualities of the game to the corporate strategy, fostering sentiments of commitment, team spirit and enthusiasm (Inns, 2002; Mengis, 2007). *Sailing* and *climbing a mountain* are other sports suitable for business use, as they focus on the team spirit and joint effort respectively. Merger of two companies is often envisioned as a *marriage*, a metaphor that carries mainly positive connotation to the union but also accounts for the potential pitfalls of the relationship. The *bridge* is also typically used to communicate the union of two sides or the way to move to a new stage. The *roadmap* (Phaal & Muller, 2007) itself is a metaphor, although its literal meaning is often

overlooked due to its wide use in planning. The aim of this metaphor is to provide the direction and the map of the route among the many possible roads that the company is planning to take. Finally, other business metaphors include the domain of the *car* (starting the engine, racing, making a pit-stop), *iceberg* (as in "the tip of the iceberg" or used to differentiate the obvious/visible from hidden elements) and *gardening* (sowing, blooming, trimming dead branches) among others.

In this section we have reviewed how visualization, from charts to visual metaphors can be employed in organizations to communicate and collaborate effectively to attract the attention of the employees, engage and motivate them. As the power of visualization has been widely acknowledged and diagrams are broadly used (in western countries) for communicating effectively and for engaging employees, several organizations are now employing the same graphic representations in all their international branches. This poses the question of whether *pictures are indeed a universal language*, a sort of Esperanto composed of signs, pictograms and metaphors that can be employed without adaptation in all cultural context. Against this widespread belief that pictures carry universal communication values, recent research (Nisbett, 2005) shows that *there are fundamental differences in the perception of visualization* between East Asia and the Western world. In the next session, we address this topic specifically and give an overview of the major issues of using visualization in intercultural contexts.

2. Business visualizations in different cultures

"A picture is worth a thousand words." This is claimed to be a Chinese proverb, however Chinese people seem to have never heard of it (Larkin & Simon, 1987, p. 65). We could further question, *which* thousand words? Are they the same in Asia and in Western countries? Does it not sometimes take a thousand words to understand a complex image or one that originated in another cultural context?

Certain characteristics of visual communication are undoubtedly universal and can therefore be particularly useful in cross cultural context. Visualization is immediate and can cut across language barriers; pictograms are typical examples of this. They can be found in most international airports and they are created with the purpose to be understood without knowing the local language. But the usefulness of visual communication can go far beyond pictograms. It can be employed for instance to communicate a sequence of actions graphically (i.e. with a flowchart) or to evoke particular feelings through a visual metaphor or image. In cross-cultural communication, visualizing ideas can be especially useful to externalize knowledge. When ideas are graphed (for example with a knowledge map), it is easier for the readers to identify differences between the visualized concepts and their own cognitive model rather than when words alone are used (Schnotz & Kurschner, 2008).

In spite of relatively universal visualization principles and despite the fact that visualization is often considered a global language, dissimilarities in the interpretation of visualizations in different cultures do exist (Segall et al., 1966; Nisbett, 2005) and should be taken into consideration in organizational communication in order to properly evaluate when and how to adapt visuals to local cultures. Messaris (1997) reports, citing Scott, that "Academic writers have long insisted that the conventions of pictorial representation are culture-bound (Scott, 1990)." These cultural dissimilarities are a consequence of traditions, education and argumentative style. Segall et al. (1966) state this in similar terms - "It should be stressed that these differences are not "racial" differences. They are differences produced by the same kinds of factors that are responsible for individual differences in illusion susceptibility, namely, differences in experience." Certainly culture, primarily through education, influences the very interpretation of visualizations; "the meaning of a map is not absolute but a product of the society and its culture" (MacEacheren 2004).

The implications of culture on visualization reception can be summarized in at least *seven main factors*, ranging from well known aspects as the use of *color* and *directionality* of reading to more dramatic differences in *attention* patterns (background and foreground) and *thinking styles*

(analytic and holistic). In the following paragraphs each of the seven factors is addressed from both a theoretical and practical perspective in a sequence from the more perceptual to the deeper cognitive differences.

1. The most apparent element of cultural differences is the meaning of *color.* It is well known that the use of red in western countries is a sign of danger, love, required attention or negative values. The contrary is true in China where red has a marked positive connotation. In Buddhist countries, yellow and orange are colors typically associated with religion and God (Hogan, 2007) and orange is well associated with religion in Ireland. In the U.S., it is a service color and in Switzerland it is the color used by the main supermarket chains. White symbolizes death in East Asia while it has an opposite connotation in Western countries, typically associated with purity, cleanness and elegance. Green symbolizes hope and spring in most Western countries.

Therefore, the safest color to be used in international visualizations is probably blue, as it carries slightly positive connotations in most cultures and is often considered elegant and conservative.

2. A second prominent element to take into account is the ***direction*** in which a visualization is read, especially if it is composed by procedural elements like a flowchart or a timeline. In Arabic and traditional Chinese, the typical reading pattern is from right to left that is the opposite of the western convention of reading from left to right. This has implications in portraying time and the sequence of events that might create misunderstanding.

When addressing Arabic speakers, the linear order of diagrams should be reversed (from left to right) as in the following figure (Fig. 1).
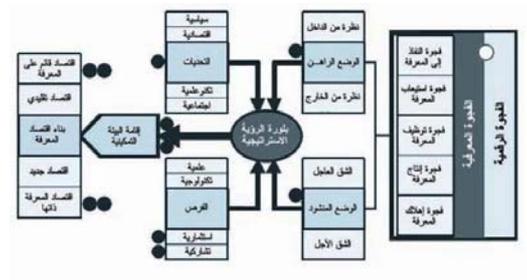
ويتضمن الإطار العام لبلورة الرؤية الاستراتيجية الخطوات
المنهجية التالية:

Figure 1. Arabic diagram (Source: United Nations ESCWA public report)

3. *Icons and symbols* are not as universal as usually considered. For example the symbol of the dollar ($) is universally used for indicating money but most countries use other currencies (like € or £). Similarly the pictogram of fork and knife symbolizes food or a restaurant; however Asians (among others) perceive the icon as a foreign visual and chopsticks would be a more appropriate symbol. The abstract figure of man and woman carries cultural characteristics because the dressing style, especially of women, can be different in non-western cultures. Finally, symbols can be ambiguous as interpreted in diverse ways in different cultures (Eppler et al., 2008). For example, the icon of a star can denote a particularly good element in North America (for example stars are used for online rating) but might be interpreted as simply symbolizing the night in other countries. Consequently when icons and symbols are used in organizational communication, they should be adapted to the local culture which might have different conventions.

4. Shifting the focus more toward the meaning of the visual message, a further element to consider is the use of *humor* which is known to be culturally dependent. For instance, vignettes that portray humorous scenes to convey a message may not obtain the same effect in all countries. In the United States it is typical and welcome to use humor in business conversations (Lewis, 1999), but in many other countries it is perceived as inappropriate and might not even be understood as humor.

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The lesson for business visual communication is to avoid or carefully dose humor, as it can cause ambiguity, misunderstandings or even offense (Barnard, 1995).

5. *Visual metaphors* offer a valuable support for communicating in different cultures, thanks to their unique ability to convey meaning by providing "the path from the understanding of something familiar to something new by carrying elements of understanding from the mastered subject to a new domain" (Eppler & Burkhard, 2005, p. 5). However metaphors fulfill their function only if they can be understood cross-culturally (Hogan 2007). Although visual metaphors of natural scenes and phenomena (i.e. mountain, weather, tree, etc.) may well be applied in different countries, metaphors of concepts and man-made objects may at times be more problematic. The metaphor of war for strategy communication described at the beginning of the chapter is so widespread in the United States, that it is almost a convention to speak about strategy in military terms but it may seem too aggressive and inappropriate in more peaceful cultures (Beamer & Varner, 2008, p. 85). Sports metaphor may be helpful to convey a team spirit and team strategy; however only a handful of sports are well known globally (Beamer & Varner, 2008) and they may appeal more to men than to women (Hogan, 2007). For instance, most people from non English speaking countries may not be familiar with baseball and cricket. The well known concept of the iceberg (as in the "tip of the iceberg") is strongly cultural as it has been made popular in the Western world by Freud's iceberg model. The metaphor itself is not transparent and may not be readily understood by all cultures without explicit explanation (Barnard, 1995). Similarly, the meaning of "bottom line" is a product of American culture and is not understood and possibly cannot even be translated in most languages. The idea of the "Trojan horse," heredity of Greek history, cannot be expected to be well known outside of Europe. Another visual "false friend" is the concept of a dog; although in Western countries dogs have a positive connotation such as loyalty and obedience, for Muslims dogs carry mainly negative associations (i.e., they are considered dirty animals). Similarly, the St. Bernard dog is only known in Europe and a handful of other countries as a rescue dog that is employed to save human lives (Hogan, 2007) and it cannot be expected

that the metaphor is understood in Asia or Africa. Heaven and hell are as well a product of culture and tradition which finds its origin in Christianity. It is therefore not a suitable metaphor to be used in countries where there are other dominant religions. Finally, metaphors developed in Asia may not be successfully employed in Western countries without explanation. For instance, the idea of Mandala (Dellios, 1997) is well known across Asia but it is typically unfamiliar to Westerners. It symbolizes a harmonic integration, unity without defeating the individual parts. The use of colorful powder for the creation of a Mandala can also be seen as symbolizing fragility and impermanence. Another "Asian" metaphor is reported by Hogan (Hogan, 2007, p. 116) - "Sangam signifies the meeting point of different rivers coming from diverse sources […] whilst you can still see each river with its own separate identity, at the same time you experience the dramatic impact as the rivers flow together and see the strength that is generated in the confluence, that togetherness, as the rivers merge and join the ocean (Chakrabarti, 2005, p. 5)."

The aim here is not to provide a comprehensive list of metaphors but rather to sensitize the reader to their use in cross-cultural context. Metaphors of the natural environment are among the safest to be used in diverse countries. On the contrary, religious and war related metaphors should be avoided. When possible, the meaning of the metaphor should be checked with locals to ensure that it does not carry unwanted meanings and that it is self-explanatory.

The deepest differences in the interpretation of visualization artifacts are not at perceptual level but are rooted in the difference in reasoning patterns, mainly between East Asia and the Western world. Segall at al. (1966) and more recently Nisbett and colleagues (Chua et al., 2005; Nisbett, 2005; Masuda & Nisbett, 2006) found evidence that "perceptual processes are influenced by culture. Westerners tend to engage in context-independent and analytic perceptual processes by focusing on a salient object independently of its context, whereas Asians tend to engage in context dependent and holistic perceptual processes by attending to the relationship between the object and the context in which the object is located" (Nisbett & Miyamoto, 2005). *Differences in perception are the effect of dissimilar*

thought patterns of Asia and Western countries which are tracked back to the argumentative tradition of Confucius and the Ancient Greeks respectively. The consequences for visualization are identified at two related levels, focus of attention and analytic versus holistic type of thinking.

6. Following Nisbett's argumentation and findings, Westerners are more inclined to *focus*, pay attention and remember the central elements in an image whereas East Asians focus equally on the background area. This preference of focus on the background or on the foreground is also known as field dependence-independence, a concept developed by Witkin and Berry (1975). Cross-cultural studies relate this factor to social conformity in the society (Smith & Bond, 1993). Collectivistic societies (like most of Asia) are found to focus typically more on the background with respect to individualistic societies (like Western countries). "With a degree of regularity, the results of these studies are consistent with the starting hypothesis relating field dependence-independence and restructuring ability to extent of stress on social conformity in the society" (Witkin & Berry, 1975, p. 89). Different researchers have investigated if this difference in attention and recall are due to actually looking at different items; they analyzed the eye movements of East Asians and Westerners and arrived to the same findings, that the focus of attention is broader for Asians as they actually look more at background elements (Chua et al., 2005; Raynera et al., 2007). Research on change blindness provides similar findings with Americans detecting a greater number of changes in the central objects while Japanese in the background and in the relationships between objects. These findings unveil substantial different styles of attending information (Masuda & Nisbett, 2006).

The implications of these findings are relevant for organizational communication. If the same business visualization or diagram is used, Asians and Westerners will nevertheless look primarily at different items in the same visualization. In general, Asians pay attention to the background while Westerners do not. Therefore important information should not be placed on the background when communicating in Western countries because it will probably be overlooked. Conversely, when placing items in

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the background of a diagram, Westerners may imply that they are less relevant while Asians will pay equal attention to the background as to the foreground objects.

7. A second major difference identified by Nisbett is related to the ***nature of thought.*** Westerners favor an abstract and analytic type of reasoning based on rules and categorization, while East Asians are more inclined to a holistic view of the world to focus on relationships and similarities (Nisbett & Miyamoto, 2005). These differences are argued to be the consequence of the influence of prominent philosophers in Ancient Greece and China over 2500 years ago. Ancient Greeks emphasized freedom and individuality and viewed argumentation and criticism of others' point of view as a way to advance knowledge. Chinese were concerned primarily with social harmony and therefore public criticism and disagreement were discouraged. Edward T. Hall (1976) defines Western countries as "low-context" cultures and Asians (among others) as "high-context" societies to express the difference in social ties and self-understanding. This concept is related to Hofstede's Individualism cultural dimension (Hofstede, 2001). Secondly, in China abstraction was discouraged and elements had to be seen in their context; typically stories were used to convey messages and pragmatic solutions were developed ad hoc for each specific problem. The Greeks on the other hand, engaged in theory, investigation, and formal logic while focusing on abstracting and categorizing the world. The consequences are reflected still nowadays by how Europeans compared to Asians make sense of the world and draw causal inferences. Westerners often overlook the influence of context and are interested in generalization, while Asians typically consider the broad context of each object and are comfortable with contradictory propositions. Trompenaars labels this aspect as "specific" versus "diffuse" culture. "People from specific cultures start with the elements, the specifics. First, they analyze them separately and then they put them back together again." "People from diffusely oriented cultures start with the whole and see each element in perspective of the total. All elements are related to each other" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

When communicating with visuals across cultures, one should take into consideration these fundamental differences in these modes of thought. While Westerners are inclined to seek abstractions and categorizations in formal diagrams, Asians prefer to have more contextual elements and emphasize relationships such as by emphasizing links between items in a visualization. Linear and abstract diagrams should be favored by Americans and Europeans (i.e. flowchart and timeline) while Asians might prefer relationship diagrams and radial maps (i.e. causal loop and mind map) and visual metaphors that convey relationships and associations of meanings. Utilizing a diagram that is not culturally appropriate can eliminate the advantages of visual communication and even lead to a negative effect if it interferes with the existent mental model of the reader (Schnotz & Kurschner, 2008).

This section has provided a description of seven crucial factors that have to be addressed for "glocalizing" visual communication in organizations. An overview of theoretical motivations and their respective practical implications of differences in the reception of visual communications across cultures have been offered. The following final part provides a summary of guidelines that emerged from the above factors as well as some concluding remarks.

3. Guidelines and conclusion

The seven main factors influencing the effectiveness of visualization in intercultural contexts can be used as a framework for evaluating, choosing and modifying business visualizations that are aimed to be used globally. Insights from the theoretical motivations and practical implications exposed above are relevant for visualization and presentation developers and can be used as a checklist against which to evaluate business graphs suitable for multi-cultural settings.

The following table (Tab. 1) summarizes the key practical insights for each factor:

Factor	Guidelines
1. Color	Blue is the safest business color.
	Red has opposite meaning in China and Western countries; if used, its meaning should be made explicit.
2. Direction	Conventionally left to right but the contrary in Arabic; order should be reversed when addressing Arabic cultures.
3. Humor	Should be avoided or used with great caution.
4. Signs and symbols	Need to be localized (for example using the symbol of chopsticks instead of fork and knife in East Asia).
5. Visual metaphors	Metaphor of war, sports not well known and religion should be avoided. Suitable metaphors are for instance - mountain, weather, garden, bridge.
6. Focus	Be aware that objects in a background area of a picture receive equal attention as objects in the foreground by Asians (attributing the same relevance) but are likely to be ignored by Westerners.
7. Analytic - holistic nature of thought	Westerners prefer abstract and analytic diagrams, while East Asians prefer visualizations that show relationships and context.

The function of the factors' description and consequent guidelines is to provide a general overview of the main issues in visual business communication. Nevertheless, generalizations about cultures always fall in the danger of oversimplification. The concept of "Asian" itself encompasses an enormous variety of cultures, from the Middle East to India and China with immensely different traditions, history and educational systems. Therefore, the insights and guidelines provided here should be complemented with specific knowledge on the target cultures and possibly a pre-check of the visualization with locals.

This chapter has addressed the use of visualization in business contexts for communicating and collaborating across cultures. The power of visualization to efficiently convey meaning, facilitate understanding, enhance recall and provide engagement can be exploited in a global context. However visualizations need to be adapted to local cultures. As ambiguity and misunderstanding may arise from different interpretations of a diagram, we have introduced a framework of seven major factors that should be considered when producing or evaluating business diagrams and visual metaphors for international use. This seems a prominent topic in the globalized economy where a large and growing number of companies are operating internationally and at multinational levels, and they need to communicate effectively in a variety of cultures. Visualization can offer great support in global communication for its intrinsic ability to cut across cultures. Its efficacy, however, can only be fully exploited through careful adaptation to the local context.

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Generation Y and "glocal" working

Lorenzo Cantoni, Emanuele Rapetti, Stefano Tardini

1. Introduction

The issue of *Generation Y* (shortly, "GenY") and *Digital learners* seems to be particularly relevant when reflecting on glocal working. On one side, the label itself of GenY has become a global one and the same can be said about a publication trend aiming at studying it and suggesting how to teach and manage people belonging to it. In December 2009, the query "Generation Y" on the online bookshop Amazon was eliciting a list of 72 books including the keywords in their title (+ 29 adding "Gen Y) and 3,010 books mentioning it somehow. On the other side, the awareness that this label is quite undefined and needs to be better focused keeping into consideration different local contexts is growing and scholars have started to challenge this lucky concept showing its shortcomings; it is quite generic, if not north America centered and at the same time trying to substantiate it with more evidence-based characteristics which inevitably calls for local research activities.

Once tested in local contexts, the global concept will partially prove its validity, becoming more rich and complex, leaving its simplistic nature, while at the same time becoming more useful when it comes to design and implement training and management projects. Reaching both global and local poles, it becomes a practical tool to be included in the toolbox of HR, knowledge and learning managers.

The chapter is organized in two parts - the first one introduces the debate about Generation Y, presenting different perspectives on the issue as well as the critical voices; the second one presents the results of a research conducted in Ticino (Switzerland) studying how GenY people use information and communication technologies at work and at home with a special focus on their learning practices.

2. The debate on Gen Y

This paragraph intends to present the controversial debate about so-called "generation Y" which can be summarized in the following question - *is it true that young people think and learn in a different way because of the widespread diffusion of new technologies in everyday life?*

In order to present the debate and its relevance for education and training, the paragraph will be divided into five sections: an introduction about this fortunate label, the presentation of three main perspectives on the topic, a general overview about characteristics expected from Gen Y people, a reference to the most important critical voices and, finally, a proposal to overcome the weaknesses outlined by the debate.

2.1 The history of a fortunate label

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are permeating more and more into our everyday life experience and, as a consequence, learning processes are being somehow changed as well.

However, this intuition needs to be defined and refined; this is an arduous goal, also because of the lack of an anthropological-philosophical vision able to tell us synthetically as to who is the contemporary man, particularly when learning.

The sociological tradition can help in taking a picture of the social condition of learners; Baumann's statements about the liquidity of contemporary Western society (Baumann, 2000) can serve as a useful paradigm to interpret its 'complexity,' also when it affects teaching and learning dynamics and the phenomenon of technology adoption.

Also, communication studies can give important pieces of knowledge; well-known Watzlawick's slogan "One cannot not communicate"

(Watzlawick, 1967) can be upgraded to today's condition of (pretending) every time, everywhere, to everyone communication. In so-called Knowledge Society, the widespread presence of media is continuously impacting our lives and as a consequence, our learning experiences that were born and are growing up in this environment are likely to develop learning abilities related to ICTs.

Following this path, the idea that people who learn in a digital era are "digital learners" was born and it has grown around two main concept-labels:

- "Digital natives," focused on the presence of 'digital' technologies in our everyday life;
- "Generation Y" (and similar, as it will be shown in the next paragraph), based on the intuition of 'generation' gaps.

2.2 The main perspectives, different labels and three possible families of concepts

Digital natives/generation Y people are expected to owe a peculiar "technological potential" or "media ability;" as a consequence, the education/vocational training provided to them is supposed to pass necessarily through the new technologies.

The discourse about contemporary learners had an increasing growth over the last decade and many labels have been invented, all of them turning (explicitly or implicitly) about the idea of a digitalized/ technologized generation. The most diffused labels are - Net generation, Millennials, New Millennium Learners, Screen Generation, Digital Learners, Echo Boomers, Net-agers, The Next Great Generation, Generation @, etc.

These labels can be organized into three families (Rapetti, Cantoni & Misic, 2009).

a. The historic-sociological approach

The concept of "generation Y" (or "millennials") is a stratagem devised by two American consultants William Howe and Neil Strauss to define people born after 1980. Coming after the "generation X" (also known as "MTV generation"), the "Y" persons would be characterized by being grown up with ICTs and by behaving like their grandparents, who were supposed to be conformist, respectful of family and work and goal-oriented.

In a famous book published in 1991 – *Generations: the history of America's future*, *1584 to 2069* – the authors provided an interesting and charming explication of US history. They divided the chosen period into centuries and each century into four generations. Each of them has a main peculiar feature which recurs every four generations in an endless cycle. The four generations are the "civics," the "adaptives," the "idealists" and the "reactives." Gen Y people are expected to be "civics." Later on, Strauss & Howe went in depth about the Gen Y characteristics, adopting also the "Millennials" label (Strauss, W. & Howe, N. 2000).

The main weakness of this kind of analysis stems from the adopted perspective. This approach can be interesting to observe and describe long-term phenomena but it risks a failure when related to peculiar contexts. Moreover, they have a US-centric approach which cannot be transposed *talis qualis* to other countries because of the different and peculiar national significant events. Finally, as noticed by Schulmeister (2008b), "The notion of generation is available as a working hypothesis both in the fields of social sciences and history. But it does not have the same meaning there that it has achieved in the thesis describing the net generation. Multivariate analyses of the use of media always arrive at different contours of the users and describe their diversity rather than their unity."

b. The socio-cognitive approach (and the neurological hypothesis)

In 2001, Marc Prensky, a videogame consultant and sociologist, coined the term "digital natives," pointing out two pieces of evidence - US children were growing up in a world full of ICTs, especially videogames, and using

them they were learning informally. Young people were experiencing learning practices in a different way than their parents and this fact was creating, according to Prensky, a gap between "digital natives" and "digital immigrants."

Digital natives have been using TV with remote controls since they were babies. They saw a personal computer at home when they were 10 years old and when they were teenagers, they got a cell phone. Moreover, they started to use computers in schools, thus becoming skilled in surfing the internet. When they arrived at the university, eLearning was booming and they experienced it. Finally, they are now entering workplaces that are fully equipped with ICTs.

According to Prensky, digital natives have developed a different way to think and learn just because the new technologies permeated their lives. Moreover, Prensky also claims that digital natives use the brain differently, developing new neural paths.

The debate started by the author has a great merit; it pointed out the crucial relevance of new media in learning experiences, thus allowing studies on education to embrace contributions in the fields of learning-by-playing, collaborative learning, indirect learning and all similar informal ways of learning.

However, even if the hypothesis is attractive, its limits are to be underlined. In fact, no neuroscience study has supported the hypothesis of new neural paths and also in this case the discourse seems to take into account only the North-Western world.

Other authors are following Prensky's steps. Beck & Wade, for instance, claim that skills achieved in playing videogames have an impact on workplace attitudes, because "gamers" are more effective, more competitive and more loyal to the authority than "non-gamers" (Beck & Wade 2006). Again, Palfrey & Gasser have presented some stories about "digital natives" drawing some generational characteristics (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008).

c. *The socio-pedagogical approach*

In the middle of this decade another interesting label arose, namely "net generation," which seems to merge the concepts expressed in the terms "generation Y" and "digital natives." This new approach emerged in the pedagogical field as an attempt to answer the question - how does this new generation learn? How should it be taught?
The label "net generation" was coined by Oblinger & Oblinger in their seminal book (and annex website) *Educating the Net Generation,* promoted by EDUCAUSE (Oblinger & Oblinger 2005). After them, other authors have addressed directly the problem of the gap between teachers and "new" students, such as Pletka, who provided a qualitative approach (Pletka, 2007) and Junco & Mastrodicasa who offered the same perspective substantiated by quantitative data about North-American students (Junco & Mastrodicasa, 2007).

The "net generation" approach has the merit of addressing the issue of new didactic strategies needed in order to face a generation of students grown up in a digital learning context.

However, in this case also, the approach has some drawbacks. It has promoted hundreds of publications claiming to teach "how to teach Gen Y people" offering a sort of simple and universal recipe books based on very few observations and simple intuitions; in this case also, we can see a US-centric approach.

A parallel research but addressed to the European context has been promoted by the OECD-CERI through the project "New Millennium Learner" (Pedrò, 2006). This research was trying to observe the issue in different European contexts, enlarging the mainly US-based observations done in the previous studies.

2.3 General overview about characteristics of Gen Y

In this section a general overview about the main characteristics attributed to Gen Y people will be provided.

Because of their condition of "digital natives," Gen Y people are expected to own a peculiar "technological potential" or "media ability" and the education/vocational training processes are supposed to pass necessarily through the new technologies. These expectations become even stronger in the work field (Quaglino, 2009); expectations concerning skills in managing knowledge, behaviors, team abilities, communication competence and so on. Therefore, to consider a young employee as a "digital native" means in a way to expect him/her to be able to manage the "technological potential" without weaknesses.

Moreover, the abovementioned studies and approaches also try to explain the social, cultural, educative and cognitive characteristics of "generation Y" people. By the way, those conceptions are deeply permeating the HR magazines also. (See: for instance, Erickson, 2009).

Howe & Strauss, reflecting on the historic-socio-cultural events affecting Gen Y, identified seven "Distinguishing Traits" of Gen Y (see also: Wilson & Gerber, 2008, pp. 30-33) which are presented and synthetically explained. According to them (Howe & Strauss, 2000), Gen Y people are:

- Special - they feel this way because of the big economic and educative attention their parents have devoted to them;
- Sheltered - never before children received so much protection, in healthcare as well as in social experiences;
- Confident - they trust the authority, because parents and educators gave them a lot of attention and care;
- Conventional - in opposition with Gen X, they prefer to respect rules of conduct, proper dress and social authority and not to take risks;
- Team-oriented - because of the experience in school and the opportunities given by the web 2.0;
- Achieving - on average, they score much better than even before; and
- Pressured - they have been spoiled and cuddled to reach the top, now they feel it is time to give back something.

Junco & Mastrodicasa (2007, 138-144) highlight four educative-cognitive characteristics of Gen Y people, which are supposed to be:

- driven to success - goal-oriented, they want high-rates and prefer to get the best mark instead of criticizing a teacher;
- social - they love to interact in learning; fewer lectures and more discussions;
- experiential learners - by learning with PCs, they developed the trial-and-error way of thinking, dislike instructional manuals and like to gather information surfing freely on the internet;
- multi-tasking - because of the "development of their learning processes using such technologies, they developed cognitive processing styles that can be described as 'hypertext' in nature."

With regard to the learning preferences of digital native learners, it is also worth mentioning the study by Jukes & Dosaj (2003), who pointed out that Gen Y people:

- "prefer receiving information quickly from multiple multimedia sources,
- prefer parallel processing and multitasking,
- prefer processing picture, sounds and video before text,
- prefer random access to hyperlinked multimedia information,
- prefer to learn just-in-time,
- prefer instant gratification and instant rewards,
- prefer learning that is relevant, instantly useful and fun."

On the contrary, their digital immigrants' teachers and trainers are supposed to be used to providing them with learning experiences based on the opposite feelings, thus enlarging the generation gap.

2.4 Critical voices

In the last years a growing skepticism about this debate has arisen, pointing out that it risks to offer a simplistic picture about education and vocational training today, suggesting the idea that it is sufficient to provide a digital training – whatever this may mean – for the digital generation in order to achieve a customized and efficient learning experience.

In this paragraph, we present two voices which have pointed out some inconsistencies and contradictions in the approaches presented so far, that of Bennet, Maton & Kervin (2008) with their *The 'digital natives' debate: a critical review of the evidence* and that of Schulmeister, author of *Is There a Net Gener in the House? Dispelling a Mystification* (2008b); this work refers to a bigger work in German - *Gibt es eine "Net Generation?,"* (2008a) constantly updated by the author.

According to these authors, it is not possible to affirm the existence of a "monolithic" net generation or generation Y. The criticisms put forward by these authors focus mainly on two points - the existence of a media skill and the "moral panic" effect.

One of the most controversial topics about Gen Y is the assumption that they would manage better skills related to the "digital" than previous generations. This claim, even if it might seem convincing, presents some problems. Sub-generational differences also play an important role (being 17 or 27 does not seem to be the same, for instance, when it is a question of mastering new portable devices) and it is not clear whether media skills expected from Gen Y people do refer more to a technical ability or to a cognitive attitude. Finally, how can these skills be observed/evaluated/compared, when referring to different countries, contexts or learning cultures? In his review of the studies on this issue, Schulmeister (2008b) concludes that a media competence exists only if related to the peculiar ability of *information gathering*, but nothing else.

Bennett, Maton & Kervin (2008) describe Prensky's hypothesis using Cohen's notion of "moral panic." In this case, moral panic would work as a kind of surrender due to a lack of understanding of new learners' characteristics and may constitute an *alibi* to justify teachers' failures. New learners are intrinsically different and teachers cannot teach them; like native and immigrants in a country, they will never become the same. If this is the pessimistic consequence of the moral panic, the same simplistic approach may also support its optimistic counterpart. The only difference to be taken into consideration is the use of ICTs; so education and training will be saved just by implementing digital technologies (Rapetti & Cantoni, 2009)...

To conclude, it seems that "the time has come for a considered and disinterested examination of the assumption underpinning claims about digital natives" (Bennett, Maton & Kervin, 2008, p. 781).

2.5 Looking for empirical evidence

As it has been shown, critical voices call for empirical evidence about Gen Y and suggest avoiding unnecessary generalizations. However, it is a matter of fact that the problem exists, as we can also experience it in our everyday life. What can be done with young people who enter today into the job market? Since they have grown up with ICTs, an adequate didactical strategy is needed to teach them how to work, staying connected to the digital mood.

Therefore, adopting an open-ended perspective has to be the main objective of educators; a contextual vision of training and a contextualized observation of reality (Crozier & Friedberg, 2004). In other words, as it is important to recognize the urgency of ICTs in learning experiences as a global phenomenon in order to adopt a customized and up-to-date didactic, it is strongly needed to respect the real – "local" – skills, habits and behaviors of learning people without blindly expecting them to behave "digitally." Again, as it has been shown by diffusion theories, it is difficult to exactly forecast social behaviors and cultural meanings (Rogers, 2003).

Surely, it can be observed how a technology is being adapted in certain local situations comparing it with global trends, but it would be quite naïf to expect exactly those trends in any context or, even worst, to adopt identical strategies without a careful consideration of local peculiarities.

This suggests that deep local studies should be run, without aiming at global results. In the next paragraph, a local research conducted in the Italian speaking part of Switzerland will be presented, aiming at a better understanding of local realities rather than of global mythologies.

3. The research "GenY @ work"

In 2009, the NewMinE Lab (New Media in Education Laboratory, www.newmine.org) of the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI, Lugano, Switzerland) has conducted a research with six companies located in Ticino, an Italian speaking region of Switzerland.

Goal of the research was to understand what kind of ICTs the young employees of these companies, i.e. the workers belonging to GenY use, for what purposes they are using them and what ICT they are using for learning activities.

To conduct the research, an online questionnaire was designed. It aimed at understanding the GenY workers' attitudes to the use of ICT in learning experiences. It was divided into 11 sections:

- Personal data (age, sex)
- Owned digital technologies
- Access to the internet
- Most used applications
- Online activities
- Most used social networking / social sharing applications
- Use of ICTs at home and at work
- Perception of a generation gap in the use of ICTs
- Learning in the Knowledge Society

- Most used digital technologies
- Self perception in using ICTs

The research was complemented by a projective methodology based on the use of Lego(Gauntlett, 2007; Rapetti et alii, 2009) bricks, used in groups of 5 to 8 young employees, aimed at understanding the "technological potential" of GenY employees. In some companies, another activity has also been proposed, namely a blog where participants were asked to post at least one short message per week about their daily use of ICTs (in one company, the same activity has been done by means of e-mail messages).

Main findings of the research

Six companies took part in the research - three banks, a consulting company, a provider of industrial gas turbines and a local newspaper. All these companies collaborate with the Network USImpresa and are either based in Ticino or have there a local branch.

236 employees altogether have been involved in the research belonging to GenY (born after 1980), 127 male (53.8%) and 109 female (46.2%). The average age of the participants was 23.3.

With regard to the owned digital technologies (Fig. 1), the most diffused are digital photo cameras (85.9%) and printers (84.2%), followed by iPod (or other mp3 readers – 79.5%) and PCs (71.4%). The less diffused are video cameras (29.9%), netbooks (11.5%), palmtops (8.5%) and graphic tablets (0.4%).
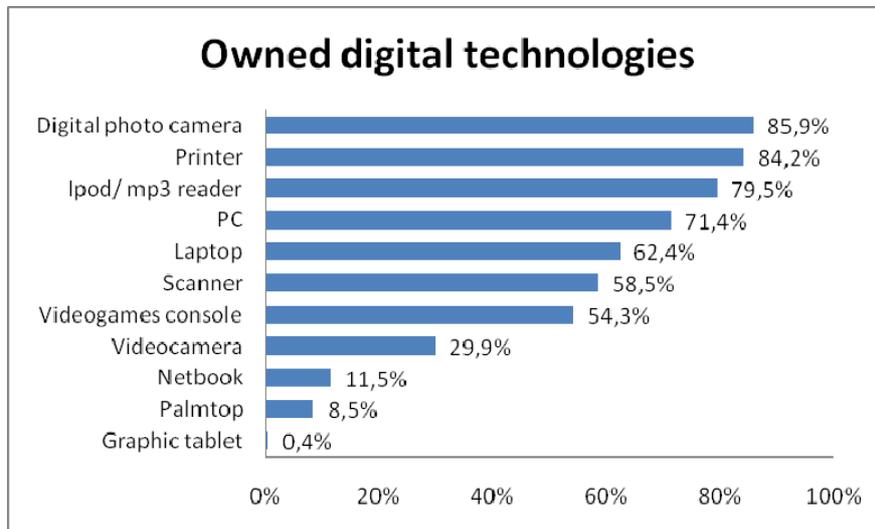
Figure 1. Digital technologies owned by Ticino GenY workers who took part in the survey.

The internet is accessed at work mostly for very short periods (48.9% for less than 30 minutes per day), while from home for longer periods (66.8% access the internet from home from 30 minutes to 3 hours per day). Only few participants use mobile devices to access the internet (15.8%).

The most used applications are those included in MS Office or similar; text editors (99.1%), spreadsheets (97.9%), presentation editors (97.9%) and databases (83.4%). The less used are more specialized applications, such as HTML editors (18.7%), video editors (10.6%), mind mapping software (8.5%) and 3D modeling software (6.8%).

The most frequent online activities are watching video or listening to audio (76.5% of respondents do it at least once per week), downloading images (58.5%), text documents (53.4%) and music (47.4%). Social networking is not yet so frequent; 43.6% of respondents update their profile on social networking sites at least once per week. The less frequent activities are subscribing or reading RSS feeds (25.2%), selling online (26.1%) and downloading podcasts (34.6%).

Among the social networking and social sharing online applications, the most used are instant messaging systems, social networking sites, video sharing services and wiki. It is worth noticing that both blogging and micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter) have still a rather low diffusion (11.5% and 0.4% respectively).

As regards how ICTs are used at home and at work (Fig. 2 and 3), it is interesting to notice that while 30% of participants do not use ICTs at home to perform work tasks, 21.9% of them use "very much" or "pretty much" ICTs at home for this purpose. While for most online activities there is no significant difference in the use of ICTs at home or at work, for some of them there are remarkable differences. For instance, to collaborate, ICTs are used much more at work (72.1% use them "very much" or "pretty much") than at home (38.7%); also for learning activities, ICTs are used more at work (82.9%) than at home (73.8%). On the contrary, downloading is an activity that is performed much more from home (64% of participants do it "very much" or "pretty much" from home) than at work (15.9%); the same holds true for online shopping (25.3% do it "very much" or "pretty much" from home vs. 4.8% at work) and online booking (33% at home vs. 9% at work). Significantly, most respondents affirm that they have never used ICTs for downloading, shopping or booking at work (60.9%, 80.3% and 62.7% respectively).

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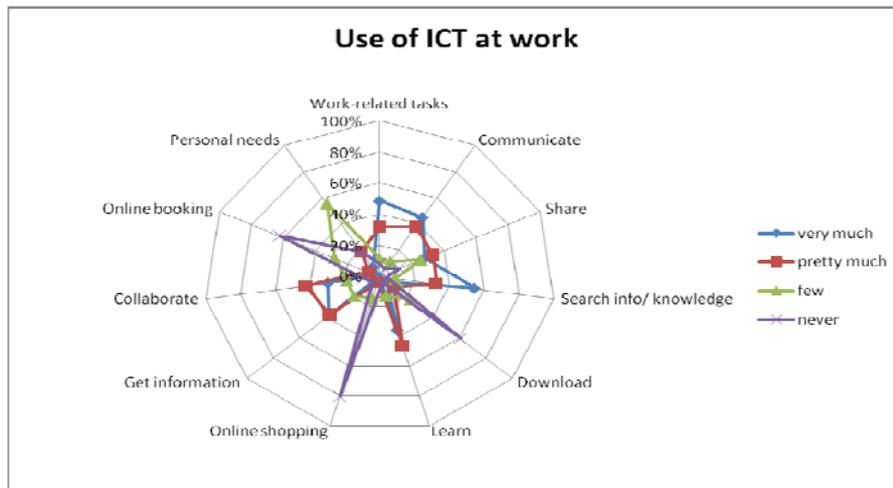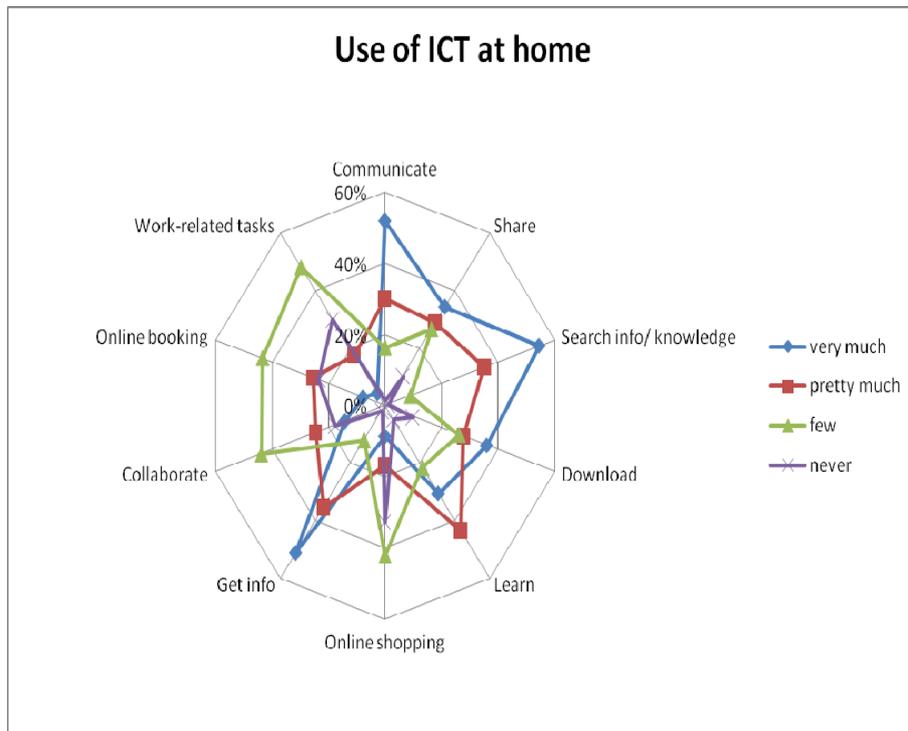
Figures 2-3. Use of ICT at work and at home by Ticino GenY workers who took part in the survey.

Participants perceive that there exists a generation gap in the use of ICTs. The activities where this gap is perceived as wider are searching information online and downloading materials (for both activities more than 50% of respondents see a generation gap).

When asked how much they learn in different assets or through different supports (Fig. 4), participants have expressed their preferences for search engines (53.6% said they learn a lot through them), classroom teaching (52.8%) and self study (42.9%). Interestingly, social networking is not perceived as a useful tool for learning; only 7.3% said they learn a lot through them, 75.5% said they learn a few.
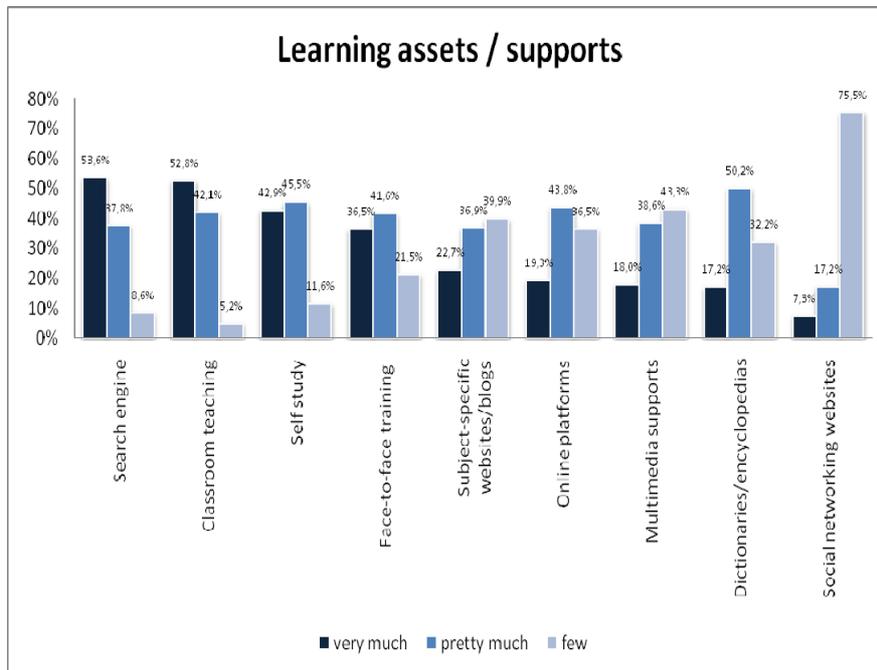
Figure 4. Learning assets / supports preferred by Ticino GenY workers who took part in the survey.

The three technologies most used at work are printers, PCs and scanners; the most used at home are mobile phones, cameras, laptops and PCs.

Participants do not perceive to have any problems when dealing with a new technology, appreciate mobile devices because they help in becoming more reachable and feel to perform more thanks to digital technologies. Only few of them (9.9%) think not to be that able to manage new technologies and only one respondent affirms to be annoyed by technologies and to use them only because s/he must. According to the answers, the way participants work and the way they learn have been dramatically improved thanks to ICTs and also the way they collaborate with peers, have relationships with friends and relatives, exchange ideas and work have been improved "pretty much." Most of the respondents (69.5%) affirm that information overload is not a problem for them since they like to have lots of information available and think to be able to adequately manage them.

Some differences emerge when considering the single companies which

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may depend in part on the different application domain of the company, and as a consequence, on their different "working cultures":

- Generally speaking, the GenY employees of the newspaper seem to have a higher "technological potential" than their colleagues. For instance, they access the internet at work for long periods (44.4% of them for more than 3 hours, while the general percentage is 18.3%); all of them use ICTs at home to perform work-related tasks; all of them have used ICTs both at home and at work to buy online.
- In the gas turbines company where ICT skills are not the core skills, the perception of the generation gap in using ICTs is lower than in the other companies. For most of the activities proposed, the participants who do not note generational differences in using ICTs are more than those who note them.
- In the consulting company, a broader gap between ICTs used in private life and those used at work emerges. More than 40% of respondents never use ICTs at home for work-related purposes. Furthermore in the Lego session, "relaxing" emerged as the main feature of the GenY employees' technological experience at home and Facebook as the most favorite ICT.
- As regards the three banks, some common features emerge; the technological potential of their GenY employees is high but seems to be unbalanced more towards their private life than their professional activities. A link between the two worlds is represented by mobile devices (in particular, iPods and mobile phones). An interesting peculiarity which emerged from the research is that the young employees of one of the banks are not in favor of an informal sharing of professional knowledge/information.

To sum up, some general findings can be stressed:

- GenY workers in Ticino have a rather high technological potential as it could be expected from young workers living in the Knowledge Society.

- They perceive a gap in using ICTs, clearly separating ICTs used at work from those used at home for leisure.
- Thinking of their older colleagues, they see a generation gap in using ICTs, in particular when they are used for searching information and for downloading materials.
- When it comes to learning, young workers put in the first position search engines – hence something connected with ICTs. But the next elements in their ranking are classrooms and self-study.
- Finally, some differences in young employees' use of ICTs that are company-specific can be singled out.

Concluding remarks: GenY between globalization and localization

The story of "Generation Y" and of so many other similar labels do teach us how risky it is, every over-generalization, and at the same time it calls for a deeper consideration of local processes which belong to global ones but keep at the same time their peculiarities and differences. A careful analysis of specific contexts may help in avoiding naïve approaches and prêt-a-porter solutions, at the same time supporting adequate interventions.

When it comes to education and training, in particular, the role of ICTs and their advantages and limits, has to be studied and interpreted in a continuous process in order to adapt every intervention to the actual local situation.

We are facing, and more than that, directly experiencing an important stage in the history of media and human communication technologies, in which ICTs have entered the media territory and struggle to define their boundaries. It is not as someone may be tempted to imagine, a simplistic Darwinian "live or die" situation. Here, like in every complex ecological system, all players are adapting to the new situation, gaining and loosing part of their territory in an equilibrium which is always dynamic and unstable but at the same time somehow *sustainable*. It is not an *aut-aut* situation – global trends vs. local niches, ICTs global distribution vs. their

local adoption, but an and-and one. Both poles are to be considered and harmonized. Gen Y learners do prefer to use Google to get a new piece of information and *at the same time* they prefer to be taught in a classroom *and* to be given printed reference materials.

Like in a sound and healthy alimentation, the availability of new foods should call for an enriched diet. It should not mean an impoverished one…

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Drumstorming music: a percussion and training experience based method

Vittorio Simonelli

What is it?

Drumstorming, in its most basic form, finds a common thread through the use of orchestral metaphors. It focuses on aspects linked to productive attitudes for team work, emotional agreement, interpersonal harmony, listening capabilities, and all other aspects which characterize the sharing of workplace processes.

Compared to other "narrated" metaphors, *Drumstorming* represents an "experienced" one in that it is characterized by one fundamental rule: *"there aren't any spectators -- just active participators."*

With an effect of absolute surprise, the participants find themselves directly living the experience of a musical performance as a representation of integration between various workplace roles. This occurs even if the participants start out with having nearly non-existent capabilities in this field.

With the help of percussion instruments (each participant is given a professional grade drum) and under the guide of a team of musicians/trainers, it's possible to create a real *band* that is able to play rhythms with great dynamic intensity.

The phenomenon intends to show, in an emotional and mean fully experienced way, the importance of an individual's contribution and of his/her harmony with the rest of the organization.

The division of the group by instrumental sections and their final integration constitutes a real metaphor for expressing the classical evolutionary phases of organizational integration:

Quality of the individual performance

+

Relationship between the individuals who play the same instrument
(= the same corporate role)

+

Harmony and integration amongst the different musical sections
(= different roles)

From the spoken metaphor to the experienced one

Individual and role integration was where the idea for *Drumstorming*® came about. It is the most natural and immediate starting point, seeing as the construction of an orchestral model permits one to create sections divided into different instruments and sounds that come together to form a common project, playing a specific and rhythmic musical theme.

By the first half of the '90s the metaphor of the orchestra was quickly becoming an analogy for the workplace rich in resources. The link between the analogy of the symphonic orchestra and the functional phases of organizational development is quite evident. Also included within the metaphor of the workplace is the sharing of time, listening, the relationship between specialists and general employees, creative processes, teams with different roles amongst themselves (compared to a jazz band), set methods and improvisation.

Up until then such experiences were only "narrated" or recounted. Since 1994, the Italian *Drumstorming* team, among the first in the world, has been turning it into a "lived" experience in training courses and large events.

What kind of orchestra is it?

The main objective is always to let every "musician" have a moment in the spotlight for a moment, a difficult task when working with big groups of participants.

However, there is no alternative: only a rhythmic orchestra made of percussion instruments can be a solution. Seeing as the basics of percussion are relatively easy to pick up in a short amount of time, it permits the application of a cardinal rule: *"don't learn it, just do it."*

Smitten by the visual splendours of the Brazilian *Carnival* in Rio, we find that rhythmic Afro-Brazilian music, especially the *Samba* and sometimes *Sambareggae*, is great for *Drumstorming*.

The musical model of the *Bateria di Samba* was right away a more than helpful aid, perfectly sticking to the metaphor: it can be performed in either small or large groups, it is divided in sections by each musical instrument, every musician must know all the others' parts, it's precise and yet flexible at the same time, it has the structure of a well-prepared project but it has moments in which players can improvise solos, it unites different abilities (sound, dance...), it gives an idea based on group-dynamics, and its leader is at the same time performer *and* guide.

The Method

The most important moment in every *Drumstorming* session has always been the beginning (whether it takes place at a training meet up or a large event) for two main reasons:

   1. We must avoid confusing the participants. With entertainment activities employed in a resort or touristy village, we use tools to make all participants think instinctively.

   2. We must guarantee total involvement but as for discipline at the same time.

In addition, we must not forget that often percussion –in an absolutely wrong way- is associated (in layman's terms) with free and instinctive creativity.

When I started to play this music, it was a real surprise to discover that it had its own musical "mathematics" just like any other, especially those genres seen as more "highbrow."

For our intents and purposes, seeing that we couldn't impose music theory on participants, "mathematics" means that the intervention (which today is carried out within groups of 10 to 1,000 participants) could not just be left to the whims and talents of *leaders*.

Since the beginning it was clear – and this has been one of our keys to success- that this understanding, even from the very first moments of *Drumstorming,* must be a "method." Our method is progressive and allows space for freedom of expression, but is always carried out in monitored, interdependent phases.

Intended results

There is one result we expect above all: we guarantee a great, unique and unforgettable opportunity for sharing real group emotion. This is possible thanks to a host of factors:

- ➢ A language capable of touching emotional chords (in this respect, music has no rivals)
- ➢ Vibrations which leave a lasting trace in participants' memories (here percussion plays a great role)
- ➢ Progression and unexpected, but pleasantly surprising, levels of success
- ➢ The total sharing of the project (it has never been our aim to be physically selective of our participants; this permits us to involve those who have different abilities, even on an auditory level. As such, a high level of emotion and collective participation is guaranteed).

Shared emotions have always influenced our *debriefings* (we're even able to involve up to 200 participants at a time). Our *debriefings* focus heavily on emotions before arriving at any results, difficulties, analogies, differences and purposes in the application of the *Drumstorming*.

Applications

Drumstorming started by taking cues from individual and interfunctional integration. Integration is still the core subject of our trainings and makes up a large part of conventions and large events, at which music and rhythm can both emotionally and rationally accelerate a shift towards cooperation in the workplace.

Inevitably as we progress towards our 300th event, our methods have been enriched with different applications and have helped training processes in dealing with *coaching*, *leadership*, motivation, creativity, individuals and organizational changes, *team building* and *team working*.

At large events, beyond reinforcing the concept of a "team," *Drumstorming* constitutes an emotional support even in terms of partnerships within corporations made up of different workplace cultures.

As it is a rhythmic language (any music is), it is the most universal and everyone understands it. *Drumstorming* is often used in meetings and international conventions (where verbalization is concentrated solely on initial phases) in order to quickly leave space for non-verbal and auditory cues that leaders progressively share with the group.

Case history

An international company, leader in the development of solutions for food treatment, uses Drumstorming all around the world within a course for change management aimed at supporting an integrated system of World Class Manufacturing.

Such systems aim at realizing standards of perfection in terms of quality, safety, waste reduction, equipment efficiency, deadline-meeting and coaching of workplace teams.

The courses are geared towards members of their international and interfunctional committees. The committees have the role of directing and piloting change in various company locations all around the world.

The day dedicated to the theme of leadership, in an unexpected way (and at an unexpected hour- 8:15 a.m.), arrive two Drumstorming leaders, Vittorio Simonelli and Francesco Pitillo. The two bring with the participants (normally 25/30) a new experience in forming workplace groups. The group constructs a real rhythmic orchestra that in 90 minutes culminates in a musical performance that for all intents and purposes was absolutely unimaginable at the beginning of the session.

The process followed by the musical trainers was drawn out with the aim of guaranteeing –in collaboration with consultants who conduct the entire seminar- a debriefing that goes deeply through the topics of changing paradigms, roles integration, coaching.

The fact that everything the participants do is a result of an experience which requires active participation, and it is not the result of a theoretical lesson, makes the metaphor of the orchestra all the more appropriate in terms of real applications on the job (which participants must guide and direct).

The international and intercultural scope of the project has grown to become quite significant, allowing Drumstorming® experiences to be carried out, as an example, in the branches of Italy, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Ukraine, Russia, Singapore, Brazil, South Africa, China.

Drumstorming is a registered logo and methodology: Drumstorming® & LKN develop several "edutainment" solutions based on Drumstorming (photo taken by Fernando Salvetti)

What instruments and practices for the management of a multicultural staff?

Helena Karjaleinen

After the professionalisation of the management function of human resources (MHR), this last had to face many challenges: the slowing down of economic growth, technological mutations and intensity of the competition favoured by globalisation; and it must also face the juridic, technologic, economic, sociologic and psychologic environment. To reconcile these many needs, the MHR has given itself a corpus of knowledge, instruments and models of good practices that are applied to various management fields.

 Nowadays, faced with the internationalisation and the reapproaching of different cultures in the working places, a new challenge seems to force itself upon the management of businesses and the direction of human resources, to understand what are the strategies and management solutions suited to a multicultural environment and how to connect the interactions among cultures, cooperation and performance? What management instruments to get the maximum efficacy from staff made of different cultures? What role must be played first by the manager and then by the management of human resources in this process?

If we want to believe the writings on the management of cultural differences for the last thirty years, the cultural factor seems to be more a problem than an advantage in business. It is often at the origin of the difficulties, of the dysfunctions in organisations, including conflicts, or also some non-comprehensions and weak performances (Bivens & Lowell, 1966; Killing, 1983; Shenkar & Zeira, 1992). Therefore, after these considerations, other researchers praise the opposite, explaining that the influence of culture on performance and efficacy is connected to the duration of multicultural groups (Watson, Kumar, Michaelsen, 1993). According to T. Cox (1991), for example, the efficacy of a multicultural

organisation depends on individual factors (prejudices, stereotypes), on factors tied to groups and relations among groups (ethnocentrism, conflicts) and on factors that depend on the organisation (business culture, structural integration). Authors like I. Hayers e P. Kaur (1997), underline the importance of organisational apprenticeship that, according to them, must be the groundwork of the strategies that will allow a dynamic development of multicultural groups. For what concerns P. Dass e B. Parker (1999), the researchers point out that there is no outstanding solution for the management of diversity. It all depends on the organisational approach, on the degree of impact of the diversity in question and on the management attitude.

Some recent studies made at a European level show that the cultural factor can be an advantage in business if it is well managed (Chevrier, 2000; Bartel Radic, 2002; Barmeyer et Mayrhofer, 2002). It is in this acceptance of the meaning that this contribution tried to interest itself in the management practices that concern multicultural staff. To do this, we must advance the example of the Prometheus case, an international business present in about a hundred countries representing 123 nationalities that has been able to solve the problem of the management of staff made up of different cultures with policy and practices suited to the business environment. After the conceptual and theoretical groundwork and a short presentation of the business, the article will concern the politics and the management practices of the multicultural human resources of the business. After that, it will study in depth the field of application and the conditions of success of these practices, ending finally with the teachings of the Prometheus model. The empiric data analysed are based on the author's PhD thesis.

1. Conceptual and theoretical groundwork

Many obstacles seem to come in the way of the management evolution of cultural differences (Usunier, 1992; Chevrier, 2000). Among the first currents that are really interested in cultural differences, we find the functional conception of culture of B. Malinowski (1968). The work of Malinowski evolves in particular in the world of business and management through a sensitisation towards intercultural relations that are based on the knowledge of 'codes' and local specificity. According to other theoricians, like the representatives of relativism, culture is not reduced to a simple code. It depends on the functioning of institutions and organisations. Descending from cultural relativism, the current of comparative management (especially the works of Hofstede) means to describe management practices and the type of behaviour towards work typical of every country. Therefore in this moment, the representatives of the intercultural management current reproach the comparative management of facing the specificity of management in different systems but of not being interested in collaboration among cultures (Chevrier, 2000; Bartel Radic, 2002). So, for example, according to J.M. De Leersnyder (2002), 'to practice intercultural management means to understand the otherness and to keep it in consideration in management decisions.' This quotation shows to what point the management must become conscious of the other and suggest instruments to manage the interaction between culture and management.

1.1. The concepts of culture, cultural identity and cooperation

To manage cultural differences, we must start by learning how to recognise it. In the management of multicultural staff there is the problem, according to us, of the management of the staff made of different cultures. In the multicultural, we are interested in the variable culture (national culture[87]) and justify the choice of this term (multicultural) used in the juxtaposition of cultures (Demorgon, 2002). Understanding this difference consists also, according to us, of two pertinent notions, *culture* and *cultural identity*.

The examination of the notion of culture with the ethnologists and the anthropologists allow us to understand how this variable explains human diversity through the language, the beliefs and the customs.

According to D. Cuche (1996), culture depends in great part on unconscious processes, identity sends us a standard of belonging necessarily conscious, because it is founded on symbolic oppositions. Many psychologists that work in the field of the intercultural, differentiate cultural identity as a component of the individual's identity, next to personal identity and social identity (Guerraoui, Troadec, 2000). As a social being, the individual builds his identity keeping in account the social and cultural universe in which he evolves. The interactionist current upholds in particular, the hypothesis according to which the subject that develops in a pre-structured cultural space contributes in modifying the latter with the unceasing play of its active and interactive constructions with the other members of the group.

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[87] Defined in the works of Ph. d'Iribarne, for example, in *The logic of honour*, Parigi, ed. del Seuil, 1989. See also Pesqueux Y. (2004), "National culture, values and last references," *International Management*, Publications CETAI, HEC Montréal, Vol. 8, p. 1-9.

We too think that the notion of cultural identity is an important factor for the understanding of cultural difference. In our studies, we started with the notion of the individual /actor (Parsons, 1937; Crozier, Friedberg, 1977) that has a culture of origin (see various); this culture (these cultures) is (are) part of his cultural identity, knowing that there is no cultural identity in itself (the psychologists define cultural identity as 'variable geometry' identity, like a metamorphosis identity, articulated on a criterion of adaptability, for example, Denoux, 1994).

To create *cooperation* (the building of a common action) among people of different cultures, we think that it is necessary to keep an account of the cultural identities that come into interaction during a well defined *situation*(identification of the context of the action). To explain the concept of cooperation, we introduced in the context of our subject, the theories of L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot (theory of convention, 1987) on one hand and of M. Callon e B. Latour (theory of translation, 1978) on the other. The interest of these theories is double; not only they offer an opening and a new reading of the construction of the social and collective action, but they also complete the existing theories, allowing us to find management solutions beyond the limits that the peculiarities of people can create. We have also been interested in the notion of *business culture* (Schein, 1992) that can, according to us, be an element of collection of the cultural differences in the sense that it can appear as a collective identity.

The interest of the culture of common business for the policy of multicultural staff management is to be found with this contrivance and *performance* (Thévenet e Vachette, 1992).

These concepts and theories help us to build a management model to observe the management of multicultural staff working as a group.

We must check after the management situation of multicultural staff on the field through these conceptual elements. Moreover, we have tried to observe through these models, three management features, that is: 1) How do interactions in a multicultural group work?; 2) What is the role of the manager as a regulator/animator within the group?; and 3) Does he restrain or precipitate the performance?

1.2. Methodology

We have approached the subject through a constructivist line of action, in the sense that we wanted to 'build reality' starting with a study of the case. For this reason we have chosen a qualitative approach called ethnomethodologic (Garfinkel, 1967; Plane, 1999) that finds its origins in social anthropology. This method allows us an extensive contact with a given community putting the accent on the prospectives of the individuals, their perception and interpretation of their environment. For practical reasons connected with the methodology chosen, the study has favoured an approach by enquiry. This brought us to meet the actors in their working place to understand the reality of the situation in which they evolve. Our enquiry also includes about thirty interviews collected at the Prometheus place of business (during the period May-October 2004). The interviews have been managed on the basis of an interview guide formed by various 'theme-questions' previously thought out, to 'grasp fully,' later, the interview on different problems. The analysis of qualitative data has been made later on, using the reading grille proposed by M. Miles et A. Huberman (2003).

1.3. The case Prometheus: a multicultural business

The Prometheus business is in this moment one of the main recipients in the world of news, financial information and technological solutions to communication media, to financial institutions, to businesses and to people. The business had been chosen for its long tradition and competence in the field of the management of international human resources, because the creation of its first agency in London dates back to the 19th century.

Prometheus numbers, nowadays, almost 200 offices all over the world in 130 countries. It employs a multicultural personnel that numbers more than 15,000 people in about a hundred nations that speaks 19 languages.

The multicultural staff represents different professions - reporters, engineers and salesmen. If the engineers are specialised in technical solutions and in the installation of programs and of information software, the salesmen are divided into two different categories. They are both salesmen of goods in general or salesmen specialised in the field of transactions; risk management/solutions, finances, investment funds or the Stock Exchange. Differently from reporters, who work alone on the ground, engineers and salesmen work in groups. These groups are of two kinds: they are 'traditional' because they are part of an agency in a permanent way; they are part of a network because the members are geographically aligned and they are most of the time connected only by telecommunication means (Favier, 2005). The working language in the groups is English.

The enquiry at Prometheus has taken place in three different countries - in Belgium, in France and Luxembourg with members that represent 10 nationalities (Algerian, German, American, Belgian, British, French, Greek, Italian, from Luxembourg, Dutch). As a complement of the interviews with the members, three directors of the human resources have been the objects of interviews (the General Director of the British nationality personnel in the London headquarters responsible for three continents; the Director of the Paris agency, a French national and the Director of the Luxembourg agency, a French national) with the intention of studying the role of the DHR in the organisation. Five multicultural groups have been studied; the first three travel groups analysed (E 1, E2 and E5) are part of the commercial service of the Luxembourg agency and include the three following units:

- PSG (*Professional Service Group*) – Technical group made up of 15 engineers that install software in the clients' houses. Three nationalities are part of the group, French, Belgian (Francophone and Flemish) and of Luxembourg.

- *Sales Group* – Sales group that includes four general salesmen (*account managers*) and three specialised salesmen. The group is formed by four nationalities - an American, four Belgians (Flemish and Francophones), a French national and one from Luxembourg.

▪ *Client Training Group* – Client Training Group made up of eight salesmen that take care of the products' after-sale and also of client training. In this group there are four different nationalities - German, French, Belgian (Flemish and Francophone) and Luxembourg.

The second level of research includes two network groups (E3 and E4) the first of which includes eight countries – Luxembourg, Belgium, Low Countries, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. This group is made up of salesmen specialised in risk management (*Risk Management*) and is directed by the Sales Director from his Luxembourg headquarters. The latter plans and coordinates the work of about twenty people of seven different nationalities (Spain and Portugal are both represented by two Spanish people).

As a comparison with the first network group, a second network group has been chosen that extends equally all over Europe. This group includes about forty salesmen specialised in marketing. We were able to meet four people of this group who represent three different nationalities, an Algerian, a Franco-American and two French people (one of them is the director of the network). These people work in Prometheus' offices in Paris. What makes observing this group interesting, is its composition of non European members.

To manage this work situation of its multicultural staff, the Prometheus Company and in particular the DHR, has had to develop and position a general management policy as well as management practices suited to the company. The results of our enquiry show that the central service of human resources in London has chosen different practices that apply to 1) work organisation; 2) the management of multicultural staff; and 3) the building of a company culture.

2. Policy and management practices of multicultural staff

2.1. Work organisation or 'smart working' policy

To promote the installation of the procedures tied to work organisation, the company has equipped itself with a structure that shows characteristics of the 'adhocratic' type (Mintzberg, 1982). The 'adhocratic' structure has allowed the direction of Prometheus to invent a policy of work organisation called '*smart working.*' This policy has been created to promote cooperation on two levels - on the level of cultures and crafts so that they mix with daily events ('*we wanted to mix skills and the multicultural,*' Mme Wagner*,* Director in Luxembourg). In these great principles, '*smart working'* means working in a flexible way (flexible working hours) with the disposition of the working premises (in *open space*) and of the technological solutions used for this purpose.[88] '*Smart working'* leaves to the staff the best way to reach the best results (keeping in consideration the interest of their working group and that of the company), making the actors aware of the management of their personal balance and of their professional life.

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[88] Including distance travel: the staff can work according to their own wish in other places than the office (at the clients,' at the airport [in the lounge], at home).

Through this kind of work organisation, the multicultural staff that represents the various jobs shares the same premises with permanent work. This is especially important for the actors in a network with other members; they mingle in this way with the local staff.

2.2. Practices and management instruments

Among these practices, there are recruitment, formation/coaching, conflict management and closeness management particularly suited to the company.

Table 1: Management practices of multicultural staff

Practices	Instruments	Objectives	Results
Recruitment	1) Recruitment programs: for example in Luxembourg SHL[89] (multilingual) suited to pluricultural staff; 2) Assessment Centers;[90] 3) Aptitude and personality tests.	Select the actors according to their professional and linguistic competence keeping in consideration their personality traits.[91]	Professional staff – engineers – Bac +4/5 that command several languages that have the competence to work in an international

			company. (Except for the Paris agency).
Formation/ **Coaching**	1) Management of the different personalities and cultures; 2) Behaviour management; 3) Languages' and civilisations' training; 4) Managers' Coaching (motivation/competencies).	1) How to learn to know the Other, how to receive him; 2) How to have the difference of the Other respected.	Global formation of the staff in a Switzerland centre then a local formation in the agencies. Managers are those who profit most from these formations. There are important differences among agencies.

Conflict management	1) Closeness management – of the managers who travel continuously to meet their network groups; 2) Participatory management – of the coordinating groups' chiefs (closer to their collaborators); 3) Mediation on the part of the DHR.	"*Problems must be managed by managers who must know their groups*" (M. Robbins, General director DHR, London).	Less conflicts in the company that are not connected to the cultural aspect but rather to the people themselves.

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89 SHL or Saville & Holdsworth Ltd. Method invented by some English psychologists.

90 They are psychologists' services to define the managers' competence.

91 The traits of the personality that are important for multicultural staff : openness towards the others, empathy, interest in foreigners, positive vision of the other, aptitude to meditation, international experience, etc..

According to management global policy, multicultural staff management consists of 'execution whose operative strategy is prepared on a local basis.' Actually, this means that the policy is at first conceived by London's general direction and is, then, made real by the human resource services of the agencies located in the various towns where the company has its offices. Indeed there are differences among the agencies for what concerns putting in order the used instruments. First of all, putting into practice the instruments is a financial matter: a big unit like Paris, for example, would seem to receive more financing than a little unit (it is the case of Luxembourg that does not have the means for intercultural formation).

Then, you can notice differences among the instruments used in the agencies according to the choice of the Directors in place. So, for example, the Director of the Luxembourg agency puts the accent on a plurilingual recruiting system (SHL) while the Paris Director prefers it to be solely in the French language (VHA[92]). This recruiting detail might be at the origin of the linguistic problems facing the Paris staff, while in Luxembourg these difficulties do not exist. In the same way, the Luxembourg Director can use mediation more easily in her unit among multicultural persons (considering her small unit of 60 people), than the Paris Director who has almost 500 people in his service.

A strong company culture is added to work organisation and the company's management practices as it plays the main role of assembler and identifier among the multicultural staff.

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[92] The method 'Human Added Value' has been conceived by Fr. Pelletiers of the group ACTAS Consultants, Paris.

2.3. Company culture as a management instrument

In the meaning of E. Schein, company culture is transmitted and taught to the group members as 'the only way of behaving, thinking and reacting in correct relations.[93] At Prometheus, our enquiry shows how it was able to unite under the same identity national differences and to also stress on the company's internal cohesion. The company's culture becomes, with the Prometheus actors, a universal conception of the individual with which the whole world identifies. This almost unanimous kind of attitude typifies the behaviour of the actors in six different sites in Europe (19 people that represent 10 nationalities on 22 examined in the sites of Paris, Brussels, Luxembourg, Italy Greece and the Low Countries). We could speak of a common conception or of a 'common and global understanding' - according to L. Boltanski and L. Thévenot it is a 'superior common principle' or according to M. Callon and B. Latour[94] of a 'compromise.'

Four indices typify this company culture: first of all, common conception does not stop conflicts, but limits their development; second, stereotypes exist but through the idea of the Other, the actors show themselves more tolerant and understanding; third, company culture promotes the adaptation of the actors inside the organisation and, finally, it allows the acknowledgement of the Other and also the acceptance and the integration of all people without discriminations.

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[93] "The culture of a group can now be defined as a scheme of shared fundamental premises that the group has learned because it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to the new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel about those problems." In E. Schein (1992), *Cultura Organizzativa e Leadership*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, p. 12.

[94] We find the notion of 'compromise' already in N. Adler (1986) in a model that intimates that work in a multicultural group gives place to three types of dynamics: 1) domination; 2) compromise; 3) synergy.

Table 2: Prometheus Culture : the actors' opinions and values

Indices	Characteristics	Examples	Consequences
Presence of conflicts	Limited. They are not tied to cultural differences but to the person in question.	*'There are problems, but they are not tied to culture [...] rather to characters, to personalities,'* M. Martin, engineer/head group, French, works in Luxembourg.	Situations measured by the actors. They are *'passing tensions'* or *'misunderstandings.'*
Presence of stereotypes	Considered as jests, a way of reconciling among cultures.	*'We use them to come closer,'* Mrs. Papas, specialised saleswoman, Greek ; *'There are common forms among cultures,'* Mr. Martin, engineer/head group, French.	Tolerance and understanding of the Other and of the situation in question.
Ease of adaptation in the	General positive attitude. Personal	Curiosity towards other	Satisfaction on the working place.

work place	choice to work in a multicultural environment.	cultures; enriching contacts; career choice.	Source of motivation that contributes to the performance.
Acknowledgement of the Other	Universal conception of the individual.	*'You must consider the persons […] The individuals are important,'* ,M. Van Eetvelde, specialised salesman, Holland ; *'Personality goes beyond national culture,'* M. Kirk, general salesman, Belgio Fiammingo ; *'People's personality counts, their lives, their reactions,'* M. Benfredt, specialised salesman, Algerian.	Satisfaction in the working place. Source of motivation that contributes to the performance.

The general policy of the direction of human resources tries to promote, through company culture, the common conception of the other. It also tries to unite the actors whatever is their original national culture and whatever is their working place. One might say that common company culture is a factor that contributes in creating cooperation at Prometheus. It is made operational by the policy and the efficacious practices of the direction of the human resources of Prometheus. This policy proves that it is possible to implement a specific company culture based on diversity.[95] The presence of a strong company culture seems to limit considerably conflicts at Prometheus– 15 people out of 22 declared that they do not know conflicts in the working place – although there can be situations of conflict in the company (they are tied to linguistic misunderstandings or cultural differences, according to the actors). Thanks to the policy of the DHR, these situations are limited and therefore do not harm cooperation.

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[95] Voir Moghaddam F. (1997), "Change and Continuity in Organizations: Assessing Intergroup Relations," in Granrose C., Oskamp S., (sous la direction), *Cross-Cultural Work Groups*, The Claremont Symposium on Applied Social Psychology, SAGE Publications, Inc. The author studies the difficulties of establishing a company culture and the organisational changes ensuing for an organisation in the United States.

Anyway, the actors attribute the causes of conflicts to personalities not cultures ('*You must consider people [...] Gli individui sono importanti [...] You must understand the Other,'* Mr. Benfredt, specialised salesman, Algerian; '*You must keep into account cultural differences. The best idea is respecting the Other,'* Mrs. Jardin, specialised saleswoman, French). What comes out is a favourable perception of multicultural on the part of the Prometheus actors. This almost unanimous behavior becomes a general behaviour that refers to the universal character of the individual.[96]

The presentation of the policy and of the management practices of the multicultural staff at Prometheus allow us to conclude in favour of a strong presence of the DHR in the company. We must therefore investigate the change of this direction and to see the application scheme, especially the company structural layout in which it evolves.

3. The application scheme and the conditions of success of the instruments

3.1. An example of British management

Behind the management success factors there is, therefore, London's general direction of the human resources. It is at the centre of the decisions concerning the general policy of the human resources in the company.

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[96] See Ph. d'Iribarne (2004), " Faced with the complexity of cultures, an intercultural management needs an ethnologic approach, HEC Montréal, 8, p. 11.

It defines the great orientations of this management system at the macro-organisational level which is later on made concrete and practised at a micro-micro-organisational level (Brechet, 1997) – 'the global management of the multicultural human resources consists in the performance whose operational strategy is prepared on a local basis.[97]' Instead of being a functional strategy,[98] the Prometheus company represents a great management flexibility which could explain, after all, its management success.

The company is really a British management example. According to R. Calori e P. De Woot (1994), the British management style is often quoted as an exception, halfway between the American and the European management. Fortemente caratterizzata dal liberalismo; strongly characterised by liberalism, this management prefers more direct and pragmatic relations among people showing, sometimes, a dislike for formal procedures (Calori, Osterrieth, 2002). At Prometheus this becomes, for example, a company organisational structure that seems close to 'adhocracy' (Mintzberg, 1982).

This kind of structure, for its organisational and coordination flexibility, seems to create the conditions favourable to multicultural staff management. It promotes considerably the establishment of management procedures like work organisation ('smart working') quoted before. It also allows the groups' management with the 'reciprocal adaptation' management type that brings the manager close to the members of his group so that he can know better the actors he directs.

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[97] To convey this global policy to the agencies level, London central service calls in meeting, under form of teleconference, the local directors many times a month.

[98] In spite of the fact that the pressures appeared here as centre of authority and of decisions.

The study of five Prometheus multicultural groups shows moreover, that group management can be done only with participatory management (the Director joins his collaborators to the group pilotage) both through the group chiefs who have the role of group. We can notice, anyway, variations among the Directors : for example between Mr. Jacques, on one hand, commercial Director, who practices only participatory management so that he relates to his collaborators is of great importance (He travels constantly to meet his collaborators) and, on the other hand, Mr. François, marketing Director, who directs only through telecommunication media. Management by 'mutual adjustment' seems to favour a lot, the way of anticipating the events and actions to implement in the groups. On the part of the actors, this kind of management promotes their insertion and integration in the structure and in the group ('*It all depends on Mr. Jacques of Luxembourg, he is friendly. The manager is important in this group.*' Mrs. Martin, commercial saleswoman, of French nationality*)*.

Or, if this layout allows us to integrate an efficacious policy and efficacious management practices suited to multicultural staff, it satisfies also the complex and dynamic environment within which the company evolves (information company, particularly financial). T. Burns e G. Stalker (1961) who was the first to emphasise the relationship between company structure and degree of stability of its environment.

3.2. The role of culture in the company

Although organisational flexibility characterise the management of human resources in the company, the general policy and the practices used show that the direction follows a knowingly built policy. It tries to unite the staff around equal values and a culture common to all. All of the management instruments (recruiting, formation/coaching, management of conflicts) contribute in promoting a company culture in which all the actors can identify. Recognisable through interactions, that show anyway a weak

impact of conflict or stereotype situations, this company culture is 'founded on goodwill that can overcome the sentimental reactions that are human' (Demorgon, 2002). The enquiry with the actors has actually established the rejection of national cultural differences, shared almost unanimously. For Prometheus's actors, it is important to know the other first of all for his personality, his character that precedes his national culture.

We think like J.F. Chanlat (1995; 2005) and Ph. d'Iribarne (2004) that the contribution of anthropology, here meant as a consequence of the ideological universalist conception of the individual, is important for the management of multicultural staff; as this theory starts with the individual, in his anthropological meaning (considering that the human species is defined by common characteristics of biological origin) to unite the actors in spite of their cultural differences. In other terms as E. T. Hall (1971) points out, this theory gives first of all 'a universal physiological basis of man, to which culture gives later on structure and meaning.'

The purpose of this policy of human resources is that of getting the maximum performance promoting this common behaviour. It tries to do this by respecting the cultures that it wants to integrate in the system.[99] This is conveyed to the staff through organisation training, especially through the group, that plays, in its turn, a role of identification, training and control. The inquiry carried on with the Prometheus' actors shows that the multicultural becomes, in this way, a well of motivation towards work and that it contributes favourably to performance. In other words, as they respect all cultures and integrate them in the system, culture is not a restraint any more but an accelerator of performance.

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[99] Let's remember that according to N. Adler (1983), it is an organisation that identifies as positive cultural diversity and its effects in a company (*synergistic organization*).

The examination of the scheme of application of the management instruments at Prometheus shows that we are faced with a British management strongly characterised by its flexibility that seems to offer for the company an advantage for multicultural staff management. What teachings can we get from the example of this management? We must examine this question under two aspects: the importance of the degree of intervention of the DHR typical of Prometheus and the particularity of this management model.

4. The teachings of the Prometheus model

4.1. The importance of the degree of intervention of the DHR

Prometheus's example shows that the management success of multicultural staff is not due to the case, but it is rather a question of the degree of intervention of the DHR. Like in the present case, it extends on various levels : at an organisation level – reapproachment of the staff through the organisation of work ; on the level of staff management – practices that aim at learning to work with others ; and finally at the level of the construction of a common company culture – grouping of the differences through a common identity. Researchers P. Dass e B. Parker (1999) pointed out that there is anyway a unique management model or an exceptional solution for the management of diversity. Various facts contribute in the management, like at Prometheus, structural layout as well as managerial aptitudes that are strongly connected with the personality of the manager under discussion. In relation to the 'monocultural' staff, the multicultural staff management ask even more empathy and openness towards the others, as well as particular competencies, especially linguistic, on the part of the managers.

Or, we must point out again that what works in the case of Prometheus does not produce the same effects in another company. Because, for

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example, according to Mr. Maznevski and M. Peterson (1997), this type of layout is subject to the cultural problems in the company. American researchers say that only organisations that are very procedural and regulated at a behaviour level, that do not show uncertainties and ambiguities, vouchsafe good functioning for multicultural staff management. Equally, according to P. Dass and B. Parker (1999), this type of layout generally prevails when the managers consider diversity as a marginal question. It represents 'the lowest level' for the introduction of diversity in a company.

We have to ask ourselves, therefore, how to relocate a management model that works for another company? Are 'the best practices' transferable?

4.2. The peculiarity of any management model

Many authors, among whom we have J.P. Bouilloud (1995), think that it is impossible to establish laws on the subject of management. On the other hand, what we can try to do is to establish the understanding of a certain situation, in finding its logic and the way it works.

So, for example, according to N. Adler, we must consider every particular situation separately in its cultural context - starting from the initial situation (*situation description*), give an explanation tied to its cultural context (*cultural interpretation*) and only with the support of these elements it is possible to create cultural cooperation (*cultural creativity*).

The peculiarity of every management situation seems to us to be the

essential factor here. In this approach Emico,[100] that is completed with the peculiarity of every organisation, we are interested in the inherent company characteristics tied to its history, culture (company, region, country, etc.), production, then those tied to its different environments (socio-economic, socio-political, competitive, etc.). Because, as in the example of Prometheus, it is not only a 'Prometheus situation' that is particularly tied to different multicultural groups (made up of different nationalities and cultural identities that work differently both in 'traditional' groups and in a network). The understanding of these particular situations imply a study and an analysis of the problematic and of the fundamentals of the logic of interactions inter and intra- group, particularly from the point of view of the psycho sociologic approach, without forgetting the cultural dimension that makes the surrounding reality extremely complex (see in particular the results of the symposium of Claremont 1997).[101]

The Prometheus company represents therefore, a situation of British management in which national characteristics remain strong (we have for example observed the difficulties of German employees to adapt to the flexibilities of the organisation of company work, especially in the working space 'open space'). The success of the model relates also to the company product that represents a particular sector (information and technological solutions) that evolve in an environment sometimes complex and dynamic.

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100 This kind of approach is trying to understand the cultural characteristics specific to an organisation and its members, differently from an Ethic approach that tries to recover the elements of universal importance of the organisations studied.

101 Granrose C., Oskamp S. (1997), op. cit.

The parts of the model form a whole that works in a particular environment. It seems then difficult to transfer this model as a whole to another company. On the other hand, it would be possible to transpose separate instruments that determine the success of the model, like, in this case, company culture, that is characterised by its universal character and mix it in a new and particular management situation.

Conclusion

The objective of our study was to understand how we can manage nowadays multicultural groups in an international organisation. We have chosen to observe the management of multicultural staff that works on a group from three points of view:

First, through the functioning of the groups which led us to study the organisation itself and its structural layout to be able, at the end, to determine the role of the manager in the groups and also to be able to characterise the working scheme in which take form the behaviours of the actor – structures of the 'adhocracy' type (Mintzberg), in which the main mechanism of coordination is reciprocal adapting.

As a second point, we wanted to understand the role of interactions and social relations among the actors in these groups and to see how the variable culture influences these relations. To do that, we have chosen to watch the exchanges on one hand and the conflicts on the other. The results of this second part have revealed different social relationships according to the type of group discussed (E1, balanced and stable group; E2 e E5, mobile groups; E3 et E4, network groups). The study of the interactions that brought us also to perceive the multicultural and its consequences in the groups, allowed us to notice a 'universalist' orientation of the actors. This common behaviour seems to avoid divisions in the national cultures in the company. Besides, our study has confirmed the validity of our model of

analysis proposed for this case. We hope any way to enlarge the field and to add to it a new component; the identity of the individual to which is joined the being's national culture, company's culture and profession culture. We have to see now, if we can extend the conclusions of the research to the set of companies on a world level. Because one of the limits of our research is that it is situated only in Europe. Are the results capable of change we include in the research Asia and the Middle East, for example? Or we can conclude that, like in this case, the DHR with its managerial instruments, for example, recruiting, selects a typical profile of the staff capable to adapt to the needs and to change.

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Cross-cultural coaching

Barbara Köhne

In the modern multinational companies, not only managers who are expatriated, but also the locals are getting a special training for working with people of another cultural background. They learn about Power Distance, Masculinity Index, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism and Collectivism, Long and Short Term Orientation (Geert Hofstede) and get an idea of what could be different and difficult. They learn about traditions, rituals and things to do or better not to do.

Arriving at work in the foreign country or leading a team, participating in a bigger project where several languages are spoken, common sense is usually speaking English - but that does not mean that they speak a common language having been trained in cultural diversity and does not mean that they feel comfortable managing conflicts among the team-members and /or his own problems to "understand" and "communicate" with his business partners. There are also other aspects to keep in mind such as personal situation (financial, private...) and economic situation of the country.

I see a risk in this mindset insofar as knowing why someone is acting in a special way may seduce him to say - I know you act like this, because you are… and so consolidate a prejudge concerning the culture of this country.

Ex.: As a well-trained and very open-minded new chief of a daughter-company in South Africa, you realize that a certain colleague is always late; he's doing a great job, so for a while you don't say anything. But on a very important meeting, he as usual is late and you're so very upset that without wanting it, you say to him - "I knew it. You're an African, they're always late"

They both are shocked - what happened?

In this situation, the chief didn't know anything about the inner conflict, social context or environmental conditions and how the high power index leads to a total misunderstanding and the escalation.

Let's say that his local colleague lives in the suburbs because he does not have enough money to pay for a flat closer to work and is ashamed about it, so he wouldn't tell. Let's imagine the chaotic traffic situation in the morning, maybe there is a strike and with respect for the hierarchically higher boss and because of his fear of losing the job, this colleague wouldn't tell about his problems.

In his home town in the mother company, the same boss might have asked his colleague at an earlier stage why he is late and clarify the situation, but in the foreign context of the situation he felt unsure, he waited until his emotions were accumulated and then he "exploded."

Often we hear sentences like - those Italians just talk about food, those Germans just think about figures and facts, those Peruans are always late, those Japanese only want to keep their faces….

During the eighties many International Airlines gave their employees a sticker with the slogan, we all are foreigners-almost everywhere.

Working in a multicultural environment does not mean to give up one's own culture for better work and live in a foreign country. It's quite the contrary; the more I understand my reactions, my thinking and feeling , my coping mechanisms and stress reactions, the more I feel myself integrated in my culture and the more I can accept those of the others. It's balancing between being a representative of my culture and integrating into the culture of the country I'm sent to. It's a "give (in) and take (over)," rather than giving up myself and melting in the cultural pot.

Being self-assured allows me to be unsecure and open for new challenges.

Therefore, "global coaching" for me, starts within the individual.

Getting to know how the values of my culture are influencing my way of thinking, feeling and acting, particularly in stressful situations and all new situations as they bring with them the need to live in uncertainty which is stressful, is important for giving respect to others.

Goethe said that there are two souls in his chest - there are a lot more than just two!

Parting from this, I'd like to introduce a working model for coaching in multicultural environment that has been developed by Schultz von Thun. He is a Professor for Psychology at the University of Hamburg, Germany, specialized in Training, Consulting and Communication and has written many books, among them being trilogy "Miteinander Reden" and "Interkulturelle Kommunikation." His well-proved model is based on the fact that we all have different "souls" within ourselves; we are multicultural in ourselves when we allow a look in detail, into our lives, as a child, student, work beginners, in holidays, with friends… There have surely been situations in which we tend to be late, we tend to be too anxious to tell the truth, we want to "keep our face," think we are better than others, our values are more important… and hinder ourselves and give justification to not being open for the other.

Schultz von Thun talks about an "inner plurality." He imagines an "inner team" that we all have and during global coaching, it's the job of the trainers to help identify the inner team-members.

"It's probable that growing in a certain social system leads to a certain Inner Team which is necessary to "survive" in this system "(p.16).

For example: Thinking of Hofstede's dimension of Individualism/Collectivism, we surely will find in a chief, coming from an individualistic society, an inner team member (e.g. German) who cares for the whole project, works for others and for the success of the action. Maybe this player is not in the front-line but he is one of the main players for a person coming from a more collective society (e.g. Japanese). These two people have to work together and the individualistic one doesn't understand why the collective one can't speak for himself, or doesn't want to realize

his dreams whereas the collective team-member always thinks of the whole and the others first before thinking of his own self.

At home, the individualistic one has a family, cares first for his children and his wife and then for him; so he has a collectivistic inner team member which is normally in the second row. The collectivistic one might care for him in the evening, after work, going out and having a drink with friends; so his egoistic inner team member is hidden in the second row.

But the important thing is, they exist and during a coaching session, it's possible to get in contact with our plurality which helps us work in a pluralistic environment.

The two qualities or values can be put in a quadrant where there are exaggerated and insulting members of the other extreme of the dimension:

For instance:

- Collectivism vs. Individualism
- Total unselfishness vs. Egocentrism

A very unselfish person can insult a very egoistic person of being too selfish and vice versa. Using this, they both have a development direction in order to work better together. The selfish could find some very valuable and useful elements of the other culture to integrate and appreciate in his own thinking and acting, just as the unselfish can find interesting qualities in order to grow.

Depending on how welcome or rejected a particular quality is seen by an individual, within a family or within a culture, the "inner team member" with this quality is last in the second row or first in the first row.

This model (Riemann-Thomann-Modell) serves to put the different dimensions of Hofstede in a relation in order to position oneself concerning the amount/strength of its appearance and gives a starting base for intercultural coaching integrating cultural as well as individual elements.

Belonging, for example, to a culture with a high masculinity index gives me nevertheless enough opportunity to behave "feminine" (in the meaning of Hofstede), i.e. consensus-oriented, preferring small companies, to work in order to live…

Being caught in cultural traps may lead to never ending vicious circles that have an immense negative effect on the working climate, productivity and efficiency. In stressful situations, it's hard to step back, take a meta-position and meta-communicate.

As V. Lenhardt (Vincent Lenhardt is the President of Transformance Group, specialized in accompanying management teams and coach training. He is especially known for having introduced coaching in France in 1988. He has published several books on transactional analysis and management, especially "The leaders, carriers of meaning," "Le responsable porteur du sens") describes step by step the process of taking over a meta position, it's important to start with being aware of my own representation of my (cultural) reality and then realize and accept the representation of the reality of my colleague. Having noticed that both representations can stand on their own and have their justification, we can start to step back and talk about our representations of the reality how we perceive it and appreciate the other's point of view.

This "king's way" of solving relational problems (Hofstede) can sometimes be perceived as creating a "cold" climate and figure-orientated instead of relational-orientated. It brings with it a feeling that the other is superior, I'm inferior, or "we are too different to understand each other, we don't speak a common language"- a development during a conversation which is not desired but often is a result of hierarchical structures or situations in which the person is not distinguished from his function. It doesn't mean that meta communication is less effective, it only means that there are other elements (psychological games, emotions like anxiety, aggressiveness, the way of thinking-figures or relations and context-lack of self-confidence)to consider if it fails.

Whenever there are two or more people in relation with each other there is always the relation itself that also counts.

Be innovative and learn how to learn!
Cultural intelligence to a better learning

Fernando Salvetti

How can we manage knowledge, human and intellectual resources and cognitive and behavioral dynamics at their best within corporations? How do we create and manage, in a flexible and dynamic way, an effective organization, filled with people always ready to learn and develop?

In the current scenario, the primary economic and natural resources are not (or not only) financial capital or work itself; they are also relationships, knowledge, and human and intellectual capital. Knowledge, abilities and imagination—as well as the networking used to share experiences, competences and knowledge (therefore, the ability to learn)—are more important than physical, technological and financial capital traditionally at the center of economic and organizational scenarios. One of the most important competitive differentiation factors among companies lies in the capacity for cultivating and enhancing the (famous but not necessarily widespread) intangible assets: intelligence, experience, imagination and, more generally, the soft skills—as well as the specialized and transversal competences, the *know-how and know-what competences*.

Intangible assets: knowledge, abilities, imagination

Only in the last few years have the majority of executives started to consider knowledge and competences as strategic resources that should be managed in the same way as they manage income and outgo fluxes, personnel, or natural resources. In the near future, more than today, managerial work will be characterized by human- and intellectual-resource development—organizational knowledge creation, as well as competences

and abilities management and development—in order to spread these inside and outside organizations and transform them into products, services and operative systems.

To be successful today, people need to be able to master skills quickly in a new field. In brief, to learn how to learn. The learning process is much more important than the content learned. The buzzwords of the times relate to the complex issues of creative problem-solving, general creativity and innovation, social skills and interpersonal communication, cross-cultural intelligence, and flexibility—all as regard place, time and type of work.

The role of the individual as a resource becomes central, where professional identity refers not only to technical abilities, but also to human capital that must be built and rebuilt throughout life. Therefore, the characteristics requested of "new" workers are changing: they are being asked for not only general knowledge, but also a willingness to learn and the ability to comprehend signs of change and react to problems.

Active and inter-subject learning, as well as network knowledge and networking, become the center around which—at every level—training outputs rotate (from a systemic and a constructivist perspective). Every person engages himself actively to build (or rebuild) his abilities, focusing on his way of learning and on how learning is built.

People, work and networking: learning how to learn, in an experiential way

To increase people's learning ability means to allow them to develop their creativity and spirit of innovation. In recent years experiential learning has developed significantly: it is a client-focused, supported approach to individual, group and organizational development that engages learners by using the elements of action, reflection and transfer (the key role of networking, as written above, is to share experiences, competences and knowledge). There are many experiential methods used to carry out such an activity: from coaching to e-tutoring, from action learning to learning by doing, from seminars on divergent ("multi-polar" and "multi-perspective") thinking to the experiences within a research lab, from peer-to-peer meetings to benchmarking and cross-fertilization seminars.

Developing learning ability requires flexible strategies and good tools that foster the aptitude to adapt and to orient oneself in dynamic situations. Education can be offered in different ways: learning can represent a lengthy process of continuous challenge wherein learners build and apply skills while taking the time to generate deep expertise. Or it can be a real-time match-making process of carefully selected, specific solutions applied to people with specific, pressing problems. Selecting the first approach is a challenge. The process of building expertise demands patience and commitment. It is hard. In the corporate world, it means exploring raw data, cases and stories, and pushing oneself to make sense of them. By contrast, the quick fixes—recipes for success, how-to's and specific solutions for specific challenges—seem appealing. They provide immediate gratification. But is it enduring? Does this provide a manager with the confidence of an expert mountaineer as he faces the next issue that comes into his office? The risk is that the manager becomes only a vehicle for implementing solutions generated by others.

Usually an encyclopedia of learning and development methods lists more or less 700 relevant methods. Depending on the situation, we can choose the adequate mix of methods: if managers need short-term, problem-solving-based education, it cannot be theoretical and must be explicit and actionable. But if they need education designed to build long-term, core expertise, it must be exploratory, difficult, deeply personal and intellectual. These are two extremes, but meeting in the middle we can find many alternative experiential methods.

Cultural intelligence to better learn how to learn

Last, but not least, a dimension of great importance to facilitate the implementation of learning ability is fostering cultural intelligence, mainly as it relates to the anthropology of knowledge and epistemology.

Culture refers to a group or community with which you share common experiences that shape the way you understand the world. Culture is the "lens" through which you view the world. It is central to what you see, how you make sense of what you see and how you express yourself.

Cultural intelligence is the ability to bridge and benefit from the cultural complexity of people with different nationalities, professional backgrounds and fields, personalities and organizational cultures. Cultural intelligence combines the emotional, cognitive and practical dimensions of cross-cultural encounters and ensures more effective and fulfilling cross-cultural collaboration.

Today cultural intelligence is the primary challenge: the cognitive paradigms, the relational schemes and the value systems among cultures have been shown to vary significantly, not only among different countries, but also among professional people working in the same corporation. For instance, people from different cultural backgrounds are likely to have different attitudes towards hierarchy, ambiguity, achievement orientation, time and working with others.

Do you know how to understand the implicit, basic assumptions that guide people's behavior in different areas of our world? Do you know how to interpret the explicit norms and values that guide a foreign society? Starting with these questions, or with similar ones, we may draw up a scheme useful in understanding a new business context and, at the same time, develop our own cognitive maps: in other words, we can develop our intellectual flexibility, our creativity and our ability to innovate.

To be innovative, you have to be an "outsider," able to see the same things in many different ways. Being an "outsider" is both a challenge and a competitive advantage. You see and think differently about a business need, a problem, a niche, and you have a good chance of coming up with an *out-of-the-box* approach—one that's original, unique and competitive.

To be innovative, people need to be able to master new skills quickly in a new field, and to think *out-of-the box*. Therefore, today, HR educational programs must meet two primary challenges: those of cultural intelligence and innovation. Our vision for the years ahead will become obsolete more quickly than expected. Whatever the future, it will not be as we imagine it. The precise line of our future is one we cannot draw. We shall never be able to describe, in detail, the society or the new markets of tomorrow. The real world is too complicated to envisage. We should, then, take nothing for granted. Innovation, with its unlimited potential, is the driving force that

ensures our competitive edge—which, increasingly, relies on itself, and hence on cultural intelligence.

Knowledge sharing + Networking = Product innovation (x 2… x 3… ∞)

Fernando Salvetti

It's a formula which may appear complex but is actually easy to read and able to be applied to practically every industry - sharing knowledge and networking allows us to significantly increase levels of product innovation.

Product innovation is indispensable for a company's good health in both the long and short run, especially for those organizations dealing with international markets. I am not just referring to "traditional brands" such as Xerox, 3M, Levi Strauss, HP and Häagen Dazs... but rather to the greater part of the corporations active in today's *global & local* world. However, innovation is difficult as about 80% of new products fail after their introduction on the market and another 10% disappear completely within five years' time.

Nowadays in order to do business, many companies are learning how to develop new products and services more quickly than ever - but how? By ensuring that employees work together and at the same time, simultaneously progressing towards a determined finished project, rather than in time intervals.

Companies within *knowledge societies* at the peak of their efficiency operate according to network models. Such organizations are able to anticipate change and new needs from the external environment with great amounts of creativity and flexibility.

Our economy is by and large made up of the immaterial; it is focused on knowledge and information. Between organizational models, we find instances which remind us of *collages*, *patchworks* and *networks* which reduce workplace hierarchy and work as forms of coordination and monitoring and help to instil a decentralized integration. As such, the network becomes the principal organizational *driver*.

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The probability for success in developing a new project is directly linked to an organization's capabilities in efficiently carrying out activities regarding research, storage, distribution and use of products (above all through exchange of information, or rather, *knowledge sharing*).

Unfortunately, we know all too well that *knowledge management* technologies are not enough on their own. The most crucial element for full use of workplace knowledge and capabilities is an organizational culture aimed at supporting the sharing of competencies and ideas.

In other words, *learning to share!* For example, in the past few years many companies have introduced rather significant campaigns and activities for sensibility training amongst their own ranks. Such projects make expert use of *slogans* like "knowledge is power only when it's shared" (Nokia), while Texas Instruments gave birth to the corporate motto "I didn't invent it, but I made it anyway" to encourage people to work together using their common knowledge.

A *knowledge based* organization is a space (perhaps physical but most certainly cultural) where people- through *networking* and *knowledge sharing*- activate circles of experience in which all shared knowledge on an organizational level becomes the starting block for new applications and products.

A *knowledge driven* working organization is considered a cognitive and social dimension characterized by processes of constant evolution. In such an organization, "knowing" does not mean "recognizing," that is, it is less geared towards learning facts and knowledge "outside oneself," but rather towards experiencing different *ways of world making* which can allow for the creation of not just new products, but also novel ways of thinking and acting.

What is global and what is local? A theoretical discussion around globalization

Jean-Sébastien Guy

"Puisque l'univers n'existe qu'autant qu'il est pensé et puisqu'il n'est pensé totalement que par la société, il prend place en elle; il devient un élément de sa vie intérieure, et ainsi elle est elle-même le genre total en dehors duquel il n'existe rien."
(Emile Durkheim)

Introduction

In this article, I discuss the twin concepts of the global and the local. My main contention is twofold: (1) the global and the local are best understood as the two opposite sides of the same distinction; (2) this distinction is used in communication as a code to generate information about society or the world. Needless to say, the terms "global" and "local" help describing various objects like symbols, events, organizations, networks, flows, social movements, inequalities, crisis, identities, etc. Knowing this, the fundamental question I want to raise is the following, "Why call one object global (or local)?" or more accurately, "What is going on when one object is being called a global object (or a local object)?" I want to suggest that global objects or items or phenomena (global social movements, global inequalities, global crisis, etc.) are not called global for the simple reason that "this is just what they happen to be for real." Therefore, when talking about the global and the local, the issues at hand are here framed as epistemological ones. Moreover, a constructivist epistemology will be promoted in place of a representational one. Thus by talking about concepts in this way, I hope to shed a new light on empirical reality itself.

When one looks at the literature on globalization in social sciences, one can already identify three current definitions of the global and the local. In the first definition formulated by George Modelski as the layer-cake model (1972, see also McGrew and Lewis 1992), global and local are taken as equivalent with the concept of whole and the concept of part respectively. In this way, the local is necessarily contained within the global. In the second definition, global and local refers to opposite modes of integration. This definition has its strongest expression in the theory of structuration of Anthony Giddens (1984). On one hand, the local is delineated by social integration i.e. face-to-face interaction or interaction between individuals physically co-present. On the other hand, the global is a function of system integration or interaction between individuals away from each other in time or space or both. This time around, because we take human beings as our point of departure (instead of the world – that is, the concept of totality – as in the first definition), it is the global that reappears inside the local in the form of distant influences impinging on personal lives and daily activities (Giddens 1990, 64, and 1991, 21). In the third definition, global and local are understood basically as specific sizes and/or ranges. Essentially, global means big and local small. For instance in Marxist (or Neo-Marxist, or Post-Marxist, or Pseudo-Marxist) literature, we often hear about global capitalism, global corporations and global hegemony as opposed to local resistance, local communities and local solidarity. As sizes or ranges, global and local have no pre-determined special connection on the conceptual plane. The relation between the two depends on the relation between the concrete actors or settings or conjunctures characterized by them. More precisely, the global would be like the queen in the game of chess, whereas the local would be like the king. The global/queen is capable of great movements across the board, whilst the local/king can only move one square at a time. Otherwise, both the global and the local ought to be envisioned as chess pieces engaging each other in a common open space.

Arguably, these definitions overlap with one another or presume each other to a large extent. Although a certain number of critiques could be addressed to each of them separately, I dismiss all of them for a single reason. The current definitions of the global and the local are flawed inasmuch as they

miss the issue at hand. These definitions are attempts made to *discipline* social communications making use of the concepts of the global and the local. What I propose instead is to *listen* to these communications. In order to develop this strategy, let me begin by discussing the idea mentioned earlier; the global and the local form a distinction. Following Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, this distinction should be seen – paradoxically – as a unity (Luhmann 1995, 20). This means that in my model, neither the global nor the local can appear without the other. This also means that ultimately, the only thing that matters under the circumstances is the fact that what is global cannot be local at the same time and vice-versa (contra Wilson & Dissanayake 1996). This is how distinctions help generating information for an observer. They create sets of possibilities making room for variety and thus enabling variation. Indeed, the value any piece of information has can only be relative, i.e. pieces of information only trigger effects (make a difference) when considered within a finite ensemble of alternative pieces of information (Shannon & Weaver 1963; for discussion see Baecker 2005). Accordingly, to benefit from the information the distinction global/local makes available, an observer must first select the distinction itself. Hence, reality as it is differentially qualified by the terms "global" and "local" only exist for the observer operating with these concepts.

What about geographical or physical space? If the distinction global/local forms a unity and if global and local express different values by virtue of their reciprocal difference only (what is global is global only because it is not local and vice-versa), then in the model I offer, space is irrelevant at the level of the distinction. I say "at the level of the distinction" because geographical or physical space may still have a role to play. Nonetheless, it can serve as a criterion. Still one may be under the strong impression that "certainly, what is global must have something to do with *large distances*" (see for instance Held & al. 1999). I argue however that distances as measurements (in kilometres for instance) are *quantitative* matters, whereas the distinction global/local has to be a *qualitative* issue. To put it in another way, measurements rest on continuity, whereas distinctions rest on discontinuity. The point is that distances and other spatial measurements simply cannot tell us where to draw the boundary separating what is local

and what is global or where the local ends and where the global begins. Spatial measurements are referred to only when applying the distinction global/local so as to justify the indication of one side of the distinction or the other, global or local. Otherwise, measurements in space (or in time) cannot be taken in themselves as the primal reason why we speak of a *difference* between global and local.

We must proceed by first reminding ourselves that by now, words like "global" and "local" have gained a meaning of their own outside of the academic circles. We must realise that in its current state, society is such that evoking possible things like global poverty, global insecurity, global recession, etc., is enough to prompt an immediate response in the system. In effect, debates in the mass media are regularly launched around these topics. University courses in various fields (business and management, journalism, history, etc.) are rearranged so as to include them. Politicians are called forward to take these matters in their hands. Public figures (private business leaders, singers, authors, etc.) reach new level of fame by trying to raise awareness about global dangers or global challenges. In short, the words "global" and "local" have become culturally meaningful throughout contemporary society and not only for professional social scientists.

We must ask ourselves, "Why do people in society talk about the global and the local? Why do they use the distinction global/local to communicate about actions and experiences in the world? What is the purpose behind all this?" Again, without thinking twice about it, one might answer that people talk about global things because there are global things taking place in reality. Again, this would amount to say that global things are called global because this is what they truly are. Unfortunately, calling global what is global (and local what is local) doesn't explain anything at all. More precisely, when one calls global what is global, one doesn't articulate any research problem and as a result, one excludes himself or herself from the field of scientific investigation. To avoid this, we must stress the fact mentioned above, namely that whatever ends up being labelled as global (persons, corporations, fashions, trends, etc.) catches up society's attention.

The empirical phenomenon that the difference global/local is pointing to consists precisely in this social reaction.

It follows that the distinction global/local has to be released "in the wild." It has to be taken away from the hands of social scientists and given back to the rest of contemporary society. Consequently, deciphering the distinction global/local doesn't amount to solving a methodological difficulty, but to analysing of living practices. Accordingly, when pondering about why people in today's world find it relevant to make a distinction between global and local, we should see a direct analogy with the distinction between normal and pathological. This other distinction doesn't report an actual state of affairs in an objective, straightforward and unbiased manner. Rather it is a matter of social construction. It's not about telling things the way they are, but telling things the way we see them. I assert that the same goes (or should go) for the distinction global/local.

In order to successfully reinterpret the global and the local, a new model of globalization is needed just as well. Whereas it is usually conceived as some sort of historical process of social change, I propose to define globalization as one of contemporary society's self-descriptions (Guy 2007). As such, globalization corresponds to a discourse or a narrative telling society what's going on throughout the world as we speak. Globalization is not exactly happening in reality along side some other phenomena. Rather globalization is a vision of everything there is in reality ordering all phenomena within a coherent frame. This being said, it remains possible nevertheless to describe (or re-describe) reality in other ways. Indeed, globalization is not the only perspective on the world available in society. This brings us back to the distinction that interests us. Global and local are different values inasmuch as they indicate different perspectives on the world. On one side, the global value indicates *the perspective or frame that globalization is itself*. On the other side, the local value indicates *any other perspective or frame as seen from the perspective of globalization*.

On its own account, such reasoning depends on the capacity to differentiate many perspectives or frames from one another. For this purpose, I will take advantage of the Roland Robertson's works. Robertson has his own theory of globalization and it should be clear at all times that it is not the same as the one sketched out in the previous paragraph. Nevertheless, it is possible to alter Robertson's ideas so as to illuminate a series of ideal-types that will serve the theory I defend myself. Robertson distinguished four images of world order capable of affecting globalization conceived as a historical process. This approach will be here modified in two ways. First, in accordance with what has been stated above, globalization will be reconceptualised not as a historical process affected by various images of world order, but as one and only one of these images. Second, Robertson's images of world order will be reconceptualised as self-descriptions of society or perspectives on the whole world (these two concepts are here synonymous with each other). In the aftermath of this double modification, I shall reconstruct the distinction global/local in the light of the contrasts between the various self-descriptions.

The self-description of society

The concept of self-description is directly borrowed from Niklas Luhmann's systems theory. Luhmann asserts that society is a self-referential system. In other words, the system is defined as a closed network of operations. The system has an environment and consequently, something exists outside of the system and independently of it. However, the system doesn't have access to what lies beyond the boundary separating it from its environment. That boundary can be displaced, but this can only be done from the inside by means of the system's own operations. In effect, a system's operations connect only with other operations within the same system and that's exactly how a boundary separating an inside (the system) from an outside (the environment) is produced and reproduced. To underscore the importance that ought to be given to the concept of self-description, I will concentrate on a particular aspect of Luhmann's systems

theory, namely cognition. This will reveal the constructivist epistemology mentioned in the introduction.

When talking about cognition, I wish to address a series of questions dealing with the way society effectively functions as a self-referential system. Broadly, I want to enquire, how is knowledge of society made available to society? It should be clear right away that for society (as for any system) self-knowledge cannot be a simple matter of sense-impression. The problem in the present case is not so much that society can solely produce operations of communication (Luhmann 1989, 1990, 1995), so that literally it doesn't have any eyes or ears or tongue that would enable it to see or hear or taste. The actual source of difficulties is this; since society produces communications and nothing else, knowledge of society becomes available to society only when such knowledge is conveyed in communications. Under such conditions however, knowledge cannot be assessed or kept under control by comparing it with its presumed object. In short, knowledge of society turns out to be part of its own object.

This is not to say, of course, that knowledge of society cannot be conveyed in communications or that society has no knowledge of itself. Still the situation is such; knowledge of society and its object are not external to each other. Consequently, if there is knowledge of society constantly made available to society, we would be well advised to treat this knowledge as non ordinary. "Non ordinary knowledge" means that it's still knowledge somehow and yet it cannot be considered as a derivative of reality or secondary to it. Quite on the contrary, it is no less than constitutive of reality. How can it be? We can assume that knowledge of society basically refers to questions like, "What is going on in society right now?" At any given moment, there ought to be more than one answer to this kind of question. In these conditions, society proceeds by making a selection among all the available answers. The chosen answer is taken to be the good one, i.e. the accurate expression or representation of reality, the key to the enigma - "What is going on right now?" Hence, when choosing one answer over the others, the system actually turns itself into this answer insofar as the former comes to see the latter as corresponding precisely to the reality

that it is itself. In other words, the system exists as the reality it observes and/or the system constructs reality as it constructs itself. The construction of a reality and the construction of a system (as it is carried by the very same system through its observations) are the same process. The two constructions are coextensive with each other.

I don't mean to suggest that reality can be modified at will. As a matter of fact, it is not the events themselves (as contents or substances) that are at stake, but their signification or else the relationship between them. Sets of events become meaningful when the individual events are connected with one another so as to reveal a pattern (an example would be a relation of causality, quite simply, establishing that event A happened because of event B). One single set of events can give support to various, mutually exclusive interpretations, considering how the same events can be connected with one another in multiple ways (see Watzlawick & al. 1968, on the punctuation of the sequence of events). The problem of figuring out which interpretation is the correct one can be solved by expanding the set of elements, i.e. by producing more events in order to put any available interpretative pattern to a test. Indeed, by adding new elements, the patterns are pushed to their limits. As the situation evolves and changes, some patterns turn out to be untenable. On the other hand however, it also becomes possible to envision patterns never thought before. Thus the cycle must go on and on and consequently, any solution to the aforementioned problem can only be a temporary one.

This quickly covers what we need to know about cognition, self-reference and self-description in Luhmann's theory. The prefix "self-" in "self-description" implies two things. To begin with, when talking about society's self-descriptions, we mean descriptions *of* society (naturally enough). Furthermore, we also mean descriptions *made by* society. It should be clear that the system cannot do without self-descriptions, for only through its own operations can it entertain some knowledge of itself. But why is there in society more than one self-description of the whole system at the same time? How does society make a selection among all its self-descriptions? Finally, what is society then, if it is so, that it effectively describes itself in various ways at the same time? For the sake of clarity, let

me take the time to provide a few more details. The following points elucidate the questions above in the same order:

- For self-referential systems, knowledge is not simply established or secured by "having a good look" at the object it refers to. Like the brain, society cannot step out of itself so as to stare at itself, because as a closed network of operations, society can only produce more operations on the basis of the operations it has already produced. Hence knowledge is more akin to an internal process of evolution by way of trials and errors. It is for this reason that a multiplicity of self-descriptions must be in circulation at all times in society. To put it in another way, knowledge is not gained by mere contemplation, but by experimenting simultaneously with multiple hypothesises or scenarios constructed in a preliminarily manner. The various scenarios are as many versions of society's current history. By retelling society's historical trajectory in non concordant ways, these scenarios set up opposing expectations about the next events. Hereafter, the happening of the subsequent events, potentially surprising, provides the means for determining which scenario fits the on-going reality the best; it ought to be the one confirmed by *both the previous and the new situations*. In essence, experience is called in to help stabilize society's sense of its own reality.

- Of course, the aforementioned events (i.e. the events coming after the structuring of expectations in the form of various self-descriptions) take place in society and are produced by the same system as further communications. Yet at the moment of their production, they are not entirely under society's control. Accordingly, there is always a risk for previously defined expectations to be contradicted by the subsequent course of action. This probability is guaranteed, so to speak, by the fact that society partly depends on its environment to complete one operation, whilst the environment lays outside society's reach. Thus the aforementioned events are society's own operations, but the former are no simple occurrences, since the latter requires that some other

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occurrences take place in society's environment at the same time. The principle or mechanism in action here is the following: for one thing to happen, other things must happen too. In the end, this is how self-descriptions come to be selected in/by society, with the help of the environment, which means with the help of *chance*. Thus although all self-descriptions are necessarily produced within society and through society's operations, the business of selecting one self-description over the other cannot be handled with total freedom (as if *any* self-description could fit the situation just as satisfactorily). This was already implied by the fact that the selection process feeds on experience.

- For the system of society, the process of self-description is therefore the process of selection of self-descriptions. Could we imagine society selecting more than one self-description at a time? In the light of the preceding explanations, one may answer spontaneously, no. Because the many self-descriptions of society are such that they contradict each other, the selection of one self-description ought to go hand-in-hand with the rejection of its competitors. This being said, it is nevertheless possible for society to embrace more than one self-description at a time. One must remember that society is not a homogeneous space. In society, numerous operations are being produced at the same time. If the system can indeed be seen as a space, then its operations are not evenly distributed in it. Rather they gravitate around "strange attractors." Each of those constitutes a panoramic site offering a unique view over society as a whole. In one single site, only one self-description can be selected at a time. However, as these sites multiply, the unity of the system comes to be reflected in more and more different ways (for this reason, Luhmann speaks of society's unity as "unitas multiplex," i.e. as a paradox). Thus we say that in society there is room for more than one self-description at a time insofar as that there is more than one of those strange attractors in action in the system (there are multiple attractors because society is differentiated into many subsystems – see Luhmann 1989). Yet from one site to the other, the various self-descriptions continue to

contradict and oppose each other, for *each single site ultimately corresponds to one self-description in particular* (so that sites come to eclipse or absorb one another as self-descriptions substitute each other through the flow of society's operations).

The visual metaphors of space and site require us to remain careful as they can easily mislead us under the circumstances. We wrote that sites are located in space. In a way, the opposite is true just as well. Each site contains space (not some space, but all the space there is). The point is that the constitution of sites in space is necessary for space to reveal or unfold itself. Each site is a recreation of space inside of space. Accordingly, differences in sites are differences in the way space is recreated or duplicated. Indeed, different self-descriptions give us different accounts of societys' past evolution, present state and potential future. Therefore, when talking about space, we are not talking about normal, classical, Euclidian geometrical space. This is something worth keeping in mind, since we want to discuss globalization.

Globalization as society's self-description

When saying that globalization is one of contemporary society's self-description, the goal is to compare it with other self-descriptions and also to examine how the relation with other self-descriptions is reflected in globalization. But what reasons do we have for suggesting that globalization could be one of society's self-descriptions? To start with, globalization presents itself in society by first appearing at the level of discourses. To put it in another way, globalization is something society communicates about. It's not enough – much worst, it's inaccurate – to ascertain that people talk about globalization because they happen to have become aware of it one way or another (for a critique of the empiricist imagination implied here, see Guy forthcoming). Without communications about it in society, globalization wouldn't be somewhere "out there" waiting for people to become aware of it.

For society, globalization exists only to the extent and as long as the system continues to generate communications on such topic. Thus the study of globalization must begin by adopting a second-order point of observation (Luhmann 2002, Von Foerster 2003). The objective therefore is not to undergo "quality control," i.e. to double-check on-going communications about globalization by verifying their truth-value or reality-value one more time. Instead attention must shift from reality to the observer behind it. This is not to say that globalization is not real at all, but that as a reality, globalization is nevertheless the construction of some observer. Those who wish to decipher globalization's secrets are here told to examine how the observer observing globalization proceeds to do so; and this observer happens to be the system of society.

Another worth-noting detail is the fact that communications about globalization are at the same time communications about the state of the world (the globe) insofar as globalization qualifies the world as a whole. This is exactly for this reason that globalization ought to be admitted as one of society's self-descriptions. In essence, society and the world are the same. This is valid if the world is understood in its phenomenological sense. In effect, in Luhmann's theory, society is the system encompassing all operations of communication (Luhmann 1990, 1995). Consequently, at the level of communication, society is the horizon that cannot be crossed nor left behind. Hence at this level, society is quite simply inescapable and this is precisely why society can be seen as coextensive with the world. That the term "the world" can otherwise refer to planet Earth is not a counter-argument, for even this has to be signified in society by way of communication, like all the rest. In these conditions then, we can assume instead that, portraying the world as planet Earth is directly implied (among other features) in the specific self-description of the system of society that globalization has to offer.

A notion of insurmountable unity is embedded in both the concept of the world and the system of society. Moreover, a similar unity is expressed in the general discourse on globalization. This is the chain of elements that gives support to our hypothesis. We now understand why the observer producing observations on globalization (by engaging in communication

about it) must be the system of society itself. Finally, as a discourse or stream of communications carrying a self-description of society, globalization amounts to a cosmology in its own right. Whereas the idea of cosmology probably sounds more familiar (or less puzzling), the concept of self-description has been preferred anyway, as it specifically enlightens the two aspects central to our argument - (1) communications about globalization are produced inside society (the fact that this is the case is necessary); (2) communications about globalization are propositions about society (that is, the world, the horizon).

Of course, admitting that globalization is a self-description of contemporary society, doesn't force us to conclude that there are no other alternative self-descriptions in the system. As explained earlier, it is the opposite situation that ought to be case. Each self-description defines a site or a point in space (in society) where the whole space (society) can be looked at. By moving from one site to the other, we see society (space) changing faces, taking different aspects. The key to understand the distinction global/local lies in the relation between these other alternative self-descriptions and globalization itself. Essentially, what is local is so only relatively to what is global, which in turn corresponds to how reality is accounted for in the self-description of society that globalization corresponds to. What could these other alternative self-descriptions possibly be? The moment has come to call Roland Robertson for help, if only to betray (respectfully) his ideas for our own purpose.

Roland Robertson's theory of globalization

Robertson defines globalization as a process of structuration through which the world as a whole (the globe, planet Earth) is increasingly reorganized as a single place (Robertson 1992). This is not to say necessarily that the world is becoming more and more unified or homogeneous. The globalization of the world is expressed by patterns of inequalities across regions or continents just as well. The concept of structuration in Robertson's definition needs to be studied closely. On one hand, the

concept is meant to underscore a non exhaustive list of major social transformations in history, such as the creation of the United Nations for instance or the spread of new information technologies throughout the globe (ibid. 58-59). On the other hand, the concept is also meant to draw attention on the reflexive nature of social activities. Human beings do not react to the situation they face in a mere mechanical way. Human beings give meaning to their lives. They interpret their experiences as they go through them. Essentially, human beings do what they do because of the way they understand the circumstances they found themselves in. Such understanding motivates individuals to engage in specific forms of social activities and organizations so as to reproduce them and sustain them across space and time with unforeseen consequences (Giddens 1984). Accordingly, globalization doesn't simply take place all by its own. The series of historical changes behind it are carried by human beings. Thus there must be a cultural (interpretative, reflexive) dimension in globalization (Tomlinson 1999, 11-12).

In order to remind us of this fundamental dimension, Robertson suggests thinking of globalization as a problem. People currently live in a world which has been changing and which continues to change under the impact of globalization. Moreover, people are more and more aware of the fact that their world is increasingly reorganized as a single place (again, for a critique of the idea of "growing global awareness" and the empiricist imagination behind it, see Guy forthcoming). By way of consequence, people now have to make a decision for themselves - where do they go from here? Robertson calls globalization a problem because he wants to put emphasis on this human factor precisely. Indeed, in order to answer the question "what to do next?" people must first figure out what globalization actually means for them. They must find a way to make sense of the mass of events that they are experiencing, some positive, some negative. Needless to say, as social scientists, we can expect people coming from different backgrounds to have different interpretations of globalization. As a process of structuration, globalization is propelled in turn by these interpretations. Robertson believes that due to the discrepancies between these many interpretations, we should also expect globalization to be pulled in different directions, possibly in complete opposition with one another.

Finally, Robertson sees a close relation between globalization and modernization. As the history of sociology reveals it, the major changes that rocked Western countries on a scale never seen before from the nineteenth century onward (industrial production, market economy, democratic ideals, bureaucratic state, workers movement, etc.) left many social commentators apprehensive or puzzled. For example, Emile Durkheim worried about the risk of anomie due to a higher level of division of labor, while Max Weber feared that newly established democracy would be the death of charismatic leaders. Nobody ignored or could deny that the world wasn't the same anymore. Whilst the evidences were irrefutable, opinions remain hesitant as people were asking themselves - is the world changing for better or worse? Are new plagues coming our way? What can be done about them? This is to say, Robertson explains, that many people of this period pictured themselves as coming to a cross road. As they were witnessing modernization's unprecedented consequences on social order and in human affairs, they were presented with a dilemma. In Robertson's analysis, they understood this dilemma as being forced to choose between Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft as Ferdinand Tönnies defined these terms.

The concept of Gesellschaft (or society) designates a voluntary legal association based on personal rational self-interests. The concept of Gemeinschaft (or community) on the other hand depicts a group of individuals tied to a common place of origin and by a sense of collective identity embedded in shared values, ideas and experiences. At the end of the nineteenth century, Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft were seen as meeting face-to-face. The confrontation was taken as the central feature of the new unsettling age. Accordingly, in order to move toward more peaceful times, it was understood that one of the two options had to be picked at the expense of the other. Preferences given to one option or another were linked to specific visions of modernization, optimistic or pessimistic. Some were convinced that the new historical conjuncture was a disaster –considering for instance how the on-going transformations were damaging to the traditional authority of Christian faith – and privileged Gemeinschaft over Gesellschaft. Others believed that modernity was not a poison, but a cure, arguing that any current social difficulties were not

representative of the new age at all, but were in fact caused by the presence of old elements that had to erase. Those other ones preferred Gesellschaft instead of Gemeinschaft.

To sum up, modernization exemplifies what Robertson has in mind when he sees globalization as an analogous problem in an attempt to bring back the concept of culture (as implemented by individuals caught up in history) in the sociological analysis of the phenomena. For Robertson, a good theory of globalization shouldn't limit itself to describe important evolutionary trends and structural patterns at the level of the globe (international division of labor, monetary flows, migrations flows, etc.). Such a theory must also take into consideration the different meanings ascribed to globalization in general by the individuals living under the conditions created by it. Robertson believes that the concepts of Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft can help us circumscribe the actual variety of interpretations and reactions. Robertson therefore identifies four "images of world-order" (Robertson 1992, 78-79): *global Gemeinschaft 1* (or many communities throughout the world), *global Gemeinschaft 2* (or one world community), *global Gesellschaft 1* (or many societies throughout the world) and *global Gesellschaft 2* (or one world society).

Images of world-order are connected with dimensions of what Robertson calls the global field (also known as global-human condition) (ibid, 27). The latter corresponds to the overall conjuncture, the process of structuration of the world as a whole has progressively constituted. In this way, a new set of analytical distinctions has taken shape today thanks to globalization, like in the past a conceptual opposition between Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft emerged out of modernization. In this new set, the concepts of individuality, national society, humankind and world-system of societies have been separated from each other (see also Waters 1995, 42-43). Each of these concepts constitutes a dimension of the global field as Robertson talks about it. The global field circumscribes human activities, both materially and ideally (or ideologically). In this context, the many dimensions of the field are like backgrounds of symbolic references or

resources for human behavior. In other words, human beings can make use the four concepts mentioned above to interpret their life and decide a course of action thereafter. Yet this ought to be done by siding for one concept or dimension at the expense of all the others.

Robertson's four images of world-order are detailed below (for more discussions, see Beyer 1994, Holton 1998):

- *Global Gemeinschaft 1:* this image depicts the world as inhabited by numerous communities mostly closed to each other. This image stands in relation with the concept of individuality for the reason that each community is conceived as unique when compared to the others (considering its customs, its institutions, its history, etc.). There are two versions of this image - one symmetrical and one asymmetrical. The symmetrical version states that the numerous communities are all equal to one another. The asymmetrical version states on the contrary that one community in particular rises above all the others as a morally superior civilization.

- *Global Gemeinschaft 2:* this image is linked to the concept of humankind and consequently depicts the world as inhabited by one single global community. There are no frontiers, no division in the world, we are told, since all humans presumably belong to the same tribe or family. The whole globe is nothing more than a big village. Again, the same image exists in two different versions where the world community can either be centralized or decentralized. Religious movements and peace movements are given by Robertson as examples for the centralized version and the decentralized version respectively.

- *Global Gesellschaft 1:* this image refers to the concept of national society. In its symmetrical version, this image portrays the world as

consisting of many politically autonomous units. These national societies are thought to be more open than their counterparts previously sketched in "global Gemeinshaft 1." They interact and exchange quite a lot with one another, but only as long as it serves their respective self-interest. Thus each national society remains a master of its own destiny and relation in-between societies are built and broken without much difficulty. In the asymmetrical version, one national society reigns supreme over all the others as a hegemonic power.

- *Global Gesellschaft 2:* In this last image, the world is said to be structured as a whole on the basis of some kind of organization, global in scale and in scope. However, the unity of the world is not natural as in "global Gemeinschaft 2." Rather it is an institutional achievement with a social history behind it. Furthermore, this achievement can assume a decentralized form (as in the case of a world federation) or a centralized one (as in the case of a world government). Naturally enough, this image is tied to the concept of world-system of societies, the last dimension of the global field.

From images of world-order to society's self-descriptions

In Robertson's theory, the relation between globalization and the images of world-order goes like this - by imagining a formal set including four different elements, we would agree to say that in Robertson's mind, the images are represented by the elements inside the set, while globalization corresponds to the whole set. In the light of the same metaphor, this is how I now wish to recapture Robertson's ideas for the benefit of my own theory. For me, globalization does not coincide with the whole set, but only with one element inside of it. The other elements along side globalization are alternative self-descriptions of society, whereas the whole set indicates the general process of describing the system of society (as the process of selection of one self-description or another by means of society's own

operations). In other words, my wish is quite simply to take Robertson's images of world-order and turn them into self-descriptions of society. Such translation is justified by the fact that the system of society as Luhmann conceives it, is already interchangeable with the whole world or the horizon, whereas speaking of "the globe" is nothing more than one of the stratagems to address the world's unity (the system's unity) within the world (within the system).

We should recall that for Robertson, none of the images of world-order actually depict what the world (or planet Earth) has become today. Indeed, the images of world order are not to be confused with the global field (or global-human condition) itself. The images delineate what the world could become henceforward, would the human beings work to change their conditions one way or another. This is an interpretation I break away with for the sake of my own theory of globalization. Following Robertson, I still seize the four images as if they were meaningful propositions alluding to the world as a whole. However, the content I ascribe to them is factual in nature (or descriptive) rather than moral (or prescriptive). This is to say that for me, the intent behind these propositions is not to specify how society or the whole world could be organised in the future, if not right now, but only how reality happens to be working in the present moment in time.

Such move to adapt Robertson's ideas automatically raises one very important question; among the four images of world-order imagined by Robertson, which one should be considered as equivalent to globalization as one of society's self-descriptions? The answer is global Gesellschaft 2. The matter almost speaks for itself. There is not much secrecy about the many phenomena globalization supposedly involves. We all learned the song and we all know it by heart by now. When it comes to globalization, we all start to talk about free trade, transnational corporations, financial integration and currencies markets. We go on and discuss a bit about business practices like outsourcing and subcontracting. Then we continue and say something about the new information technologies, from microprocessors to fibre optic to Internet, providing the infrastructure which supports most of the economic side of globalization. A few words are mentioned about the emergence of new economic powers like India and

China. Some comments are added about worldwide migration movements triggered (at least partly) by the new international division of labor. This eventually draws attention to some of the cultural aspects of globalization, since ideas and symbols characterizing collective identities (ethnic, racial, religious or other) are travelling along side money, commodities, knowledge and workers. Sooner or later, some people cannot help themselves but to remind the rest of us that globalization produces as much poverty and risks as wealth and opportunities and that there is a huge gap between globalization's winners and losers. Moreover, at one time or another through the discussion, the role of organisations (national and international as well as governmental and non governmental) is addressed, since it is them that do most of the work supplying globalization with standardized frameworks for interaction (human rights regimes, environmental protection regimes, national policy blueprints, etc.).

When Robertson is saying that the image Gesellschaft 2 entails a form of global organisation, he's thinking about one possible solution to the problem of globalization. For this reason, he seems to be talking about a bureaucratic type of organisation with staff, offices, hierarchies, budgets, etc. While I want to use the same image, I give the word "organisation" a different meaning, since I confound this image with globalization rather than opposing the two. For us then, "organisation" is meant to designate the kind of state we find the world in. Hence what globalization implies essentially is that today's world is organised, that it is effectively structured, although maybe loosely only, through a range of networks and flows of electronic bits, material goods, abstract ideas, human beings, etc. None of the three other images of world order adequately replicate this scene or stage. In Gemeinschaft 1 and Gesellschaft 2, the whole world's unity or the world's autonomy as a unit of its own is underrated or neglected, if not dismissed. This is not the case in Gemeinschaft 2, but in this last instance, the world's unity is given as natural, whereas it has to be considered as an achievement.

The distinction global/local

Let us return to the distinction global/local. The first side of the distinction, namely the global value, is the one attached directly to globalization as a self-description of society. In this self-description, the system of society, the world which is our horizon, is depicted as being determined, in most part at least, by global factors of one sort or another (see previous section). Accordingly, one can catch a glimpse of globalization whenever one comes across communications evoking such factors. What about the other side of the distinction? In the same way I have joined globalization with the image of world order called Gesellschaft 2, I now link the local with the other images of world order, the ones Robertson calls respectively Gemeinschaft 1, Gemeinschaft 2 and finally Gesellschaft 1. It should be noted that this list is not limited in principle. What matters in all cases is the contrast (the distinction) with globalization. More precisely, the local corresponds to these *other descriptions of society as seen from the perspective of globalization*. The fact is that the observers who observe society and who describe it in the form of globalization are also capable of observing other observers who observe society like they do, but who otherwise describe society in different ways. It is these other observers and their observations that embody *what expresses a local value according to the first observer*.

When globalization is selected as the best description of society under the immediate circumstances, globalization appears as reality itself. To be exact, what is at stake is not the mere existence of certain social practices, or transnational corporations, or technological equipments, etc. In other words, the precise object of the debate is not, or not solely, to decide whether these phenomena are concretely taking place or not. What matters more is the actual influence these phenomena may have on the on-going course of events. When globalization is accepted as the reality we live in, it follows that a special causal power is attributed to networks and flows that cross over state boundaries, so that they are interpreted as the main forces that currently cause things in society to be what they are. Consequently, within this perspective, whichever observer thinks and acts as if society was on the contrary animated by some other forces – like the mutually

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agreed partnership between free sovereign states as in the symmetrical version of the image Gesellschaft 1 or the division between civilized people and barbarians as in the asymmetrical version of the image of world order entitled Gemeinschaft 1 – will be found to be "out of touch" with reality (that is, with globalization). Such observers will still be admitted as part of globalization (as part of reality), but only by being placed at a local level (it's still convenient to talk about levels, although it may be misleading too – see below).

Where is the local to be located then? It turns out that this is not exactly the right question to ask, for what we are dealing with is something that has more to do with time than with space. Indeed, one steps into, or otherwise falls at, the local level whenever the world stops being described in the form of globalization or whenever globalization is replaced with another description of society. Accordingly, if the local is framed with boundaries, one must realise that the latter doesn't exist in geographical or physical space, but only in the streams of communication the system of society generates as it continuously reproduces itself. Accordingly, one doesn't move from the global to the local by covering a certain distance so as to reach a certain place on the face of planet Earth. Rather the passage from the global to the local corresponds to or is triggered by a change in social interaction. At the local level, the world (more precisely, to repeat again, the phenomenological horizon the system of society coincides with) doesn't take the aspect of globalization anymore, but some other aspect. This difference in aspects or appearances necessarily translates into a difference in social behaviour and social coordination. People don't talk about and react to the same things anymore. Above all, people don't talk about globalization and react to it or else they don't see it as the reality they already all live in, but instead as an alien force coming from afar. In brief, the local pops up wherever this change happens and in theory it can happen anywhere.

When it comes to the local, we must therefore distinguish two perspectives - one external and one internal. It is only from the external perspective that the local adopts such a title. From the internal perspective, the local is not the local, but a complete vision of the world (once again, the phenomenological horizon) and accordingly a world of its own. Following this reasoning, we must dismiss two common ideas about the relation between the local and the global. First, contrary to what the distinction between whole and parts leads us into thinking, *the local is not contained inside the global*. Rather the former is *as big* as the latter and therefore has to be positioned *next to* it, since both of them show us an entire world. Actually, they both show us the same world - society. Second, contrary to what the distinction between modes of integration implies, *the local and the global do not merge or mix or fuse with one another*. This confusion may be caused by the fact that society can virtually be described in different ways at all times. Social scientists may react to this situation by trying to include all descriptions of society into one coherent frame. Yet this only produces poor results, as the frame is not so coherent in the end. Again, social scientists move around this difficulty by claiming that ambiguity is an intrinsic part of today's reality. For those aiming at observing how other observers go on with their observations (and their self-observations), this is not entirely convincing. For instance, it is not quite clear whether the ones some social scientists are eager to call hybrids, actually define themselves as such (see for example Pieterse 1995). I believe there is a better solution to account for the relation between global and local (namely, between the many descriptions of society). Quite simply, I suggest introducing time as a variable. Thus in time, and contrary to the third definition mentioned in the introduction, global and local never meet face-to-face with each other. Rather *they alternate with one another*.

There are many descriptions an observer can use to make sense of or give shape to reality. Moreover, descriptions are akin to points of view inasmuch as different descriptions can show us a same object while ascribing different meanings to it. Accordingly, there are objects that globalization as a point of view enables us to observe that can be observed from some other point of view just as well. Although these objects' meaning varies from one

description to the other, they never take more than one meaning at a time. It is so since no observer can proceed by embracing all points of view simultaneously. It follows that the multiplicity of descriptions, perspectives and meanings doesn't reveal itself at one particular point in time (that is, instantaneously), but only across time (through a chain of consecutive events). As the chain of events continues to extend, a chance (or risk) arises for *oscillating from one side of the distinction global/local to the other*. In fact, observing systems periodically revise the operations of observations they previously produced. In this way, values ascribed to objects in the world are occasionally inverted; global objects are turned into local ones and vice-versa. Hence objects adopt alternatively one value and the other, but at no time can one object take on both values concurrently.

A word on globalization and region before the conclusion… Although there is a strong tendency to think so, regions are not irreducible to what is global and what is local. In the context we are concerned about, phenomena are either global or local. There are no other possibilities. Accordingly, the concept of region cannot be accepted as a third term. On the other hand, we can perfectly conceive things like global regions and local regions. But otherwise, within the perspective of globalization – considering that globalization is precisely that, a perspective – potential entities like "regional phenomena" are dismissed. How so? In many cases, on closer inspection, "regional phenomena" are in fact explicitly offered or implicitly portrayed in opposition to global ones. As a result, "regional phenomena" are actually meant or ought to be understood as synonymous with "local phenomena" and so the logic of our arguments reaffirms itself. We don't mean to suggest that there is something fundamentally wrong with region as a research concept. Again, it is of course perfectly possible to talk about regions. But anything that is distinguished must be distinguished from something else, so we cannot help but work with binary codes or bivalent tools. Trios as elementary forms (like say, local-regional-global or local-national-global) are rejected on this ground. Still it should be clear that all this relates to globalization as a specific self-description of society. Accordingly, one could suggest that region belongs to a self-description

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other than globalization (perhaps Gemeinschaft 2 which presumably articulates itself around the distinction between universal and particular).

Conclusion

In his book about the system of the mass media, Luhmann writes:

> The media designate what they are communicating about and must therefore distinguish it. For example, they inform people about scandals and in doing so must presuppose that non-scandalous behaviour would have been possible as well. What is not reflected here, however, is that one could pose the question (which a sociologist might pose) why something is even being observed in the schema scandalous/non-scandalous at all (…) (2000, 118).

What we explained in this article about the distinction global/local is essentially equivalent to what Luhmann says here about scandals. Let me restate my central ideas. To begin with, there is a connection between the systems of society as Niklas Luhmann understands it and the world inasmuch as the latter doesn't refer to the planet Earth, but to the phenomenological horizon meaning it is associated with. This connexion goes as follows: *society is the world*, because it constitutes the aforementioned phenomenological horizon. Accordingly, statements aiming at describing the world, like for instance "we now live in a globalizing world," depict society by the same token. Hence the idea that globalization has to be interpreted as a self-description of contemporary society rather than an actual process of social change. Despite that, globalization doesn't appear as the sole self-description made available in social communication. The distinction global/local comes about as a reflection on the relation between the many self-descriptions of society. This is all in accordance with the specific content globalization as a one potential self-description of society concretely has to offer. In this self-description, the world (the system of society) is portrayed as being determined by networks and flows leaping across state boundaries. When globalization is selected as the best description of all within one particular context, the other descriptions are conversely found faulty. They don't seem to concur with the on-going events and thus they are labelled as local by default.

The relation between the various self-descriptions of society can be exposed furthermore with the help of Roland Robertson's ideas. Robertson speaks of globalization as the structuration of the world as a whole. This process can take different directions in so far as different worldviews can propel it. Robertson himself identifies four worldviews, so that in the end his fundamental proposition can be formulated as X: {a, b, c, d}, where X stands for the structuration of the world (or globalization), whilst a, b, c and d stand for the various worldviews. Knowing that the world refers to society itself (following the above reasoning), I give the same variables alternative definitions. First, X indicates the generic activity of describing society. Second, globalization becomes one way to achieve such a goal among many others (one letter among the four contained in the whole set). The reader should keep in mind that descriptions of society are parts of the system they presumably describe, considering that they have to be produced necessarily through operations of communication. In these unsettling conditions, taking the good descriptions apart from the bad ones turns out to be highly problematic. The many pictures of reality cannot simply be put side by side with reality itself. The way out consists in confronting the many pictures with one another. As Robertson indeed shows us, there are effectively many possible images of the world and globalization is ultimately weighted against them.

One could say that what is global and what is local have no reality to a sociologist, i.e. for a second order observer. However, I contend that global and local are very much real for the system of society, whereas society in turn is real for a sociologist, for it is the observer that he or she wishes to observe. Admittedly, the method I advocate (Luhmann's method) doesn't help people (experts or laymen) to deal "more effectively" with their lives or the work they have to do (by reducing "costs of operations" for instance). Rather this method aims at making room for more complexity in our scientific descriptions. What about research in the future? How to study globalization once we replace first order observation with second order observation? We can start anew by looking for specific social situations where the description of society arises in the flows of communication. We can then examine how various self-descriptions are disseminated depending

on the situations' practical requirements. As an illustration, we can think of the universities' advertisement campaigns for recruiting new students. In this case, what we call a social situation is created, as many universities address the same public. In their advertisement campaigns, the universities proceed by making a statement not only about themselves, but also about society as a whole so as to convince their targeted audience of their respective value as higher education institutions. Since the potential students or future clients are not part of the universities just yet, the latter must position themselves within the wider society if they want to reach the former. Therefore, we are dealing with a triangular configuration made up of the organizations of universities, the population or targeted audience and society as a whole. There are of course numerous differences between universities (size, location, history, programs, etc.) and we cannot presume that they all advertise themselves in the same way. But precisely for this reason, we can expect universities to give diverging accounts of society in order to achieve their goals (this brings back the metaphors of space and sites, i.e. a multiplicity of sites, each of them reflecting in a different way the common space they all are a part of). Some universities try to attract students by inviting them to contribute to some sort of universal objective of high importance, like the production of scientific knowledge or the social development of the humankind. By doing this, these universities promote the self-description of society we call, following Robertson, Gemeinschaft 2. Other universities choose to present themselves in relation to the nation-state they belong to. For instance, University of Ottawa is Canada's university. This other strategy denotes the self-description called Gesellschaft 1. Finally, there are universities depicting themselves as *global institutions or research centres*, thus relaying the self-description called Gesellschaft 2, otherwise recognized as globalization itself as explained in this article. By comparing many universities in this way, it could be shown how globalization expands across society and under which conditions.

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When one aligns the distinction global/local with the distinction whole/part, the so-called layer cake turns into… a pie!

I don't mean to say that as a rule we shouldn't bother clarifying the scientific concepts we work with. The point is that under the circumstances, the distinction global/local is not taken as an analytical tool for studying one research object. Rather the distinction is hereby conceived as the research object itself insofar as its use is embedded in discursive practices.

In fact, these words most probably already had a meaning of their own even before university researchers started using them on a regular basis (Waters 1995, 2).

I must mention two other (very stimulating) papers also dealing with the distinction global/local with the help of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory: Wastell 2001 and Staheli 2003.

One finds a brilliant illustration of this principle in Jorge Luis Borges' short story "Ibn-Hakam al-Bokhari, Murdered in His Labyrinth" (in Borges 2004). The story revolves around an improbable maze, a king in exile, his servant and an unidentified body. The reader is presented with two different ways to assemble this handful of elements so as to give support to two contradictory accounts. For instance, in one account, the body is the king's, whereas in the other it is his servant's; in one account, the maze is a protection against an enemy, whereas in the other it is a lure driving the same enemy intro a trap; etc.

For this reason, there should be no confusion between "selected by chance" and "selected with the help of chance."

For another reflection on the concept of the world in sociology that otherwise also finds its inspiration in Robertson's work on globalization, see Turner 1994.

The relation between globalization, the invention of microprocessors and the transformation of the production system, work organization and business practices in the second half of the twentieth century is described by David Harvey (1990) and Manuel Castells (1996). Moreover, both authors explain how the technological and economic changes behind globalization alter our experience of space and time. In a subsequent work, Castells also highlights the interface between globalization and social movements (Castells 1997). The cultural side of globalization (collective imaginaries, ethnoscape, mediascape, ideoscape, etc.) is explored by Arjun Appadurai (1996). The institutional side of globalization (organizational models, legitimating discourses, goals, ideals, programs, etc.) is studied by John W. Meyer and his collaborators (e.g. Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez 1997). Zygmunt Bauman insists that globalization is not only advantageous for some, but also – and simultaneously – disadvantageous for others (1998). Finally, David Held, Anthony McGrew and others provided us with a wide series of textbooks covering the many aspects of globalization: economic, political, cultural, technological, environmental, etc. (Held & al. 1999, Held & McGrew 2000, 2007a, 2007b, Held & Kaya 2007).

The distinction global/local has also been dealt with by Roland Robertson himself (1995, see also Beck 2000, 47-52). In Robertson's opinion, global and local should not be conceived as mutually exclusive. Accordingly, Robertson wants to promote the concept of glocalization. The present article develops a different approach.

Global/Local services

Fernando Salvetti

Speed, interconnection, immateriality, *net-economy*, global world...

Global services open up interesting prospects and not just for *globe-trotters*. I come across offers for *"global insight and services to explore a wealth of opportunities worldwide"* more and more often. *Global initiatives* are almost behind every corner we turn in our companies.

It is a shame that at times the *global-thought* sometimes spreads with such a speed that it does not see the myriad of local factors that respond to a hidden code, an *"embedded-code,"* rooted in the horizons of sense that direct people's thoughts and actions. This "code" conditions their visions, models their looks and forms/deforms the lenses in their glasses (the metaphorical ones are stronger and more widespread, we all wear them and we do not require a medical prescription to do so).

I am not a *"no-global"* let alone a *"no-logo"* person. I am rather a lover of *logos* (Heraclitean) where "everything flows;" it is the continuous change that creates the environment for the invention of new products, new services, new worlds. I am fascinated much more than worried by the dynamism and *chances* of *"surmodernité"* ("over-modernism").

I am an anthropologist, a consultant and an entrepreneur attracted by open society. But I fear some of its enemies, such as the projected *global business initiatives* that look at things with "God's eye" and are convinced that they act on the basis of a universally valid model. For example, a marketing action thought to be *"worldwide"* in Milan rather than in Rome, Paris, London, Hong Kong or in the Silicon Valley, is implemented into the world with small local variations (more or less concerning details). A classic case: the same message and the same promotional actions all around the world, changing perhaps some detail in the publicity campaign's photography, for example the skin colour of the *testimonial*.

You need to know how to swim in the river where everything flows and know how to navigate the tides whilst possibly being aware of the rocks and sharp spikes, the peculiarities of the river bed and the specific hydrological characteristics of the different areas. The situation is similar in *global business*, particularly in services: it is not enough to simply change some details such as the skin colour or the description of a service. Even if the indicators for sales and proceeds are positive at least for a while, homologation and standardisation as the *drivers* of action preclude the occasion to "listen" to the local context; to interpret it and to revise the singularities within a business strategy effectively suited to the geo-cultural chessboards of reference.

One requires *cross-cultural intelligence*, the ability to "grasp" at a deep level the local context and the most common thought processes, whilst being aware that "*the receiver, not the sender, defines communication*."

To this day there are many actions implied in terms of cultural colonialism/tailorism, of standardisation. The interpretations of local contexts aimed at supporting *global business initiatives* with real cultural knowledge of the more common thought processes and actions, rooted in the different market contexts are still few in number. The risk is obvious, especially if we believe as Michael Porter does, that "*strategy is to be different*."

Managing in Asia: conflict, incomprehension, or successful relations? The difficulties encountered by Western expatriate managers in Asia

Pascale Reinhardt

> To penetrate China - which functions somewhat like an oyster that opens its shell and closes it, filters what it chooses to and digests it in its own way - one must be fascinated by it.
>
> *José Freches*

Working and succeeding in Asia depends more on "knowing how to be" rather than on "know-how." Long-term cultural and psychological support of these new expatriates is one of the most effective means to help them accomplishing their mission and to develop both professional efficiency and personal "alignment."

To the best of our knowledge, **few studies on the subject of "post-negotiations" exist.** "It's after the official negotiations that everything begins," says one of those interviewed in this study. Daily interaction, whether at work or elsewhere, can see crystallization or a smoothing out of the managerial or inter-cultural difficulties between Western expatriates and the Asian people with whom they work. It is from this angle that we have chosen to approach this study, through interviews conducted with 68 people who worked in Asia between 1984 and the present.

Over 15 years of experience as management consultant in Europe and in an inter-cultural context (principally in Anglo-Saxon and Asian environments), has allowed the author to ascertain that an individual's personal schematic representations can greatly facilitate, or render all the more difficult, working in Asia. In this study, regularly updated with the

help of various international firms interested in the results, we have developed a number of **hypotheses concerning integration** and attempted to **clarify or to quash certain impressions.**

How successfully integrated, in the context of pre-existing companies, were the mangers interviewed? In short, **is it possible for newcomers to Asia, with an imposed company mandate to make profits, to be effective?** How can they take adequate time to appropriate a portion of the existing network and managerial operations of their predecessors, work in a satisfactory manner, and begin to achieve their objectives as soon as they arrive?

The size of the studied group and the character entirely open of the interviews does not permit us to propose a description of the ideal conditions for " success " in Asia ("ideal" that our training as systemic analyst forbids us to search for…) Our objective was to **identify convergence or divergence of opinions** emanating from people having themselves lived the experiences they described, so that future expatriates could succeed in their mission and reap both the personal and professional benefits.

To speak of "the Asians" may seem an oversimplification when trying to understand the mechanisms of interaction between individuals, and the risk of clichés is great indeed when uniting nearly 2 billion people, with various cultures, under the same banner. By Asia, we mean countries in the Far East, where people speak mainly Tibetan-Asian languages (anthropologic categories): the managers we follow and who responded to the study work in China, Malaysia[102], Japan, South Korea, Viet Nam, Thailand and Cambodia.

Obviously, the initial culture of respondents varies. Behaviors and representations of the world of the German, British, and American managers interweaved have been widely observed by anthropologists and specialists of multicultural management such as Hofstede and

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[102] The Muslim characteristics of Malaysia were taken into account in the study, but not "singled out" in this article.

Trompenaars. Referring to the work of these specialists and also taking into account the initial Company culture will enhance the results described below. For example, uncertainty avoidance factor, power distance, time, efficiency have different meanings across Western cultures.

Moreover, the generic term " manager " must be interpreted in its widest sense : any person having responsibilities, hierarchical or not, who has made decisions in either technical, financial, strategic, training or other matters, and who had to answer to a European authority (not including independent consultants).

DIFFERENT REPRESENTATIONS OF THE WORLD

"One must observe an Asian person doing a puzzle: he takes the pieces in any order, searches, and the puzzle comes together by itself. We choose the corners first, then the edges, sometimes organizing the pieces according to an unexplainable logic, incapable of understanding whoever proceeds otherwise. And yet, is it not the completion of the puzzle that counts?"

"In Asia, not only 2 + 2 equals 4, one can also obtain the sum by dividing 4 into 100,000 little parts, or by sometimes exceeding 4 and then achieving the same result by subtraction."

"While we seek the why, most Asians will focus on the how."[103]

To the attentive western observer, Asia appears as a strange and paradoxical country. Strange, for the gap separating our interpretations and those of the Asians can be immense, all the while concealed by apparently similar behavior. After all, there is no great difference between designating ourselves by pointing at our nose rather than our chest; but this small difference in gesture reveals to us that our western conception of "me" is

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[103] All quotes are presented in quotation marks.

not the same as that of the Asians. Our "me" lies within the person; theirs is "face," the social image.

Asia is the heart of paradoxes, as witnesses the concept of a socialist market economy which, in principal, associates two conflicting terms. For the Asians, these paradoxes are not opposites, but arise from complementary logics. The key skill thus consists in managing tensions and conflicts without necessarily making choices, keeping all your options open while assuring that, except in situations of crisis, one alternative does not negate the other. Asian culture is first of all a manner of seeing, a way to understand and to interpret.

This thinking process elicits numerous and diverse behavioral consequences. Firstly, the process is segmented into regional cultures, equivalent in diversity to that, in the West, of the Danish culture in comparison to that of Italy. The different generations present quite various and contrasting sets of desires and values as well. And finally, the foreigner who has come to do business in Asia finds himself confronted with a very strong cultural organization, inherited from the famous "heavenly bureaucracy."

As described by some Asians people, **the Western approach to reflection is methodical**, the manager seeks to establish a set of general principles and then to apply them to specific situations. The implementation of the principles becomes increasingly complex, especially when he **acts in a persuasive manner**, meaning he forsakes his rational hat to enter into a mode of exchanges based on emotions and a sort of "emotional blackmail."

This idea is endowed with a strategic aim and combines classic actions, improvisation and emotional partition. The fact that the Western often mix ideals with a sharp sense of their own interests remains an enigma to the Asians with whom we were able to speak – the two attitudes appearing to them as paradoxical, if not mutually contradicting.

On a cultural level, Asia offers an entirely singular mode of thought with regards to western logic. The West developed an intellectual tradition know as "Cartesian," based initially upon an analytical approach, on the revealing

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of fundamental logic underlying the processes and events. The Asian tradition, for which concepts such as logic remain impossible to translate, rests upon a radically different approach. Their approach examines situations in their entirety, the problem and the context, and ignores the analytical approach that aims to identify all the variables and to establish causal relationships between them.

To the relatively "Cartesian" and reasoned approach of the Westerners, the Asians respond with a global, concrete, and analogical approach. In Asian logic, mostly inherited from Taoism, contraries do not oppose but complement each other, and what is true is not opposite to what is false. As with the *yin* and the *yang*, black and white are not mutually exclusive, and what is true is not opposite to what is false. The methods of reasoning founded on constraining logical constructions have little value in Asians culture. This is disturbing to the Westerners steeped in principles such as non-contradiction.

Following the example of writing, which is essentially figurative, Asian thought rests upon apprehension through the senses; it is a descriptive thinking, with recourse to analogies and metaphors rather than reasoning reputed to be logical. The Asians are more interested in the short term rather than the potential long term perspectives.

For Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, the spirit of conciliation must dominate. In reality, this principle is only applied within limited circles – amongst family and friends: *guanxi*, the network in Chinese. Decisions are made collectively, as individual decisions generate conflict. Unable to satisfy his needs, the Asian person will prefer not to express them.

Face, one of the cardinal principles of social life in Asia, is the credit that society confers to the individual and that he or she must preserve and enhance, without affecting that of others – all the while permitting the members of the network to do so as well. Relying on intermediaries in delicate situations is a sort of protection; the use of indirect speech allows one to protect oneself against risks. The apparent modesty is in fact a means to give *face* to the other.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

"After 13 years as an expatriate in China, the Chinese continue to surprise me every day"

Westerners, and particularly **the French, struggle to accept the representations of the world and the time-space conceptions of the Asians.** Today, only **time** spent in Asia and knowledge of the culture and the language help Westerners expatriates to overcome this constraint and to achieve their optimal effectiveness.

According to 75% of Asian people surveyed, amongst all the Westerners, it is especially with the French that relations are complicated. And yet, everyone, "Wasternophiles" or amateurs of Western culture, present themselves as patient and ready to offer help… providing their help be taken into consideration. *"It's as if you never learn – or perhaps you don't listen? " You are the only ones who cling to your all-powerful reasoning, even if proved wrong by experience. It is less pleasant on a personal level to work with Germans, but at least one obtains results."*

The **difficulties expressed** by the respondents can be classified into three categories:

- Tensions with Asian subordinates, with a direct impact on the Westerner's work;

- Complexity to understand how Asians function at work, relate to the hierarchy in Europe or with their peers;

- Cultural difficulties and problems outside of the workplace, with the administration, and with people outside of one's department.

The experience of working in Asia can be very destabilizing, in the long term, for a person poorly prepared for the opposition of cognitive models. The primary paths to improvement lay in a good knowledge of one's own **models of representation, individual support**, and a better

understanding, on the part of international management, of the specificity of activity in Asia in comparison to other expatriate postings.

Expression of satisfaction by the respondents is mitigated: people most satisfied with their experience are those who came to Asia on their own initiative and/or speak Asian. Part of the employees of international companies felt as though "thrown in the water."
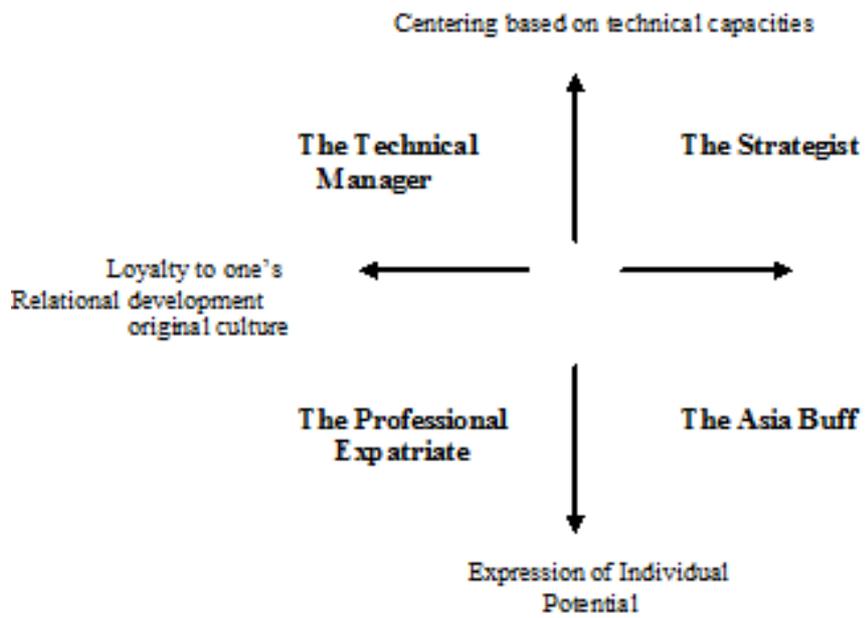
There does not appear to be a link between the date of the first arrival, age, sector of activity, multi-cultural education or the number of previous posts abroad and the fact that the experience be considered as generally satisfying. However, it is important to be accompanied by one's family. The **initial training of the expatriates** interviewed is essentially technical or sales-oriented. **Experience in the company** is not a deciding factor in the choice of expatriates to Asia. **The living quarters/jobsite have an influence on the success of integration**: the difficulties would appear to be greater outside of Beijing and Shanghai.

Training before expatriation to Asia could be improved. Beyond the minimum discovery of the language and culture, more **personalized training**, based on experimentation and the discovery of one's own reference models could be conceived to accompany the manager in a difficult environment. The training would have as a goal the understanding of modes of interpersonal relationships rather than negotiations.

For those who declared that their **experience was successful** (marks of 4 or 5+), **respect for the good manners and etiquette of the Asians is vital.** It is thus impossible for a Westerner to adapt and be respected if he insists upon maintaining his proper codes. These differences concern gestures as well as the verbal content of exchanges/encounters.

PROFILE OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Four manger profiles can be distinguished.

Centering based on technical capacities

The Technical Manager

The Strategist

Loyalty to one's
Relational development
original culture

The Professional Expatriate

The Asia Buff

Expression of Individual Potential

The Technical Manager: Proves to be little interested in Asian culture. He tends to avoid conflict and to try to resolve problems from a technical approach.

The Strategist: Arrived in Asia for the potential offered by the country. Speaks Asian, interacts with younger generations. Moves in various circles and does not evoke personal conflicts.

The Asia Buff: Feels a special bond to Asian culture. He expresses his own difficulties and adaptation. Sees conflict as a learning experience.

The Professional Expatriate: Shows a strong personality, bearer of responsibilities, he does not hesitate to confront delicate situations. He does not adapt his management style to the Asians.

COMPANIES

Companies are essentially industrial groups, established in Asia as 100% Western companies or under the guise of joint ventures with Asian partners.

Automobile: 3

Energy, Chemical: 4

Construction, materials: 6

Distribution: 4

Hi-Tech: 6

Agribusiness: 3 (excluding spirits)

Luxury: 4

Banking, Services: 5

Beauty products, Health: 4

Tourism, transports: 3

Education, training: 4

METHOD AND POPULATION OF STUDY

Exploratory method: 101 interviews conducted over a 2 year period. Semi-directive with analysis of the content, conducted with English-speaking employees expatriated by their company, or independents having chosen to establish themselves in Asia.

11 open questions:

- personal and professional data, including initial training background
- evaluation of the success, on a personal level, of their experience in Asia
- primary difficulties and areas of incomprehension encountered
- differences, similarities between the private and personal contexts
- evaluation of training received before departure

Elements analyzed:

- The terms used (more or less normative, open, technical...) which indicate the capacity to adapt, **relational development.**
- The fact that respondent referred to his base company, **loyalty to company culture.**
- The **status** of the employee of an international firm or of a person having looked directly for employment in Asia.
- Holding more or less strong opinions regarding the Asians, the desire to understand their modes of functioning and to learn the language.

CLASSIFICATION BY THEME OF DIFFICULTIES EXPRESSED

1. Direct hierarchical relations

    1A.   Following of orders/guidelines

            1Aa.   Recurrent errors

            1Ab.   Imprecise or false information

            1Ac.   Lack of logic. Personal "modification" of

procedures

            1Ad.   Blatant disobedience, laziness

            1Ae.   Blind obedience to orders given by

foremen

    1B.   Management

            1Ba.   Absence of feedback

            1Bb.   Difficulties re-centering, differing perceptions

of sanctions (+/-)

            1Bc.   Conduct of meetings: models to be re-

defined

    1C.   Difficulties finding effective factors of motivation

            1Ca.   Avoiding of risks, refusal to be delegated

responsibilities

            1Cb.   Turnover

1D.   Tensions between Westerners: with base company, colleagues, or Western clients

2. Functioning of the Asians in an environment of important changes

2A.   Different conceptions of the law and norms of the company

      2Aa.   Contractual difficulties

      2Ab.   Search for individual benefits

      2Ac.   Utilization of personal networks

2B.   Poor understanding of the status of the Western manager, perception which is exacerbated in the Asians hierarchy.

2C.   Difficult adaptation to time management systems

2D.   Surveillance, curiosity

3. General cultural context

3A.   Linguistic barriers

      3Aa.   Necessity to speak Asian?

      3Ab.   Role of the company

      3Ac.   Difficulties interpreting non-verbal communication

3B.   Understanding between generations of geographical differences

3Ba.	Contrasting behavior of different Asian generations

3Bb.	Behavioral patterns based on geography

3C.	Obligation to participate in non-professional social activities

3D.	Understanding and respecting etiquette/customs

3Da.	Gifts

3Db.	Money

3Dc.	Meals, alcohol

3Dd.	Others

3E.	Personal difficulties outside of professional context

FREQUENCY OF MAIN PROBLEMS EXPRESSED

Caused by subordinates

Imprecise or false information: 54%

Poor execution of tasks: 44%

Refusal or avoiding of delegated responsibilities: 34%

Different conception of laws and norms of the company: 29%

Difficulties to hear or accept re-centering: 23%

Blatant disobedience: 10%

Poor understanding of manager status, exaggerated perception of hierarchy: 10%

Search for personal financial benefits: 10%

Laziness: 8%

Caused by managers

Linguistic problems: 74%

Obligation to create personal relationships + non-professional social activities: 74%

Cultural errors. Difficulties respecting Asians etiquette/customs: 56%

Management and perception of time: 32%

Personal difficulties outside of professional context (living quarters, health care, supplies, spouse, children...): 32%

Tension with base company in the West: 32%

Difficulties understanding formal and informal networks: 25%

Difficulties interpreting non-verbal communications: 12%

Difficulties conducting a meeting: 12%

Relations with the Asian hierarchy: 10%

"Compulsory" consumption of alcohol: 8%

Surveillance: 7%

ATTITUDES DESCRIBED IN THE EXAMPLES

- Withdrawal, avoidance: 61%
- Physical or verbal violence: 8%
- Bad faith: 41%
- Confrontation: 6%
- Lies: 30%
- Long-term conflict: 8%
- Hostility: 20%
- "Coups de théâtre": 3%

QUOTE EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Poor execution of orders/guidelines

The errors cited often had grave consequences, in terms of security or the evolution of business. Numerous actions by Asian subordinates seemed irrational, especially when classical management methods and transmission of orders were employed. The situations were often incomprehensible and frustrating, sometimes unbearable if not dangerous.

Characterized as unforeseeable, these errors do not seem to serve as a learning experience to the subordinates; direct re-centering is difficult and destabilizing for the managers, especially the technicians. The terms used are often quite strong, laced with judgment of the person.

"They begin by ostensibly following the orders to show they work well, but I often have to intervene like a "firefighter" before I'm obliged to invest even more energy and have to start the whole process again. I can have full confidence in no one, for those who have previously performed well on one or two occasions can do the same thing," explains a manager of the Asian office of a Western manufacturer of industrial material.

Erroneous or false information

Relations with Asians subordinates, whether they speak English or not, were described as "complex and incomprehensible." "A long series of misunderstandings;" maintained by inappropriate decoding. Before the Asian subordinate has adequate time to get used to his superior's management methods, the national *face* seems to come into play : to protect his reputation as well as that of his friends and his organization, the Asian counterpart can go as far as manipulating the information, avoid making commitments, do nothing, dissimulate the truth...

"People rarely say "no" in Asia, but resort to ambiguous formulas that maintain a certain degree of confusion for Western people accustomed since childhood to clear approval or contradiction as a mode for treating an abstract subject."

Lack of logic: "Personal" modification of procedures

Numerous authors insisted on the fact that to the apparent rationality implying for the Westerner a sequence of causes and effects, Asian thinking in turn involves a process whereby the various elements are linked to multiple contingencies equally important to the final goal.

This divergence of thinking is described as a source for mutual growth, or as destabilizing for those who sometimes consider, often despite themselves, that their system of logic alone is effective. Such is the case for those who refuse to adapt to a mode of thinking every time they work in another country: "the employee must adapt to his employer."

Management: Those who are ready and willing to modify their management style speak of **time as a factor of improvement** of their managerial reactions, resulting in better choices of the methods used to motivate their employees.

"The Asians do not particularly share the "Shaddock" spirit (*why be simple when you can be complicated?*), yet the solutions they devise often seem convoluted, if not unsound."

"Why must we execute a task exactly as you proceed in the West? Is it not the final result that counts? I often heard this, and it drove me crazy."

Difficulties to re-center, different perceptions of sanctions (+/-)

Hypersensitive to criticism, the Asians do not consider a re-centering interview as an opportunity for personal growth: "it's as though they had to know everything in advance." The five rules of subordination established by the Confucian tradition forbid conflict between a superior and his subordinates. "When a Westerner opposes one of his subordinates, or summons him to a re-centering interview, **he breaks the codes and loses credibility**."

"I invented my own sanctions, basing them on what I understood of Asians hazing in the past. I swear I don't like reprimanding anyone in public, but it's the only re-centering that has an effect. And, to be honest, I sometimes feel I'm getting revenge!"

Tensions between Westerners: with the head office, colleagues, or clients

Often, the manager's position regarding his Westerner correspondents can be complex: words like frustration and a feeling of neglect are often used. When the Westerner "has resolved, in his fashion, certain tensions with his Asian colleagues, he still has to take time to explain his decisions to the head office or to his clients, far removed from the context."

"Top Western management continues to believe that the Asians function like westerners, and want to impose western conceptions *in extenso*, failing to see that local management is struggling to put them in place."

Not speaking Asians increases the feeling of lack of effectiveness or success

The relation that exists between a feeling of success and the fact of not being able to speak at least a few words of Asian is a constant: Not a single person who perceived their experience as unsuccessful spoke Asian, as with 55% of those with mitigated feelings. The Technical Managers and the Professional Expatriates are the most reluctant to learn the language.

"Even though I had taken night classes to study Asian during my four years at university, I found the language barrier very impressive; I had to invest a lot of energy to once again be technically effective."

"This language barrier provokes an isolation of foreigners from the Asians. This creates real problems of effectiveness; I've lost entire days of work which produced no result, other than a lot of frustration and resentment. These difficulties vanished once I finally spoke 1500 words of Asian. Afterwards the efficiency of my work progressed constantly. After 2 years I finally achieved a higher level of effectiveness.

Personal difficulties outside of the professional context

The difficulties explained are somewhat anecdotal. But, whether *Professional Expatriates* or *Asia Buffs*, the respondents cite them merely as the type of problems much easier to resolve than their professional difficulties. "Very quickly, in the personal context, I managed to acquire an effectiveness I could not achieve in the professional context."

QUALITIES NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT IN ASIA

As described by the respondents

Trying to grow radishes by pulling on them does not produce convincing results (Asians proverb)

"Asia is not a country; it's a World of and in its own, representing 20% of Humanity, with its rules, its History, its mode of thought, its unspoken rules and, above all, the Power of Numbers. Asia can fascinate or scare you, appear beautiful or inspire disgust, but, if one makes an effort to discover if but a small part, it's impossible to remain indifferent. Thus, it's necessary to leave your western references behind, and all that seems normal in the West can create mountains of problems in Asia."

Learn to "trigger" a coaching response from others.

Know where your identity is and how to refer to it, while being able to temporarily adjust to another method or behavior.

Speak a few words of local language. Acquire some cultural and historical knowledge.

Be able to question one's own attitude: Be aware to what extent our beliefs can affect our adaptation. Prepare arguments and behavior that contradict "our missionary character as holders of universal truths to be spread."

Develop the capacity to question one's personal models, to accept the observation without one's overly marked references. Know how to constantly question oneself, even after departure about "my personal reaction to nonobservance of commitments."

Show empathy: put yourself in the other's place to understand him, to better sense the totality of the elements comprising the relationship -

without necessarily having to adopt their point of view. Accept the differences and try to understand them.

Be patient with regards to the environment as you would be with yourself.

Maintain a global view of the problems: assure the delegation (cautious, some say) and sharing of tasks, idea often incompatible with the Western vision of management.

Know the terrain before going to work there: "My preceding job included regular missions to Asia. It was conceived as training/preparation for the expat position."

> "Our group has a rather solid expatriation structure: I made several trips in preparation and I'd been sent to another country in Asia, where I was even more isolated."

Use diplomacy when seeking information.

Do not openly contest official authority or decisions, in the original country as in local countries.

Learn to understand the interconnection of networks: "a complex linkage where each level of the network must be in harmony with the others, especially private/professional life. Rely on local expatriates networks, while questioning "set ideas" upon arrival.

Understand the mechanisms of "Culture Shock" and learn, ahead of time, to recognize its signs, while using pre-prepared and customized solutions to face it.

Know the rudiments of local etiquette and customs.

INTEREST AND IMPACT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS: OPINIONS

The opinions regarding training programs are mitigated. Certain groups propose themes entitled, depending on the case, "Intercultural Awareness," "Preparation Day for working abroad," "Asia.".. Work habits in Asia are sometimes outlined in a second session entitled "Negotiating and working in Asia" or "Going to Asia? Go well-equipped!" An introduction to geopolitics can allow one to understand certain international stakes.

Moreover, in only one Company do the Asian managers who come to work in Western countries receive training with the theme of: "Introduction to the local system."

A detailed analysis of the behavior of those studied, in the context of information gathered from documents, conversations or general training programs, is cited as one of the best ways to avoid committing "too many" cultural "faux-pas." However, most regret that the people who are sent by their companies, whether first-time expats or not, do not reflect further before leaving, about "**their personal capacities to accept such significant differences of behavior, management or daily habits... and how to help their people develop, whether Asians or not**."

"My biggest difficulty was a personal one, and caused me to question my professional qualities; I would have liked to be able to speak with someone, to be coached, like we say today."

"Some of my young colleagues seem satisfied with their training, given by someone who knows the Group and the differences between the West and Asia, and especially someone **who came back to help them, here, six months later, speaking about problems they had actually experienced.** I envy them - plus, they were at different sites, and the exchange of personal difficulties brought them closer together."

"I arrived without any training and I'm sure that my perceptions, totally wrong, did not help me understand my Asians colleagues. Luckily the technical questions brought us together! Mind you they were even more ignorant of my Western culture... which is a shame for employees of an important international Western Group!"

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"Just before leaving, I did a week of intensive Asians and a day of fairly comprehensive yet quite vague inter-cultural training. That helped, as I was able to learn a few basic phrases and especially to write and pronounce my name in Asians."

"I didn't receive any specific training, which I regret - language and cultural training are absolutely indispensable to be rapidly operational upon arrival."

"Following a 2-day training program, given by a Chinese person who'd been living in France for a long time, my wife and I had a false picture of Asia - rather traditional, poor, and little evolved - the old China of at least 15 yrs. ago. In fact, the South Western town where we live is a big city, with big buildings and large avenues, McDonalds… but still with an Asian atmosphere. **In any case, I knew nothing about what I was going to encounter professionally... and I hadn't been capable of asking myself what effect it would have on me.**"

CONCLUSION

"In Asia, everything is in constant motion.
In Asia, nothing, indeed, moves at all"

Western people working in Asia are confronted with a dual reality, which they perceive as contradictory. Their sense of adaptation, their desire to learn and to help those around them progress can be sorely tried by this double constraint.

Respect for harmony, the Confucian value of reference, entails a profound aversion by the Asians to open conflict. This translates into indirect games, not to the absence of conflict. These basic cultural traits give rise to numerous cognitive and relational consequences for the Western participants in the study. They are the principal source of confusion and misunderstanding, and for many of those interviewed, a prime obstacle to the effectiveness of their work within the Asian context.

Take time. If one adds the pre-eminence of politics over economics to the Asian cultural specificity (which includes the refusal of the universalism of methods for adapting to the environment and to the evolution of situations), one obtains a kaleidoscope with which the most well-adapted Western managers continue to learn from and perceive each situation. All agree that TIME is the best factor for professional integration in Asia, more than elsewhere, and that a minimum of 2 years after arrival is indispensable to become effective.

Know yourself and accept the other's point of view. To the difficult adaptation are added exaggerated reactions, only too natural in a complex

or hostile environment and responsible for behavior lacking in subtlety- an unconscious reaction to a potentially threatening situation. Cognitive adaptation will ultimately depend on the manager's ability to question his own habits and models of representation, and to learn from the difficulties encountered : to ask himself, before departure, about his own personal capacity to accept differences in behavior, management, or daily habits... and to help both his employees and his management to develop, whether Asians or not.

Understand one's own culture of conflict. A large part of those interviewed confirmed the initial impression according to which the Asians despise open or direct conflict, known to be socially unacceptable. The individual reactions of the respondents faced with somewhat latent situations depend on their personality and their ability to understand the other's point of view, whatever his culture. "We shouldn't be surprised by the fact that engineers are more successful in adapting to these new learning processes in a changing environment, for they have systems management training, and project management in particular."

Do not be "completely Western." With a tendency on the part of companies establishing themselves in Asia to conserve their Western culture, the risk is great for people destabilized in their daily environment (though not always aware of it) to want to impose their systems of management which do not correspond to what their Asian counterparts either expect or are able to absorb, even those who know the West. Among the most frequent traps, the idea of cuddling the newly-arrived expatriate, protecting him from the inevitable "culture shock," does not seem to facilitate adaptation. Those most protected on arrival are also those who later have the most difficulties adapting their methods to the differences manifested by their Asian subordinates, or able even to question these methods.

Speak local languages. Going to Asia without knowing at least a few words or phrases of everyday local language seems to be a mistake: all the managers who qualified their experience as "successful" or "very successful" showed interest, during the interview, for the language and culture of the country where they were to be established. Whether the interest was prior to or after their arrival, it allowed them to smooth out difficulties often presented by their less flexible colleagues as inevitable.

Living "glocally" with literacy success in the US Midwest

Loukia Sarroub

The research of K-12 literacy and language scholars (Auerbach, 1989, 1995; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Rowan, Knobel, Bigum & Lankshear, 2002) suggests that immigrants, poor people, print-illiterate families and boys are short-changed by schools that often operate under a deficit model or deprivation model (Varenne & McDermott, 1998) in which students' economic, language and gender status is the main determinant for school success. Youth are growing up in social and cultural worlds where literacy looks quite different from what is privileged in schools. Ideally, all high school students should be able to read and comprehend a variety of genres at the high school level, but in many states, including those in the Midwest, schools are finding that growing numbers of students who are not designated as special education students, often do not pass graduation reading exams on the first try and school districts have begun to draw on research in reading achievement at the elementary levels to address this situation.

Recent immigration from all parts of the world is a relatively new phenomenon in the Midwest and immigrants and refugees, as well as their hosts, are faced with new challenges to be a literate person fully participating in all social spheres. At the same time, middle- and high-school teachers find themselves in a rapidly changing demographic situation and must learn to become teachers of literacy. Thus, reading in the United States and elsewhere has been politicized to such an extent in intellectual and policy circles at local, state and national levels and in popular media that it has become difficult to reconcile ideological perspectives, scientific stances and best practices (Gee, 2000; Snow, 2000). Moreover, youth and their families remain in the center of these debates

about effective literacy instruction and are active agents of their reading or literacy practices. It is important to understand more broadly how researchers, teachers, policy makers, and families approach literacy; how they implement policies and strategies in and out of schools that create and develop readers among American, immigrant and refugee youth; and how these practices lead to success and self-sufficiency, two seemingly American goals.

To address the dilemmas mentioned in this introduction, I offer for discussion a set of themes that address (a) the challenges of recent immigration and resettlement, (b) the concept of glocality in connection to youth literacies and transnationalism, (c) the Midwest as a glocal context, and (d) the implications of success in relation to teachers and schools. I end with some ideas for how educators and researchers might conceptualize literacy in a glocal world.

Challenges of recent immigration and resettlement

In her analysis of the impact of immigration on Lincoln, Nebraska, Pipher (2002) noted that Lincoln includes children from over 50 nationalities. What is more unusual is the fact that the immigrants to Lincoln from predominantly Muslim countries arrived in the city not voluntarily, but at the behest of the U.S. government. We know little about their education in their home countries or of their experience of assimilation and concomitant language and literacy learning in English and their native language(s).

Pipher's book is the first popular audience book to delve into the lives of people who are not immigrants in the normative sense of the word, but who have been chosen by the U.S. government to apply and seek refugee status here. The refugees, some 20,000 a year prior to 9/11, are not given a choice about where they live. Instead, they are brought to refugee-designated sites, such as communities in Nebraska, North Dakota and Virginia - states with relatively stable economies and low unemployment rates – and are expected to make new lives for themselves. However, anthropologists

remind us that resettlement is a complex process that underscores (1) the means of ensuring that there are opportunities for restoring and improving living standards of the resettled population, (2) the importance of having conflict resolution mechanisms to reduce the possibility of hostresettler conflicts, and (3) the need to ensure that both resettlers and hosts are beneficiaries of the resettlement and development process. (Willis & Hitchcock, 2002, p. 1) United States citizens and refugees from other nations must somehow understand each other, their mutual interactions and relevant institutions of host cities. The experiences of refugees in sites like Lincoln, Nebraska are different from those of immigrants who have traditionally chosen where they will live. Although immigrants were frequently faced with limited options for resettlement in the past (or even in the present) because they had to relocate according to employment opportunities, that image of the independent immigrant is itself, a distortion of the kind and degree of choice that many immigrants of the last two centuries actually had. There is no doubt that the refugee experiences studied by Pipher (2002) pointed out that (a) identity is no longer based on [a national] territory and that (b) one of the greatest challenges in the United States is to understand how people from different countries, religions and traditions view Americans. Their view is important because the immigrant and refugee population require common understandings of success in everyday life.

Living 'glocally': literacy and transnationalism

How do individuals successfully negotiate their lives locally as they interact with the world globally? The concept glocal, which has been used by scholars to describe economic phenomena that are simultaneously universal and particular, helps frame the local and global connections that people make as they learn to live in a new setting as they adapt and adopt new literacies.

Foremost among the scholars who study such phenomena is Robertson (1995), who laid a foundation for the study of modernity requiring the understanding of an increasing global discourse about locality, community and home. This interconnectedness, as Robertson noted, is so pervasive that even the Oxford Dictionary of New Words includes a definition of glocal, a term originally used in Japan to signify the adaptation of farming techniques to local conditions and also to explain Japanese business - "the tailoring and advertising of goods and services on a global or near-global basis to increasingly differentiated local and particular markets" (Robertson, p. 28). What is important about the concept glocal is that it offers a view of everyday life that does not dichotomize local and global particularities or imply a binarism of good and bad. Glocalization thus describes how people relate linguistically, culturally and cognitively to one another and to the institutions they inhabit in times of change. This is particularly salient in the Midwest where home is both in Nebraska and other countries such as Iraq, Bosnia, Mexico, Vietnam, Dearborn, the Ukraine, or Russia. The same can be said about southeastern Michigan, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Poland, Russia, etc.

For scholars of literacy, glocal is especially helpful because literacy is tied to both academic and social success, linking literacy practices to the homelands of refugees and immigrants and the United States. Literacy is an important dimension of youths' lives in and out of school. Literacy and reading, for the purposes of this argument, are not defined in traditional terms as stemming from either socio-cultural or cognitive and psychological traditions. Those dichotomous relationships are relinquished for a more middle ground approach (Pearson, 1996) that suggests that literacy and reading are what key agents (parents, youth, teachers and policy makers) make them to be in public schools, homes, work places and communities. Definitions of literacy depend, in large part, on the socialization of individuals' identities in different contexts and places and on scholarly research mediated by political agendas. Thus, to uncover what a reader is, or how one becomes literate and how s/he connects this perception to academic and social success, means to understand the relationship of the reader to himself or herself and to those who broker (Pipher, 2002) or sponsor (Brandt, 2001) their relationships with social

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institutions and local, national and global economies. These relationships allow for the careful documentation of the multiple layers of identity building and socialization that both refugee and American youth negotiate in a transnational setting such as the Midwest.

According to the Concise Oxford American Dictionary (2006), transnationalism means "extending or operating across national boundaries" (p. 968). In other words, folk and personal theories of success are as important in the extension and operation of individual and communal identities within local and international boundaries as they might be in promoting socioeconomic mobility, a broader and more general goal shared by many people regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, or color. Therefore, as Heath (1983) and Heath and McLaughlin (1993) noted in their work, examining and defining the intersection of home and school expectations for literate success is one way of categorically establishing the relationships that govern dispositions, language use, social adjustment and self-actualization. In turn, school is negotiated through the glocal experiences that refugees and immigrants live out from day to day.

The Midwest as "glocal" context

Within the past decade, several regions in the Midwest have received new linguistic, ethnic and religious populations. As such, identity, or the glocalization of identity, seems to be at the forefront of intellectual and policy debates as schools struggle to accommodate a range of student abilities, dispositions, ethnicities, socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, and so on. McCarthey and Moje (2002) suggested that youth create hybrid identities as a means to successfully negotiate their youth cultures and school norms. Alvermann's (2001, 2002) analysis was connected to this notion of hybridity, when she recommends that teachers find ways to encourage the use of multiple literacies in their classrooms, including those that youth privilege, such as digital literacies, in order to connect to adolescents' out-of-school lives. Hull (2001) argued that there is very little connection between literacy (in this case defined as reading and

writing) and the work of low-wage workers and that literacy has been historically used to discriminate against certain groups of people, such as African Americans, poor Whites, Hispanics and Latinos, and women.

Since 2002, I have been following a group of 16 high school Middle Eastern and American youth in and out of school. I have documented how the students negotiate and learn various literacies and how their teachers enact literacy in high school for both ELL and mainstream students. One key finding is that these secondary literacy classrooms are composed of mostly low-socioeconomic status (SES) students, who are on free and reduced lunch and the number of such classes is growing. For example, since 2001, the number of reading classes in the focal high school has more than doubled and the same can be said about the other high schools that serve predominantly low-SES populations.

In 2005, the focal high school offered five types of reading classes, ranging from a beginning reading class that served emerging readers, to the most advanced level, offered as an option to students whose reading score on the district graduation exam was within one standard deviation of passing. If students earn a C+ in the most advanced class, they can pass the exam and fulfill their high school requirement. There were 10 to 12 of each of the intermediate level reading classes that served from 6 to 19 students each. As one teacher pointed out, 40% of the students in the school were part of the free/reduced lunch program, but they comprised 97% of the reading classes. This is disproportional and invites continued study to answer why poor white kids, African Americans, Latinos and Hispanics, immigrants and refugees, and minorities in general find themselves in these remedial classes as they make the transition from elementary school to middle school and then to high school. Why is it a cultural fact that these populations of students are in high school literacy classes when there is evidence that these youth read a variety of texts on their own and are engaged with an array of print activities on a daily basis (Sarroub, 2007; Sarroub, Pernicek, & Sweeney, 2007; Sarroub & Rub, 2006)? This is an area that is ripe for further study and analysis.

Furthermore, within this school setting are refugees from Iraq who must also actively engage with a curriculum aimed to address the deficits in their host society (see McBrien, 2005, for a review of literature regarding refugees),thus lumping together what appear to be, in the literature, people living on the margins of society. These new American high school literacy classrooms have become a microcosm of transnational identities, reflecting political and educational tensions that span across continents.

The recent refugees from Iraq, some three to five thousand people in Nebraska alone, represent different religious (Sunni, Shi'a, Yezidi, Wahabe) and ethnic (Kurd and Arab) groups. They also represent varied socioeconomic populations in their homeland, ranging from well educated professionals to subsistence farmers. They arrived in the United States after the First and Second Gulf Wars with a range of educational experiences, many of them with little formal schooling because of the deplorable conditions of some resettlement camps such as the Rafha camp in Saudi Arabia. In addition, some refugees such as the Kurd Yezidis - whose religious beliefs advocate avoiding literacy (reading and writing) - face problematic cultural transitions within high school ESL and literacy classes (Sarroub, 2007). Other factors, such as the geopolitical tensions between the Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, play out in classrooms, in cafeterias and in town, dividing the student population. Teachers must deal with these cultural and religious tensions as they attempt to teach reading in high school classrooms.

Complicating success: implications for teachers and schools

The idea of success becomes all the more complex when it is woven into the glocal fabric created out of the threads of cultural, religious, linguistics, geographical, national and personal forces (Sarroub, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2005; Varenne & McDermott, 1998). It is especially critical given that, by 2020, one in every five students will be an immigrant or the child of

immigrants (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Literacy success in secondary schools is also intimately tied to the socio-cultural and socioeconomic identities that students, teachers and parents have a hand in creating and enacting (such as being a good reader). Today, researchers examine youth literacy practices that show that students are, in fact, reading and writing, even as they fail reading exams (Sarroub & Rub, 2006). My research shows that students in these classes actively resist these exams, often not taking them or treating them as having little consequence in their lives, when, in fact, they are used to determine students' academic trajectories. There is a need to foster conversation and connection between school-based literacy and youths' literacy practices outside of school.

Research on effective schools, conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, focused on elementary schools and recently there has been more research conducted on effective schools at the secondary levels. Hoffman (1991) listed the attributes of effective schools as (a) a clear school mission; (b) effective leadership and practices; (c) high expectations; (d) a safe, orderly and positive environment; (e) ongoing curriculum improvement; (f) maximum use of instructional time; (g) frequent monitoring of student progress; and (h) positive home-school relationships (cited in Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2002, p.6). These characteristics encompass a range, both in depth and breadth, of the ways that schools do the work of being effective and although they are helpful in describing schools, they do not account for the ways in which students, teachers, parents and communities make sense of school life outside of school. They especially do not account for the ways in which youth resist school literacies as they navigate their glocal identities in and out of school. Moll and his colleagues (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzales, 1992; Moll & Gonzales, 1994) suggested that teachers have useful and important resources in their students' communities, which they call funds of knowledge. These can be teaching tools that bridge curriculum, teacher knowledge and student knowledge and experience. The teaching tools can only be strengthened if both students and teachers create opportunities to bridge local and global academic experiences into glocal literacy practices, thus intertwining cultural, social and academic knowledge realms.

In past research on Dearborn, Michigan, Yemeni American girls, who typically came from print illiterate families, I found strong traditions of oral literacy practices, such as the recitation of religious text that served to encourage education and success in a public school (Sarroub, 2005). The young women were actively engaged in studying a variety of texts in English and Arabic. The texts included typical school related materials and books. They also included texts that helped them subvert cultural and religious norms across home and school settings. Finally, their roles as the literate managers of the print texts (such as bills) that arrived in their homes helped them facilitate their family's negotiation of health, school and economic matters. Teachers in this school setting knew very little about these students' engagement with texts and literacy in and out of school, even though this population (Yemen and Yemeni American) comprised nearly half of the school youth and therefore missed certain opportunities for engaging students in relevant curricula.

Also, in many instances, the young women were also young married women and they supported working husbands from Yemen who, themselves, were print illiterate or who had no knowledge of English. Rowan et al. (2002) argued that current forms of literacy teaching omit boys who resist adapting to and adopting a good reader identity, yet girls embrace this identity because it comes as a part and parcel with being good students and good girls, high status positions for girls within most school and home cultures. The relatively small number of teachers and administrators who really connected with the Yemeni American young women in this school understood the significance and value that was placed on education and transnationalism by the community and therefore found ways to accommodate these students through formal and informal curricular reforms in the school (Sarroub, 2005).

Literacy in a glocal world

There are two recent reports that argued for more attention to literacy for youth in grades 4-12. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) recommended 15 elements of effective adolescent literacy programs. They are explicit comprehension, effective instructional principles embedded in context, motivation and self-directed learning, text-based collaborative learning, strategic tutoring, diverse texts, intensive writing, technology, ongoing formative assessment of students, extended time for literacy, professional development, ongoing summative assessment of students and programs, teacher teams, leadership and a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program. Kamil (2003) proposed that schools provide high-quality, ongoing professional development in literacy and coaching in particular.

High schools face major challenges if they try to implement these recommendations. First, most English teachers are not prepared to be literacy teachers and other content area teachers are not necessarily prepared to teach the range of struggling readers I describe earlier in the article. Second, No Child Left Behind policies expect that all teachers are trained to actually teach what they teach and this is simply not possible under current conditions in American public schools, given the need to teach the numbers of students to pass the reading graduation demonstration exams, for example. Third, the notion of teaching reading to high school youth invites the culturally different norm of testing of skills that have traditionally been relegated to elementary schools. Although the high school as a whole, finds this cultural difference perplexing and frustrating, low-SES, refugee and immigrant students who attend high school with high hopes find themselves tested over and over again and in tracked curricula that emphasize the deficit they are perceived to have, rather than the interests and aspirations that they might pursue.

Despite many obstacles, research indicates that teachers and students are still succeeding at being and becoming literate glocally, although this success is not consistent for all populations of students (Sarroub, 2007; Sarroub et al., 2007). Glocalization is especially important as new migratory movements, both domestic and transnational, take root in the

Midwest and instruction that accounts for the glocal experiences of students across home and school settings is the key aspect of the cultural, institutional, communal and linguistic changes currently taking place. Students would benefit from educators visiting their communities, knowing more about their languages, religions and traditions, thus making vital connections between the realms of home and school. Educators and researchers must continue to address, however, why low-SES students are disproportionately placed in high school literacy classrooms.

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Glamour and honor: going online and reading in West African culture

Wendy Griswold, Erin Metz McDonnell and Terence Emmett McDonnell

When West Africans go online, what are the cultural consequences? This article investigates how public access to the Internet is affecting Nigerian and Ghanaian urban culture in general and reading in particular.

Research assessing the Internet's impact on sub-Saharan Africa has concentrated on the two faces of the digital divide: (1) will the Internet exacerbate or reduce the technological gap between the developing world and advanced industrial societies? And (2) what effect will the Internet have on internal patterns of social and political stratification? We are addressing a related but specifically cultural question - how are West Africans using the Internet and how are their practices affecting other media, in particular print?[104] Although most research on the Internet's impact on book production and on reading practices comes from Western Europe and North America, Nigeria and Ghana offer intriguing grounds for addressing similar questions.

Both have large populations of literate people, well-developed literary institutions and internationally eminent writers. Nevertheless, their reading cultures may be fragile, for they involve a small fraction of the population and they operate in a cultural context that rewards socializing more than individual pastimes. As new entrants into the wired world, Nigeria and Ghana are living laboratories for investigating cultural responses to technological change.

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104. Sonaike (2004) urges moving beyond the technology gap issue in Africa; Norris (2001), DiMaggio et al. (2001) and Wellman & Haythornthwaite (2002) overview the social uses of the Internet. See Hargittai (2004) for a summary of the access versus use issues. The study of media use, not just media access, has a history that long predates the Internet, of course. Exemplary works in this tradition include Hoggart's (1992) analysis of how working-class Britons use print differently than do their middle-class counterparts and Morley's (1992) discussion of gender's impact on the ways in which people watch television.

Some working definitions are in order. Whereas *literacy* refers to the ability to decode written texts, *reading* is the actual practice of doing so. We further restrict *reading* (as do virtually all studies of reading) to refer to the leisure-time engagement with print. This excludes the reading required for job performance or for school, and it excludes reading online. Our informants define it the same way. *Readers* are not people who *can* read, or who *do* read for work but those who *choose to read* in their spare time. The definition includes magazines and newspapers, although some of our respondents did associate "reading" with "books." We use the terms *using the Internet* and *going online* as equivalents, for the people we studied do not distinguish between the two. *West Africa* is shorthand for the places studied; urban Ghana and Nigeria. Despite many differences, West African countries share similar patterns of sharp North/South and rural/urban divides, ubiquitous cybercafés in cities and ambitious youth who see education and global connections as their ticket to a brighter future; they differ from East and South Africa in lacking a (European) settler population and being less developed in terms of indicators like literacy rates.

Our methods were exploratory and opportunistic. One of the authors has studied Nigerian readers for many years (Griswold 2000). As she was completing a book on the Nigerian literary complex, Internet access became widely available in urban West Africa. The same people that constituted the Nigerian readers—the young, the educated, the well-off, the urban—were also the early adopters of such practices as sending e-mails, playing online video games and surfing the Net for entertainment and information. So the substantive question arose - what impact would this development have on the literary culture that she had just finished mapping? Through this case, one may consider more general questions about how electronic culture engages print culture - Do they compete? Do they support each other? Do they not engage at all?

Griswold observed Internet cafés and interviewed users in Lagos during August 2002 and January 2004. McDonnell and McDonnell carried out comparable interviewing and observation during the summer of 2003 in Accra. In March 2005, Griswold conducted focus group interviews on reading and Internet use at three secondary schools in Nigeria - Queen's College, Yaba; Igbobi College; and Federal Government Girls' College, Sagamu. (See the appendix for the focus group questions.) Students at these elite schools do not represent Nigerians and Ghanaians as a whole. They do represent (1) the next generation of the reading class and (2) the first generation of youth who take Internet access for granted.

This article begins with the perspective that new technology's interaction with a pre-existing cultural context shapes its social uses. The second section looks at what is known about the relationship between going online and reading in the world at large. The third section focuses on reading in West Africa and the fourth on Internet practices in West Africa. The fifth section considers how youth manage their reading and their Internet use. The final section concludes that the Internet and print do not compete because West Africans separate the two in both time and space, manage time carefully and accord a cultural honor to reading and readers that is quite distinct from the glamour associated with going online.

The Cultural Impact of New Technology

The relationship between technological change and social context offers a vantage point from which to view the Internet's impact on West Africa. Until recently social scientists did not question what most people see as common sense: a rationality-based model of technological change whereby (1) a problem exists and (2) technologies are developed until something finally solves the problem. In the 1990s, however, some studies highlighted how the reverse takes place. People develop new technologies and then seek problems to which they can be applied.

Technological changes can indeed revolutionize social and cultural practices. The printing press is the most familiar example; historians have seen print technology as giving rise to everything from modern science to the end of absolutism to the Protestant Reformation (Eisenstein 1979). Television has similarly had a fundamental impact on everything from how people get the news to how they eat meals. More often, however, technological change does not revolutionize social or cultural relations but facilitates what people are already doing. Whereas technology creates new behavioral possibilities, the goals of the behavior are not new themselves. A recent study of cell phone usage in the Philippines illustrates this nicely. The popularity of mobile phones derives in large part from Filipinos' strong desire to communicate in the first place (Pertierra et al. 2002). Filipinos can do what they always did—stay in touch with people and reinforce social ties—only now they can do more of it.

Thus, there are two ways to think about the impact of the Internet (or of ICTs in general). It will revolutionize cultural patterns—the "agent of change" thesis—or it will facilitate and support cultural patterns—the "agent of reproduction" thesis. By looking at the specific question of competition or collaboration between print and electronic media in Nigeria and Ghana, our research seeks to shed light on the general question of whether sudden technological change destabilizes cultural patterns. Is Internet culture (the local symbols and meanings associated with the practice of going online) eclipsing West African reading culture, is it supporting it or is it having no impact? What are the implications of this new technology for the cultural reproduction of reading and readers? How is the reading class responding?

The relationship between internet use and reading in the world at large

In January 2004, UCLA's Center for Communication Policy released findings from the *UCLA World Internet Project,* which was "the first survey to produce international comparison data on the social, political and economic effects of Internet use and non-use" (UCLA, Office of Media Relations 2004, 1). The project analyzed data from thirteen countries, most from the technologically developed world. Two findings give a sense of what the emerging pattern in West Africa might be. First, every country showed a gender gap with more men than women using the Internet. The extent of this gap varied considerably, from more than 20% in Italy to less than 2% in Taiwan, with an average of 8% overall (see also Kolko et al. 2004). Second, in every country of the survey Internet users watched fewer hours of television than non users did. Worldwide, Internet users spend a bit more time socializing with family and friends, more time exercising and more time reading books. Although these latter correlations are not great, what is clear is that the main loser in competition with the Internet is television.

Research on the future of reading in the wired world has been inconsistent. Some studies have suggested that the reading cultures in America and Europe are remarkably resilient, contrary to the fears in the 1990s about the death of the book (Birkerts [1994] offers the pessimistic view; McGann [2001] and Loizeaux and Fraistat [2002] express more optimistic rethinking). A new study from the National Endowment for the Arts paints

a bleaker picture, especially in terms of "literary reading"—that is, novels, poetry and drama (National Endowment for the Arts 2004). The NEA report shows that, although half of all Americans do read literature with some regularity, the percentage has declined in the past twenty years, especially among younger cohorts.

One must separate the overall trajectory of reading with the interaction between reading and going online. A recent article reviewing the survey data from highly developed countries concludes that, so far, the relationship between the two activities is one of "more/more" (heavy Internet users are heavy readers, even controlling for education) rather than "zero-sum" (Griswold & Wright 2004). Increased Internet use cuts into time spent watching television in the United States and the West generally, but not into time spent reading. On the other hand the NEA study, though it did not measure Internet use, suspects that, because "literary participation is clearly less popular than it used to be, [this is] possibly due to competition for entertainment time and money from a range of other options, including videogames, movies and the Internet" (National Endowment for the Arts 2004, 28).

Even if reading and Internet turn out to be mutually supportive rather than competitive in the West (and the jury is still out on this), what will happen in places where the reading culture is newer, smaller, frailer and less influential to begin with?

The Reading Class in West Africa

People who routinely read in their leisure time constitute a social formation that we call the "reading class" (Griswold et al. 2005). Historically the reading class has been an elite group associated with religious hierarchies (the Church in the European Middle Ages) or regime hierarchies (the Chinese bureaucrats—literati—during the Qing dynasty). It was not until late eighteenth-century that northwestern Europe and North America developed a reading culture, one wherein commercial, governmental, entertainment and religious-ideological institutions presumed the widespread ability to read (Rose 2001). Other parts of the world caught up

gradually. Africa lags the rest of the world in literacy and West Africa lags the rest of Africa. UNESCO reported that in 2000, 28.4% of adult Ghanaians were illiterate (19.7% of the men and 36.8% of the women); Nigeria was even worse, with adult illiteracy at 36.0% (27.8% male, 43.9% female) (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2002).

West African readers—not those who are literate but those who read for pleasure—share some of the characteristics of readers everywhere. First and foremost, they are highly educated; education is invariably the strongest predictor of reading (Griswold et al. 2005). They are affluent and they are urban; standard characteristics associated with both literacy and reading as a practice. More specific to the African context, Ghanaian and Nigerian readers are disproportionately likely to be Christian. Islam as interpreted by West African mullahs tends to discourage secular reading; moreover, the literacy rates for Muslims, especially women, have historically been much lower than for non-Muslims (Griswold 2000). In contrast, much colonial literacy was a product of Christian missionary schools and the Christian churches have continued to involve themselves in education and book publication. Reading is prestigious, even for youth, and books are fairly hard to come by; so reading a book, any book, confers status (Griswold 2000; Newell 2000). One way in which African reading may be different from Western reading involves gender. In the West women read more than men; the difference, while not large, is very stable (Griswold et al. 2005). In Africa however, because males lead females in literacy and because Africans have large families so even educated women have little leisure time, women's usual gender advantage may not apply.

Although the West African transition to print culture is not complete, people there assume that it will happen. During interviews for a book on the social complex underlying Nigerian fiction, the editors, authors, readers and booksellers repeatedly said something along the lines of, "Nigeria does not have a large reading culture yet, but when it does..." - for example, we'll sell more books, I'll live off my writing, it will be easier for me to get hold of books, the quality of our literature will improve, kids will be better off and so forth (Griswold 2000). The Nigerian and Ghanaian reading class sees itself as a vanguard for this reading culture, small, beleaguered, but on the winning side of history (for the case of Ghana, see Newell [2000]).

The onset of electronic media and the Internet raises questions about this assumption. Contrary to the expectations of their writers, publishers and readers, Nigeria and Ghana might never attain (or need) a larger "reading culture" than they already have; indeed, the reading culture might shrink. One way this could occur is that, heretofore, African popular literature has served as an entry point (the "rich compost of prior creativity," as Lindfors put it) into reading for youth and/or the newly literate, with some readers and writers and then moving on to more challenging material (Lindfors 1996; Newell 2000). If the easy entertainment of lightweight reading (Macmillan's Pacesetters, romance magazines, Onitsha market literature, *soyayya* love stories) gives way to the easy entertainment of video games and the Internet, this would derail the expected move from less demanding to more demanding reading.

Defenders of print culture have worried about competition from electronic media since the early days of television. Dana Gioia, chairman of the NEA, argues that "reading a book requires a degree of active attention and engagement.... By contrast, most electronic media such as television, recordings and radio make fewer demands on their audiences and indeed often require no more than passive participation. Even interactive electronic media, such as video games and the Internet, foster shorter attention spans and accelerated gratification." The results of reading being displaced by other media would be disastrous. "[P]rint culture affords irreplaceable forms of focused attention and contemplation that make complex communications and insights possible. To lose such intellectual capability—and the many sorts of human continuity it allows—would constitute a vast cultural impoverishment" (NEA 2004, vii). This is the view held, without exception, by the adult Ghanaians and Nigerians with whom we spoke, even those who enthusiastically embrace the advantages of going online. West African educators, editors, authors, middle-class parents fear the Internet could have a catastrophic effect on the fragile reading culture.

The Internet in West Africa

Three kinds of billboards assault the visitor coming into Lagos from the Murtala Mohammed Airport - ones involving HIV-AIDS, ones promoting religious revivals and ones touting Internet services. Ads for dot.coms, cybercafés and Internet service providers are ubiquitous. Accra offers the same visual landscape; ads for Busy Internet (the city's largest cybercafé) are everywhere. Service providers and dot.coms advertise widely, whereas cybercafés usually restrict their signs to their immediate neighborhoods.

West Africans' embrace of the Internet is not simply due to technological enthusiasm. Although e-mail has many advantages everywhere, it has one extra one in Nigeria and Ghana. It helps free West Africans from their abysmal local telephone service. Government-run Nitel and Ghana Telecom are notorious. Calls don't get through, phones go dead for hours and people wait years to get connected. (Ghanaians and Nigerians similarly love mobile phones because they circumvent the national phone companies.) Most Africans don't use e-mail to contact people in the same city—an e-mail message won't be received until the recipient goes to the cybercafé—but e-mail is far more effective and less expensive than phones for keeping in touch with relatives in other towns or abroad.

The front page of Nigeria's largest newspaper, the *Guardian,* both confirms the Internet's ubiquity and suggests some local characteristics. It features an ad for technical engineering firm, Avery Nigeria Ltd., with the e-mail given as aveynig@beta.linkseve.com. Note that two Rs are missing from this e-address. Similarly on page 2 an ad for the oldest bookstore in West Africa, CSS Bookshops Ltd., trumpets the firm's prestige (Lagos address by the Cathedral; branches in Abuja, Akure, Kaduna and Port Harcourt) and gives the e-mail address: cssbookships@skannet.com.ng - which, of course, should be book*shops.* Ubiquitous errors such as these challenge West Africans attempting to use the new media, especially when most are working out of cybercafés where their Internet time is being metered.

This is beside the point. All of the larger newspapers in Accra and Lagos have their own Websites and some - *This Day, Tell* - are quite sophisticated. In our observation of Internet use in both countries, engineers have been up to lately. These websites are for prestige, not utility. All businesses however, we never observed anyone looking at a local paper's website, nor did anyone ever mention doing so. People do go online to look up sports scores or news information, but not from local newspapers. A

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newspaper website is to impress and thereby to encourage the sale of more print copies of the paper, though a secondary but much appreciated function is to enable expatriate Africans keep up with local news. The same is true of all business websites. West Africans don't shop online anyway and few spend much time in cybercafés checking on what Avery's want to appear up-to-date, so the point is to have a website and e-mail address, not to have customers actually be able to use them. Does all this mean Nigeria and Ghana are "wired"? Does this suggest West Africans routinely use the Internet? No, for we know this is not the case. What it does suggest is that there is glamour associated with the popular IT complex—URLs, e-mail addresses, Internet use—even though people face obstacles in actually taking advantage of the new technologies. Part of the glamour comes from being on the cutting edge, but in countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, additional panache comes from being connected to the outside world, being seen as and seeing oneself as a global player. Whereas West African youth can try to capitalize on this, for example by obtaining visitors' e-mail addresses and then contacting them for help getting into foreign universities, merely to have the connections is satisfying. In societies where dispensing patronage—being a "big man"—is an important cultural role, both businesses and individuals benefit from a reputation of being wired into external contacts. Promotion and advertising capitalizes on this cultural fact by generating anxiety, the fear of missing out by not being online. This is one reason why entrepreneurial West Africans have been so determined to go around their local infrastructures in order to reach cyberspace (Zachery 2002; Goldstein 2004).

Cybercafés

For the average Nigerian or Ghanaian, the road to cyberspace goes through an Internet café. Lagos seems to have a cybercafé on every block. Even if you miss the sign, the tall red-and-white towers sprouting everywhere pinpoint their locations. In Accra, although the towers are not always red and white, the cafés are everywhere.

Lagos cafés are pleasant places; air conditioned, clean, and by West African standards, quiet. They may be crowded with each actual user surrounded by a cloud of friends. The connection charge is modest, typically 60 naira (roughly 40 cents) for a half-hour or 100 naira per hour. This is not exorbitant and the middle class is well able to afford it. Cybercafés range from business-like operations with training programs and

an adult, work-oriented clientele, to local hangouts with posters on the wall, loud music, snacks and young customers. Because they are neighborhood based, most cafés serve both types of clients, but the feeling in each is distinct (cf. Miller & Slater 2000).

Accra likewise has two levels of cybercafés. High end operations which feature newer computers and operating software are clean, air-conditioned and relatively quiet and orderly. Busy Internet's red walls are covered with popular Adinkra symbols; Conect [*sic*] Café has locally made batik cloth for the waiting area couches and draperies. Such cafés offer beverages and "small chops"—that is, home-baked biscuits and other snacks. They tend to have more terminals than the more humble operations and they are more likely to offer auxiliary services such as long-distance calling, printing, computer software classes and computer assistance. Low-end cafés are poorly lit, small-scale and offer older computers and software. A single employee is on site and is often not able to help users much, though some such cafés tend to be located off the main traffic areas and they serve a neighborhood, often working class clientele. High-end cafés draw a mix of middle-class Ghanaians, students, expatriates and visitors. During the day most cybercafé customers are adults: either young men or women in their twenties or middle-aged adult men. When schools let out in mid-afternoon, youth take over the cafés and continue to dominate all evening (very young teens earlier, older ones later). Some adults show up after work and some students show up during the day (and, of course, on weekends), but the general pattern seems to be adults earlier, youth mid-afternoon and later. Youth often go online in groups, with one paying customer accompanied by friends.

One demographic group rarely appears - women beyond their early twenties. Pressed for time, mature women seldom go to cybercafés; if they need Internet information, they usually send their children to the café to get it. Women as a whole are under-represented, especially in Nigeria and most cybercafé owners and virtually all computer technicians are men. The picture in Ghana is only slightly more balanced. The owner of the largest café in Cape Coast (one of the three main cities) is a woman and one of her assistants is female, though she is not as involved with the hardware assistance as with software usage. In Accra, however, all owners are men. Although development organizations like the World Bank work "with missionary-like zeal" at putting IT in the hands of African women, social and economic patterns on the ground have reproduced gendered inequality so far (Robins 2002).

West African Internet users may be even more youthful than elsewhere because the schools introduce youth to computer skills and because high fertility rates mean that young people constitute an enormous portion of the population. Certainly the cybercafés are largely domains of the young. Older people may be going online at their workplaces, but, if they are, their activities are likely to be limited. Because our focus is on leisure time, Internet use compared to leisure reading and because the Internet penetration into the home is minimal, the cafés constitute a good register of who is going on-line in their spare time.

Café managers recognize the youthfulness of their clientele but underestimate the gender gap. For example, the Conect Café in the Osu neighborhood of Accra was observed five times from May to late July 2003. Overall, there were thirty-six young male customers, one young woman, five middle-aged men and one middle-aged woman. At Cyberlink Café in the Yaba neighborhood of Lagos, at 3:00 in the afternoon of January 2004, there were twelve males and one female at the terminals (all young). There were also three young men sitting and talking; it was not clear if they were waiting for someone or not, but they were not waiting for terminals, as several were free. The front desk personnel, two young women and one man, obscured how masculine the space actually was.

Nigerian cities have unreliable electricity, giving much occasion for the complaint that "NEPA [Nigerian Electric Power Authority] has taken the light again." When the electricity in a neighborhood goes out, many Nigerians who have been watching television head for the cybercafés, all of which have generators. In Ghana, generators are not as common, so Internet cafés sometimes suffer blackouts hand-in-hand with private residences.

Going Online

Cybercafé managers report that adult customers go online to e-mail, look up sports and entertainment news and search for jobs or educational opportunities—schools, test requirements, scholarships. Customers also troll for pornography; some managers actively discourage this while others

shrug. One thing West Africans do not do online is make purchases. With both Nigeria and Ghana being cash economies, the credit card transactions essential to e-commerce are impossible for most people.

Youth go online primarily for social reasons. By far the most popular activity is email. They chat with people from around the world. They read about their favorite sports teams. They visit entertainment sites. They are seldom required to do schoolwork online, though some students do research (not easy in cybercafés because printing is expensive and the meter is always running).

Patricia, a fourteen-year-old Nigerian girl whose online activities we observed during a session at Cyberlink, exemplifies youth practices. After she pays her 60 naira, Cyberlink staff give her a username and password. She first checks e-mail via Yahoo messenger. Her e-mails are from school friends, from her brother who is studying medicine in Atlanta and from people she has met online. She knows girls who meet dates online, though she would not do this herself.

She then begins surfing by going to Lyrics.com to check out some Eminem lyrics; Patricia is a huge Eminem fan. (Looking up music and music celebrities is popular in Ghana as well; Busy Internet has a menu devoted entirely to Tupac.) Patricia also looks at tickle.com which has personality questionnaires and horoscopes. She participates in several chat groups, including a favorite for Christian teens. She doesn't download music or games because, if she saved them, she would have to get the same terminal next time; because of virus concerns, Cyberlink customers can't bring in diskettes or CDs.

Although Patricia's Internet access is very local, a half-block from her house, her online activities are global. For example, if she wants to check up on some Nigerian story or entertainer, she just Googles them. (A portal called onlinenigeria.com exists, but she doesn't bother with it.) She chats to a friend in India regularly and exchanges e-mails with her brother and other relatives in the United States and United Kingdom. In many ways it is easier for her to navigate globally than locally. Information from places outside West Africa is more readily available than information from within; in Lagos and Accra, online services like locating addresses via MapQuest.com or online residential telephone directories simply don't exist.

In West Africa, like everywhere else, young people are confident Internet users whereas their elders tend to be diffident. Older users have a sense that, although everything can be found on the Internet, they do not know how to do it. One Ghanaian entrepreneur, who owned a rental housing complex and a restaurant, wanted to get into fish farming and asked the authors to search for information online; despite his successful enterprises, he assumed his own Internet incompetence. Younger people are savvier at finding things online. Friends particularly share information about free e-mail sites and the average teenager knows a dozen or so. The time factor at cybercafés encourages extraordinary dexterity among the youth, who juggle half a dozen different online activities, fingers flying as they e-mail, participate in a couple of chat rooms and check out a singer's Web page. Multitasking is second nature to kids such as Patricia and monitoring three Beyoncé web sites while e-mailing your brother presents no problem.

Some Western computer skills are foreign to West African youth, however. Few have learned touch-typing; their speed comes from having mastered one-and two-finger typing and fast pecking without much need to hunt. Ghanaian students preparing to study abroad were amazed when a U.S. Embassy official told them they would need to learn how to type.

Youth conflate all computer activity with "going online" or "the Internet." Some Ghanaian boys told us about playing games online; when we asked how they play these games, it turned out that they were loading the games off the desktop and not connecting to the Internet at all. For a generation of youth who are growing up in this technological jump-forward, however, there is no sense of separation between "using the computer" and "using the Internet."

Although it is largely outside of the purview of this article, no discussion of online practices in Nigeria can ignore the problem of scams. Nigeria is notorious for its cons and corruption and its entrepreneurial crooks have found the Internet to be a godsend. People everywhere get e-mail from some official or disgruntled member of an elite family who has selected them to participate in a foolproof scheme for spiriting funds out of Nigeria; all they need to do is send their bank account number and perhaps an advance fee. Once hooked, marks find themselves asked for more and higher fees; they sometimes wind up traveling to Nigeria, where more money will be extorted, sometimes through violence. Locals call such a scam a "419," referring to the particular section of the penal code that covers fraud. Cybercafé managers in Lagos swear that they monitor their

customers to assure that none of these schemes are being run out of their shops and they have good reason to try as the federal government will close them down if it connects a 419 to a particular café. Association with these scams embarrasses Nigerians. Although Ghana has few such problems, newspaper articles in both countries emphasize the potential harm scams do to a country's economic credibility (*Accra Daily Mail* 2001, 2002, 2003; *Ghanaian Chronicle* 2003; *Daily Champion* 2004). Their mortification over Internet scams also dampens Nigerians' online nationalism

Youth Reading, Youth Online

Looking at the practices of youth is essential for understanding cultural change or stability. How young, educationally advantaged, urban West Africans read and how they use the Internet matter because (1) these youth are the future West African reading class, if there is to be one, and (2) they are the demographic and socio-economic group most likely to be experiencing the satisfactions of going online.

We held focus group discussions at three secondary schools in or near Lagos - Queen's College–Yaba (girls), Igbobi College (boys) and Federal Government Girls' College, Sagamu (girls). These elite schools admit students through competitive examinations. Queen's and Igbobi are unity schools supported by the federal government and Igbobi is a mission school, supported by the Anglican and Methodist churches. Queen's and Igbobi have boarding and day students and FGGC Sagamu girls are all boarders. The students at these schools are not representative of Nigerian youth as a whole. They are academic stars and they are likely to come from educationally advantaged, middle-class backgrounds; both characteristics make them budding members of the reading class and indeed they do read a great deal. Their considerable cultural capital makes them appropriate for a study of the cultural practices of the first West African generation to grow up with the Internet.

Our discussions, which took place in an assembly hall (Queen's), a library (Igbobi) and a classroom (FGGC Sagamu), began with the question of when and where the teenagers read for pleasure. Most read in the nighttime or anytime "I'm bored." One girl said she reads at times when she's feeling sleepy, often taking a break from studies to pick up a newspaper, but she also reads at night, especially if she's *not* sleepy. Another gave the typical

response; she reads afternoons, nights and on Saturdays, which is a "free day" for all the students. Boys and girls said they read during their leisure time—that is on weekends, after school and at night. A few girls, but no boys, read in the early mornings—one reported that she slept in the day and woke up around 3:00 AM to read until 6:00—because it was quiet then. Another said she liked to read "in the middle of the night" for the same reason - "I like very quiet places."

No one reported reading in any other place except "in my room" or in the school library. Day students say they read mostly at home, in their rooms and they are usually alone when they read. Boarders find it more difficult to be alone (the dormitory rooms house fifteen or so) but they lie on their beds and manage to lose themselves in a book. At Igbobi, one boarder said it is never hard to find quiet places to read around the school and he also reads late in his room at night: "I just keep turning the pages."

When asked where they got their books, most said they bought or borrowed them - "I get them from my cousins" was a common response - though a few mentioned their school library as well. Several mentioned home libraries. Books are valued family possessions and old paperback novels or schoolbooks do not get discarded.

Both girls and boys cited "thrillers" as their favorite leisure reading. They repeatedly brought up crime and adventure writers such as James Hadley Chase, Tom Clancy and Sidney Sheldon as well as romance writer Danielle Steel, the Harry Potter books and local youth-oriented fiction series such as Pacesetters and Lantern Books. (Patricia, whose online activities we looked at earlier, had similar tastes, telling us, "I like to read suspense novels, mainly bestsellers like John Grisham, Jeffrey Deaver, Sidney Sheldon, etc. I also read autobiographies, or biographies.... I read a wide range of books, but suspense novels are my favorite.")

Not everyone reads fiction. One boy said he likes history, both African and non-African. Another loves basketball magazines and books. Another likes to read the newspapers at night. Several girls mentioned reading magazines. One girl reads the *Watchtower,* the magazine put out by Jehovah's Witnesses. Several girls at Queens College reported that they didn't like to read at all and did so only for their schoolwork. Because their English teachers were present, this response seemed to indicate the girls' frankness and indeed the teachers later commented approvingly that Queen's College girls are encouraged to "speak their minds."

We had some spirited discussions of English versus Nigerian writers. Although the students respected Soyinka and Achebe, whom they read in their literature classes, most preferred English writers for their leisure reading. Whereas some fiction enthusiasts said they didn't care where the writer was from as long as the story was good, the general consensus was that the English (including American) writers were better than Africans at depicting emotions and relationships. Students concentrating in literature were the most likely to bring up Nigerian authors. One boy who hopes to be a writer himself some day was working on a copy of Isadore Okpewho's *The Last Duty;* he mentioned that he has a reading room/library at home and that his family does a lot of reading. This prompted me to ask the group if anyone came from a family that did *not* do much reading, but no one said they did. These are children of the reading class and they take for granted that reading wins parental approval as well as social honor.

Most of these same students go online regularly. They do it from cybercafés. Only a handful usually with a parent working in the IT sector, have Internet access at home. Sagamu did not have Internet access from the school and while Queens and Igbobi did, going online was restricted to schoolwork (although there were a few knowing smiles on this point). Some youth go to the cafés after school, but most go on Saturdays. One typical boy said he goes on weekends because that is his only leisure time; after school he does assignments. The cybercafés aren't open on Sundays, so he goes on Saturday evenings, observing "the atmosphere is cool at that time." He often goes with his friends or meets them there, since they go to the same cybercafé because "we all like it." Girls also reported going with cousins, siblings, or friends or meeting them there, though both girls and boys go alone as well. Girls did not go at night because they didn't go out at night at all. Most seemed to think cybercafés themselves were safe places, though one girl, who can go online from her home, felt uncomfortable with the mix—'all sorts of people'—there; another reason for her avoidance is "My mom believes they do 419" at the cafés.

Going online fulfills social and informational functions. As we observed at the cybercafés, chatting and email are key and some youth cheerfully admitted that chatting was "the most interesting thing to do." Many talked about staying in touch with friends and relatives abroad and some mentioned online friends all over the world. Entertainment and sports sites were also popular. One girl who reported that she goes to the cybercafé

with her cousin proceeded to give a detailed account about what "the cousin" did there - "First of all check the top ten songs, top ten movies and that sort of thing... the latest cameras... she wants to go on with the crowd on everything, so she just goes and checks what the latest things are." One girl discussed in detail how she seeks answers to religious questions. She said she might hear something from her pastor and then go to a religious chat group to discuss and check what she has learned. Several other students were familiar with religious chat groups (recall Patricia's Christian teen group) and used them "to find out if it's true or not." Many of these students are actively religious and use the Internet to bypass what they regard as more dogmatic religious instruction they receive in their churches or at home.

Overwhelmingly the students claimed that going online had no impact on their reading. Three reasons came up over and over - time and space separation, time management and the different functions reading and going online have in their lives. A theme that came up in discussing all three was the honored position that reading holds in West African culture. When asked to describe their practices, the youth pointed out that their reading and Internet use took place at different times. They read at night or during the very early morning and went online on Saturday afternoons. Moreover, the activities took place at different places; reading was done in relatively private spaces—home, school libraries, dorm rooms— and going online took place in the public space of the cybercafé. Such time and space separation meant that the two did not directly compete. The students said that their Saturday afternoons, if not spent at the cybercafés, would be spent hanging out with friends; their nights, if they were not reading, would be spent watching television.

A number of students stressed their effective time management; by scheduling their time well, they had plenty of time for both reading and going online. (The implication was that other young people might not handle their time so well.) One said, "Actually, it depends on the person. If you know the time you are going to use the Internet and the time you are going to read, it won't really affect you. But if you are using your reading time for Internet things, then it will affect you and you read less." Another girl said, "[Internet use] doesn't affect my reading, because I have a timetable, a time to read and a time to browse and other things, so it doesn't affect me." I asked her about television and she said she didn't watch it much. Another emphasized there was no problem because you can "plan your time well." The third common response emphasized that the Internet

served a different function - getting information and staying in touch - whereas reading was for pleasure and improvement. Many said, "I don't browse that much." They depicted their Internet time as communication (chat, e-mail) and getting information they wanted (schoolwork, leisure interests). Because their time online was metered, they could not indulge in long browsing sessions or online games.

Although a few students said going online might affect their reading, the reasons they gave were not that the two activities competed for their free time. Several said that, because they didn't like to read anyway, they welcomed anything that filled their leisure hours. These youth probably would not have read anymore even if they didn't have the Internet; one girl who didn't like reading said she didn't patronize cybercafés much either, for she preferred to socialize with friends. Another girl said the Internet definitely reduced her reading because, if she were assigned a book for her literature class, she could just go online, learn about the book and then write a paper on it without having actually read it. But when asked about her reading for pleasure, she said, "Oh, the Internet doesn't affect *that.*" One of her classmates quickly added: "It's much more interesting reading a book in front of you than going to the Net to find out about a book. So like me, I only go to the Net when I need something, when I want to find out about something. So I only go there to do important things, not to browse, not to download music, not to do anything else."

Several students maintained that their online activities actually supported their reading. As one girl from Sagamu College put it, "Well, I don't think it affects my reading, 'cause, if I'm reading a book today and I want to find out more about that book, when I finish reading the book, I go online and check on the author and I know what kinds of books he brings out and I go look for those books, so I don't think it affects my reading." A boy who likes to read and write poetry says going online helps by giving him ideas. He also chats online with other young poets and these conversations encourage his reading and writing.
Another Igbobi boy made the complementary media argument thus - "Personally I prefer comparing the books and going online... because there is information about the authors." He gets a book, gets interested and then does research on the author; he gave Tolstoi and Achebe as examples of authors he has researched online. The basketball fan said he goes online to get new information about the players and teams and to chat about basketball. For him, reading and the Internet work together to deepen his knowledge of

the game and its players. Since many of the students were boarders, I asked them to reflect on their cultural practices at home versus at school. When I asked the Sagamu girls (all boarders) about the impact of the Internet on reading, for example, I stipulated that this question referred to when they were at home and had cybercafés readily available. One girl said that reading required concentration and, when at home, many things distracted her, but the chief distractions were friends and social life, not the allure of the cybercafés. Students home from boarding school are invariably occupied with catching up with friends and relatives. At the same time, boarders are at home because they are on holiday from school, so many find that they do more leisure reading, not less, simply because they have much more free time.

The fact that most students had to go online from cybercafés may be shaping their behavior. As one girl put it, "As for me, it doesn't really affect the reading [because she doesn't often get to the cybercafé]... but once I get an opportunity, I always like to go. If I had the Internet in my home, it might affect it, because I like to be on the computer every time. But since it's not in my home, it's outside, it doesn't really affect me." This type of comment raises the question of what will happen when Internet connection from home becomes more available. Here television, a longstanding competitor for people's leisure time, might offer a relevant comparison. Although there is no data specific to West Africa, one must assume that the advent of television depressed leisure reading there as it did everywhere. But will Internet access from the home impinge on reading at home or on watching TV at home? The Internet has cut into time spent watching television, not time spent reading, in the United States (UCLA Center for Communication Policy 2003; Griswold & Wright 2004). When asked about television, several students replied that the Internet was not having much impact on TV because they didn't watch much TV anyway. Because television is popular and ubiquitous in Nigeria, this suggests the reading versus watching TV split that has been found elsewhere. Both reading and Internet use are inversely related to television watching. Internet access in the home will likely reduce the time spent watching television but not have much impact on the time spent reading by committed readers.

I asked the youth to speculate on what they would be doing on weekends and holidays if they didn't have the cybercafés. One boy spoke for many when he said that there are many things he might be doing—being with friends and family, or watching TV—but he can do all of these because he

doesn't go online all that much. This was the common response - they weren't spending much time online anyway, so it wasn't robbing time from any particular activity. When I asked the Igbobi boys whether anyone felt that their Internet use was competing with their reading, they all said no and seemed a bit horrified at the idea. One explained that he might go to the cybercafé when he was bored, tired of reading, just as others might visit friends or watch TV when they were tired of reading. But reading always came first in his priorities.

The Internet and reading: conclusions

West African Internet users of all ages seemed surprised when asked whether their online time affected their reading. They almost uniformly insisted that the Internet had no impact on reading, unless it was to support it by providing access to information about authors and books. They did think that their Internet use competed for time with a number of things—they mentioned phone calls, hanging out with friends, watching television after school, writing letters—but not with reading.

This is consistent with what seems to be the case in the West. Internet use has a negative relationship with television watching but either no impact or a slightly positive one on reading. Although the Internet/reading relationship may be the same noncompetitive one, however, the reasons are somewhat different. In the West the positive relationship between Internet use and reading is an example of the more general point that educated people do more of just about every type of cultural activity (Erickson 1996; Peterson & Kern 1996). So it makes sense that such people would both read more and use the Internet more. The one big exception is that educated people watch less TV.

We do not know whether this is the case for West Africans as well, though we suspect it is. In any case there are other reasons at play. In the developed countries, users have the Internet continuously available and it is woven into their other daily activities, including their reading. In West Africa, to a far greater extent than in the West, *reading and going online occupy different physical, temporal, social and cultural spaces* from each other. In Nigeria and Ghana :

- People read for pleasure in their homes, in private vehicles for those lucky enough to ride in them, or—for students—in the school library. They go online in cybercafés.
- People read after their evening meal or in the early morning. They also read at work, more or less surreptitiously and on their way to work if the vehicle is not too crowded. Adults, especially job seekers, use the Internet in the daytime (unemployed adults) and students—the most frequent users—go online in the mid-afternoon and early evening.
- Electrical failures drive Nigerians and Ghanaians from their televisions to their local cybercafés. Loss of power has less impact on reading, which does not require electric light during the day.
- West Africans view reading as a private activity. People read individually, even when surrounded by other people in a crowded room or vehicle. They regard going online, by contrast, as a social activity. Internet use takes place in public and often in groups. Moreover, going online is inherently social, maintaining ties to distant friends, relatives and strangers (even scams are social).
- Middle-class women are a significant portion of the reading class but a negligible portion of the Internet class.
- The Internet is somewhat tainted, especially for Nigerians, by its association with the 419 scams. West Africans hold no comparable reservations about books or reading. On the contrary, persecution of journalists and writers (especially under Nigeria's former military regimes), have established some heroic associations to writers and print.
- Going online—new, trendy, associated with youth and with globalization—had the attractions of glamour. Reading—established, institutionally encouraged, associated with elite practices and with wisdom—has the attractions of honor. The two activities occupy different cultural positions.

Reading and Internet use do not compete in West African culture. Nigerians and Ghanaians read for information, for study, for self-improvement, for entertainment and to enact and demonstrate their social status. They go online to maintain or initiate social connections, for fun, for school and job searches and to demonstrate their cosmopolitanism. The functions of the two activities overlap but are by no means congruent. West Africans regard reading as more serious, the mark of a refined person, someone of substance and gravity, whereas using the Internet use is fun,

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practical and the mark of the young and the trendy.

One final observation specific to West Africa is that because of the slow transmission rates and the fact that Internet time is metered, some users avoid image-intensive sites. We note, for example, that our Nigerian teenager spent time on a favorite site with Eminem's *lyrics,* not images of him in performance. This being the case, the percentage of time spent reading online as opposed to looking at pictures might be higher in countries with less developed Internet service, further undercutting any tendency for images to be displacing written words.

In conclusion, we note that one of the most firmly established principles of those studying literacy is that literacy should not be regarded as a skill or a possession but as a practice. Whereas earlier research had tended to see literacy in terms of a one-way move, an acquisition and literacy rates in terms of tipping points, by the end of the twentieth century literacy was viewed more in terms of how it was deployed for economic, social or personal objectives.

In this approach reading became not a simple result of literacy, but a practice subject to interrogation. Can people read? How well? Do they read? What do they read? When? Why? What are the social consequences of their Reading?

In light of this expansion of the types of questions associated with literacy and reading, we envision a parallel expansion in the way we think about the Internet. If media use—reading, going online— is seen as subject to an off/on switch, some new technology can come along and turn the switch off, perhaps by providing light from another source. On the other hand, if we understand media use as an evolving bundle of practices, all embedded in cultural patterns and understandings, then a new communications technology is more likely to interweave with current practices than to revolutionize them. With respect to books and reading practices, the Internet is operating as an agent of cultural reproduction rather than an agent of change.

This should come as no surprise. Culture is not a zero-sum game whereby the new must displace the old if it is to thrive. Cultural space is multidimensional. People located in a specific material, social and cultural context must manage their various practices in terms of time, space, functionality, attention and evaluation. Those practices that the culture

values—that have prestige, social esteem, longstanding connections to admired figures—will be protected from the threat of the new, even as the new is embraced. Glamour and honor can coexist within a given cultural field.

Appendix

Focus Group Discussion Questions

I.   Let's start by talking about your reading habits. We'd like to know when you read, where you read, and what sorts of things you read.

•   When? Particular time of day? More or less on weekends? Any times when you don't read much? Times when you read a lot?

•   Where? Room? Library? In public places? Are you alone or are others around?

•   What do you read for your work/studies? What do you read for pleasure? Fiction or nonfiction? If you had more time, what would you read more of?

•   Has your reading changed since you've started secondary school? How? Do you read as much as you'd like to? More/less than you'd like to? What would you like to change about the amount you read?

II.   Now let's talk about your Internet use. Again we are wondering about when and where you use the Internet, and what for.

•   When? What particular time of day? More or less on weekends? Any times when you don't use the Internet much? Times when you're online a lot?

•   Where? Cybercafé? Home? Library? Other places? Are you alone or are others around?

•   What do you use the Internet for in your work/ studies? What do you use it for in your free time? If you had more time, would you be on the Internet more?

•   Has your Internet use changed since you've started secondary school? How? Are you online as much as you'd like to? More/less than you'd like to? What would you like to change about the amount you use the Internet?

III.   Tell us about your sense of whether reading and Internet compete for your time, or does one support the other?

IV.   Imagine your lives about ten years from now. Let's say you're finished with your studies, working, married, or in a committed relationship. Do you think you'll be using the Internet more or less than you do now? Why? What about reading, more or less than now? Why?

V.   Do you have any other ideas about the relationship between reading and Internet use that haven't come up in our discussion?

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Wal-Mart: a glocalized company

David Towers

Historical overview

Wal-Mart was founded in 1962 by Mr Sam Walton, and at its core is a chain of hypermarkets offering *'low prices always.'* The first store 'Sam' opened in Rodgers, Ark, (United States of America), was the beginning of something which would take the world (literally) by force. Richard Willing (2001) comments that the growth of Wal-Mart has been nothing less than *'explosive.'* However, some boycotters prefer to use the word *'horrific'* to describe the growth of Wal-Mart rather than the more gentle term of *'explosive.'* Never-the-less, wording aside, Wal-Mart's growth has been phenomenal. Wal-Mart grew from having an impressive 874 stores in 1985 to around 5,000 worldwide today. Not surprisingly, Wal-Mart is the world's largest retailer. In 2003, it sold $244.5 billion worth of goods.
Wal-Mart is not just the world's largest retailer. It's also the world's largest company. The scale of Wal-Mart is difficult to comprehend. One interesting statistic provided by Owen Thomas (2002) gives a small indicator of the selling capability of Wal-Mart; he explains that annually Wal-Mart worldwide sells so much baby food that it could fill the equivalent to the number of 58 Olympic-size swimming pools.

Wal-Mart worldwide

Wal-Mart, because of its scale and intensity is an interesting organisation to look at, particularly with regards to its overseas development. Wal-Mart became an international company in 1991 after a 'SAM'S Club' opened near Mexico City. Since 1991, Wal-Mart's international growth has been aggressive and rapid. Today, in 2004, Wal-Mart has over 1,500 stores overseas (Wal-Mart.com) in 10 different countries.

Wal-Mart's entry strategy within these countries has varied, however it has entered both through a series of acquisition (such as seen in Germany, Argentina and Canada) and from merely starting the Wal-Mart

hypermarkets from 'scratch' within the country (such as was the case in Mexico and China).

This paper will look in depth at the most interesting part of these developments overseas; the question of **the need for cultural adaptation**. This paper will investigate in particular how Wal-Mart tackled this issue within Germany and China, the problems it faced, and the solutions it found. Interestingly, essential to Wal-Mart's image has been its corporate culture, however even this, the *'gold dust'* to Wal-Mart's success has had to be adapted to the countries that Wal-Mart has found itself in. Thus even Wal-Mart, the epitome of a globalised company offering universal global products has had to have shown local understanding.

Where Wal-Mart currently operates

As previously mentioned, Wal-Mart is now operating in 10 countries outside of the United States of America. These countries cover a good proportion of the world. Wal-Mart has become increasingly interested in Asia, and sees what it has to offer, as being what the inhabitants of these countries will be looking for in the not so distant future. Hence, Wal-Mart has begun operations in China, Korea and Japan. In Europe, Wal-Mart has successfully entered the British and German markets. Wal-Mart has operations in the whole of North America; Mexico, United States, Canada and even Puerto Rico. South America was where Wal-Mart made its first moves, and currently has successful operations in Mexico and Argentina. Wal-Mart's practices:

What Wal-Mart is famous for: products

Wal-Mart became famous through advertising and selling gallon (approximately 3.79 litres) sized jars of whole pickles. This peculiar item, 'Vlasic's gallon jar of pickles' was the size of a small aquarium, and weighed 12 pounds (approximately 5.5 kilograms), too large to be carried in one hand. According to Fishman, this is the item that Wal-Mart *'fell in love with.'* Incredibly, Wal-Mart priced this product, a year's supply of pickles, for less than $3. Pat Hunn, the man who was responsible for the gallon jars, commented that Wal-Mart used this product by; *"putting it before consumers, saying, this represents what Wal-Mart's about, you can*

even buy a stinkin' gallon of pickles for $2.97. And it's the nation's number-one brand." This fascinating case gives a clear demonstration of Wal-Mart and what it is about. But further more, this case brings with itself questions, how can this sort of American retailer, famous for 'Vlasic's gallon jar of pickles,' be a relevant company to take abroad? Surely no other country would be interested in a gallon of pickles?

In actual fact, this point in question is not alone; Wal-Mart has many quirky facets that one would presume should make it very difficult to have successful operations abroad. Another example is something Wal-Mart is renown for, 'Wal-Mart greeters.' At every Wal-Mart store, when customers enter the store, they are greeted *'with a sweet face, a huge smile and a shopping cart'* (Burbano, 2004). The idea behind this is that the welcome creates a more personal feel to the customers' hypermarket shopping experience. Again, with this example, the question automatically comes to mind, could a company like this, which insists upon maintaining its friendly corporate culture operate successfully abroad?

In addition to the 'Wal-Mart greeters,' and gallon jar of pickles, Wal-Mart is different from other hypermarkets because of how it chooses to do its retail. Unlike other chain stores, Wal-Mart has four retail categories; *'Wal-Mart Supercenters,' 'Discount Stores,' 'Neighbourhoods Markets'* and *'SAM'S CLUB warehouses.'* These four separate divisions exist because this is a way that Wal-Mart can determine what type of store would be relevant for each similar location. Thus, each of these retail divisions is attuned to a general type of location and a common customer profile. Of particular interest however is the 'SAM'S CLUB warehouses,' because customers are required to have membership to enter these stores. These stores are huge warehouses typically between 110,000 and 130,000 square feet (33,500 and 40,000 squared meters), and present a very basic approach to retailing, no time and effort is given to presentation. Customers entering these stores are solely interested in low prices. When seeing this, the question arises, would this method of retailing be relevant in other countries of the world?

Wal-Mart's policy abroad: localization

With the question posed; -how could Wal-Mart be so successful overseas by merely offering the same portfolio that it offers in the United States but abroad- the simple answer is, it couldn't. Even Wal-Mart, the biggest retailer in the world has had to be flexible and adapt, and show local understanding.

But Wal-Mart's overseas development has not been without error. It would certainly be true to say that it has been a steep learning curve for Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart is probably one of the most typical American stores that exists and as such it has had to change in many ways in order to reach the suspicious German consumer and reserved British consumer alike.

In order for customers to buy a product, they need to be happy with the product and comfortable with the environment in which the products are purchased. Wal-Mart needed to provide the customer what he wanted in a way the customer was comfortable with. It would have been no good for Wal-Mart to have entered the Mexican market selling exactly the same products that it sold in its stores in the United States, and selling the products in exactly the same way. This would have been a sure way for Wal-Mart to have seen failure within the market it entered. Although there is one 'centralised global' buying agency for Wal-Mart, which has huge power over suppliers, not all products can be purchased through this because, it is necessary for different products to be supplied to the relevant markets depending which country they are in. Fundamentally, this is really a basic concept of marketing; consumer tastes and preferences will depend upon the country they are in. Thus the products provided in Wal-Mart stores worldwide is one example of how Wal-Mart has adapted in order to meet customer needs.

Wal-Mart boasts that it has a global strategy, but is locally focused. In actual fact, this has been the only way that Wal-Mart has been able to survive overseas. According to Wal-Mart, it has experienced success abroad *'because of its ability to transport the company's unique culture and effective retailing concepts to each new country.'* Effectively, when Wal-Mart chose to go overseas, it made substantial efforts to adapt to local cultures and become involved in the local community.

With respect to culture, some of the countries that Wal-Mart operates in have not reacted positively to all aspects of the American way of doing things. One visible example is that of the 'Wal-Mart Greeters' who approach shoppers on entrance to the store. Understandably, in some countries this 'in your face' welcome has been reached with content within some countries and Wal-Mart has thus had to react to this. Wal-Mart has had to get a balance of maintaining its culture whilst not alienating its customers.

Actual issues faced by Wal-Mart in countries

Wal-Mart in China – Need for adaptation

Managers within Wal-Mart saw great potential within the Chinese market, 170 cities, each with over one million inhabitants. If any nation could sustain a Wal-Mart with success as seen in the States, China could be it. Consequently in 1996, Wal-Mart made a decision to attempt to penetrate the Chinese market. It was an extremely ambitious decision because of the vast cultural differences between Wal-Mart's country of origin and China. However the potential gains were high, so Wal-Mart in true American style 'jumped in.'

Products

Wal-Mart's move to China was not without problems, or need for cultural adaptation and refinement. As the development went ahead, Wal-Mart discovered that Chinese tastes were very different from elsewhere in the world. It was certain that the 'gallon jar of pickles' that Wal-Mart had become famous for in America, would not go down well with the Chinese consumers. With regards to products, the Chinese customers above all wanted leafy vegetables, and these could only be purchased locally, complicating Wal-Mart's normal strategy of 'global centralised' purchasing. The vegetable section in Chinese Wal-Mart's is double that within American Wal-Mart's and the products offered in Wal-Mart in China in Shenzen, range from chicken feet, to Ma-Ling branded stewed pork ribs, and Gulong brand pickled lettuce. A considerably different portfolio from that offered in the United States.

Sourcing

The different product portfolio has had an impact upon the power of the 'global centralised' purchasing of Wal-Mart China, as many products could only be purchased locally. Furthermore, many of Wal-Mart China's products were sourced locally because of the poor transport systems in China and governmental regulations that meant some products such as alcohol and tobacco had to be purchased locally. All in all, what can be seen in Wal-Mart's operations in China is that sourcing had to be made locally for a number of reasons; geographical, political and because of consumer tastes. In total, in 2004, a massive 85% of products sold at Wal-Mart China came from 14,000 Chinese suppliers (Tiplady).

Structure

Although products and sourcing methods changed, the practical way in which Wal-Mart traded, remained the same. Wal-Mart's first store in China was 'SAM'S CLUB' in Shenzhen, and 'SAM'S CLUB' is also open in Beijing with an area of 18,000 meters, costing $18 to join. This members-only division of Wal-Mart was an ambitious move by Wal-Mart China because other retailers had failed in this area of the Chinese market. However, Wal-Mart China was successful, according to Tom McLaughlin, vice president of merchandising and marketing for Wal-Mart China because of 'high quality and low prices.' As well as 'SAM'S CLUB,' Wal-Mart China has also used the neighbourhood markets and Supercenters market models as used in America to meet customer needs.

Success

The result in China for Wal-Mart was an organisation different from the model in the United States. Although Wal-Mart have held onto the 'SAM'S CLUB' warehouses, the 'centralised buying' in Wal-Mart China is less powerful than in the States for the simple reason that so many items have to be sourced locally. Additionally, what is sold within the stores is largely completely different from that of the United States. Nevertheless, operations within China, although very different from U.S. stores, have proved profitable with profits of $670 million in 2004.

Wal-Mart in Germany

Wal-Mart's development in Germany is perhaps the most interesting case of how Wal-Mart has had to change and adapt its American methods in order to satisfy its Germanic customers. Wal-Mart entered this country in the year of 1998, and did so optimistically that it could satisfy customer demands.

Customer service

One of the ways it was sure it could fulfil customer needs was through customer service, something which Wal-Mart prided itself on in America. Wal-Mart became sure that service was going to be an important issue following a report published, prior to Wal-Mart's entry into the market, by Arthur Anderson consulting. This report revealed that retailers in Germany were the least accommodating of all European countries in terms of customer service (Troy, Mike). Germany was already well equipped with discount retailers such as Aldi and Lidl, thus customer service became one of the ways in which Wal-Mart wanted to distinguish itself from its competitors.

Wal-Mart decided to enter the German market using a takeover strategy; it acquired nearly 100 hypermarkets in less than 1 year. Wal-Mart took over two companies; Wertkauf and Interspar. In order for their commitment to customer service to be successful, Wal-Mart decided to re-name these stores, something it was reluctant to do in countries where the name of the previous of company has good connotations (such as with Asda in the United Kingdom). But Wal-Mart Germany was eager to build up its brand image, to be able to offer something to the German consumer that he had never seen before.

Differentiation

Wal-Mart in Germany intended its brand image to be very positive, putting the customer first, and motivating its employees to share in the enthusiastic culture of Wal-Mart. Unfortunately for Wal-Mart, this was a timely process. It took a great amount of time and effort to transform that culture

within the two firms that it took over, Wertkauf and Interspar. Although to the customer the name of the companies had changed, the culture within the organisations remained the same. Cultures within organisations cannot be quickly changed and manipulated, they must gradually develop over time, and this is what is to be seen in Wal-Mart Germany. Some employees from Wal-Mart in the United States went to Germany to give training sessions, to show employees of the new Wal-Mart what the Wal-Mart-way of treating customers is.

Misunderstanding

Actually, following the re-branding of the stores, the Wal-Mart way of doing things was introduced in many ways, this even included 'Wal-Mart greeters.' It appears however that the German population were not ready for the 'Wal-Mart greeters,' a good example of cultural misunderstanding on Wal-Mart's part. Even though this was successful in the U.S. and to some extent in other countries also, customers in Germany found the 'Wal-Mart greeters' too superficial, consequently some Wal-Mart stores removed this role altogether.

Organizational culture

However, it hasn't all been sorrowful for Wal-Mart Germany. Management within Wal-Mart were able to create an organisational culture where employees felt they were listened to and respected; a culture where employee ideas are valued and suggested new ways, to meet the customer needs, are implemented. This part of the organisational culture is something that Wal-Mart prides itself on in America. And it was because of these changes that Wal-Mart was able to offer flexibility and listen to customers needs through employees on the shop floor. There is an interesting example of this in action; it is the development of 'singles shopping night,' every Friday night in many Wal-Mart stores in Germany.

Singles shopping

The 'singles shopping night' was started in the Wal-Mart store in Dortmund, Germany because two Wal-Mart shop floor workers thought it might be a good way for people to find partners, for those who were 'too old for discos and too proud for Internet dating' (Zimmerman and Schoenfeld). Because of the nature of this development this story has been well documented, and all the reports indicate that the 'singles night' has gone down well. In fact, Wal-Mart officials say that following the implementation of singles shopping night, profits on Friday nights have increased by 25%. Although a rather comical story in kind, this has been a success, attracting customers that normally wouldn't shop in Wal-Mart. In fact it seems to have been a success for people too; German Wal-Mart officials say they know of at least 30 couples who have got together through the shopping night.

This remarkable case of singles shopping reveals an interesting aspect of Wal-Mart Germany; it was able to form an organisation culture, in keeping with that of its home-base, whereby employees were able to share their ideas with their superiors, and thus, put customer needs as the priority. In fact the case of the singles shopping was actually developed further by Wal-Mart Germany, and through staff participation, the nights were made even more successful by having 'flirt points;' tables where free chocolate samples are offered. The 'singles shopping' night was implemented nationwide in Germany for February the 13th, and has been recognised by Wal-Mart internationally as being successful, with Wal-Mart Korea and Wal-Mart Canada contacting Wal-Mart Germany for operational information. According to Bill Wertz, the spokesman for Wal-Mart's international division, the 'singles shopping' night has been a way in which Wal-Mart Germany has been able to distinguish itself from its competitors, commenting "we found a little personality doesn't hurt." Globalised or Localised?

What can be taken from these cases?

Germany

The two cases actually show something quite different. In Germany, the case demonstrates how Wal-Mart Germany has had to differentiate itself from fierce competition. Although initially this was difficult, and it took time for the right internal culture to be formed whereby the employees could share their initiatives and ideas, this happened eventually. Thus the outcome for Wal-Mart Germany has been successful. Wal-Mart Germany faced cultural barriers in terms of too much 'Americanism' in some parts of the Wal-Mart formula, such as the 'Wal-Mart greeters,' however after fine tuning had been made, it was able to function respectably, and offer the customer what he needed.

China

In China, the case demonstrates that problems came up because Wal-Mart wasn't able to function as it normally does in many other countries, due to external demands on the company in terms of products and sourcing. Consequently Wal-Mart had to react to these demands and be flexible in its operations in China in order to give the customer what he wanted. The reason one finds whole pigs hanging from hooks in Wal-Mart's store in China is that it wants to give the customer what he wants.

Glocalisation: a new word, an old method

Readjustment

Wal-Mart prides itself on striving to put the customer first all the time, offering the customer good service, and the products he wants at the lowest prices. This paper has looked into two cases of Wal-Mart's operations, and it can be seen that in actual fact Wal-Mart has succeeded in fulfilling its objectives. These cases show one thing; even though Wal-Mart prides itself on its methodology within the United States of America, the country where it has been most successful, it has had to readjust its strategy whilst operating abroad. In Germany this has meant no 'Wal-Mart greeter' in some stores, and in China this has meant the limited use of the 'global

centralised' buying system. However at its core, Wal-Mart's operations abroad have still been truly Wal-Mart in nature, it has just meant that certain aspects of its operations have needed to have been tweaked. Wal-Mart still manages to sell the same Nestle and Heinz products world-wide, however it has had to give attention to local tastes.

The definition

The way that Wal-Mart operates, a global company with a local strategy, but adapting locally, has become known as 'glocalisation.' Richard Tiplady has given the following definition of glocalisation; *'the way in which ideas and structures that circulate globally are adapted and changed by local realities'* ('World of Difference,' 2003). Management Today, in February 2004 reported that *'Glocalisation means running an international business that tailors its output and organisation to local tastes.'*

Localization

It is clear that world tastes are not the same, they are not homogeneous, consequently rarely does a company, not even McDonalds offer a product without some sort of adaptation to the people its targeted at (for example the McBurrito in Mexico). This is what's known as *'localisation,'* adapting a product to meet the cultural and linguistic requirements of a market. The whole purpose of marketing is to give the customer what he desires; one can't simply try and sell a potential customer a product which has no relevance to him, howsoever, well one can try, but its very unlikely one would be successful. In April of 2003, Mr David Wright, the head of corporate marketing at the Chartered Institute of Marketing, explained to the British Overseas Trade Magazine how companies must ensure that products, promotions and delivery channels are appropriately tailored to local markets. This is because, *'social and cultural factors can be one of the biggest barriers to success across borders.'* It is only after the socio-cultural factors have been discovered and dealt with that organisations can be successful, and this is explicitly shown in the example of Wal-Mart.

Misunderstanding

Wal-Mart Germany using the typical 'Wal-Mart greeters' is an example of a mistake, Wal-Mart took something typical to the Wal-Mart philosophy,

and put it in a country where it wasn't welcome. Plain and simply it was a regrettable mistake, which fortunately didn't do too much damage. There are numerous accounts of similar such mistakes, Mr Wright refers to McDonalds error in taking the white faced Ronald McDonald to Japan, where in Japan white signifies death. An unfortunate miscalculation.

The French writer, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, said: *"Language is the source of all misunderstandings."* At the heart of what he was saying is true, language often represents a difference in culture, and language and culture often result in misunderstanding. For this reason it is important for organisations such as Wal-Mart and other truly global companies to align their offerings to fit in with local tastes and requirements.

Glocalization is an answer

The term 'glocalisation' does explain the solution to Wal-Mart's success overseas. Wal-Mart has been able to run an international business, maintaining the advantages of huge economies of scale and buying power, whilst at the same time being flexible at the local level.

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Abstracts

Think locally, act globally: cultural constraints in personnel management (Geert Hofstede)

Nobody can think globally. Both national and organizational cultures constrain personnel management. Global personnel management implies understanding local constraints. Management in general and personnel management in particular, are culturally constrained. A distinction is made between national cultures and organization cultures. National cultures differ mainly on the level of fundamental values where five dimensions of values can be distinguished. These affect organization structures, motivation, performance appraisal, objective setting, strategic management and humanization of work. National cultures do not converge over time. Organization cultures (within nations) differ mainly on the level of more superficial practices, which means they are somewhat manageable. Six dimensions of practices can be distinguished, with implications for management. Managing multinationals means accepting and managing organizational culture differences.

Three cultures of management: the key to organizational learning (Edgar Schein)

Why do organizations fail to *learn how to learn* and therefore remain competitively marginal? In this article, I try to explain why organizational innovations either don't occur or fail to survive and proliferate. Some typical explanations revolve around vague concepts of "resistance to change" or "human nature" or failures of "leadership." I propose a more fundamental reason for such learning failures, derived from the fact that in every organization there are three particular cultures among its subcultures, two of which have their roots *outside* the organization and are therefore more fundamentally entrenched in their particular assumptions. Every organization develops an internal culture based on its operational success, what I call the "operator culture." But every organization also has, in its various functions, the designers and technocrats who drive the core

technologies. I call this the "engineering culture;" their fundamental reference group is their worldwide occupational community. Every organization also has its executive management, the CEO and his or her immediate subordinates — what I call the "executive culture." CEOs, because of the nature of their jobs and the structure of the capital markets, also constitute a worldwide occupational community in the sense that they have common problems that are unique to their roles. These three cultures are often not aligned with each other.

The cultural metaphoric method: description, analysis and critique (Martin Gannon)

This article describes, analyzes and critiques the cultural metaphoric method. It also compares briefly the strengths and weaknesses of the bi-polar or dimensional method and the cultural metaphoric method. A cultural metaphor is any activity, phenomenon or institution which all or most members of an ethnic or national culture consider important and with which they identify closely, both intellectually and emotionally (Gannon, 2004; Gannon and Pillai, 2009). Each cultural metaphor is derived inductively using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; see also Gannon and Audia, 2000). The article begins with a description of grounded theory, followed by a description of the cultural metaphoric method, an analysis of it and a critique addressing some major issues. The focus of this article is on national cultures, although the method can be used to provide insight into ethnic cultures within and across nations and clusters of national cultures. Keywords: cultural metaphor – emic-etic distinction – testing of cultural metaphors.

Cultural intelligence: a concept for bridging and benefiting from cultural differences (Elisabeth Plum)

What have international relations, mergers and cross-discipline innovation got in common? They share a dependence on the ability to create mutual understanding and synergy between people from different cultural backgrounds. In this paper, I want to introduce the concept of cultural intelligence which aims to provide a new insight into the social skills and mental frameworks which enable us to bridge cultural differences. One of the core points in the concept of cultural intelligence is that the cultural dynamics of a situation are the same in relation to professional, organisational, national or racial differences. I believe that cultural difference has a greater impact on business effectiveness than we think. Our cultural backgrounds influence the way we think and act and the way we interpret each other's contributions. Our success or failure in communication depends on this competence and ultimately skill in this area affects the company's bottom line.

Cultural codes (Clotaire Rapaille)

I am going to guide you now towards the two dozen most important culture codes that I have discovered. These codes will show how the cultural unconscious affects our personal life, the decisions that we take as consumers and the way we act as citizens of the world. I will also contrast these codes with the discoveries I have made in other cultures with the purpose of showing how the same thing can have a very different meaning somewhere else.

What is cultural intelligence? (Brooks Peterson)

Whether travelling abroad or working at home, business people routinely face challenges when it comes to understanding the culture of others. When misunderstandings occur, relationships suffer. The good news is that

cultivating cultural intelligence is a skill that can be learned; and you don't have to speak a second language fluently to have cultural intelligence.

Anthropology and epistemology for "glocal" managers: understanding the worlds in which we live and work (Fernando Salvetti and Barbara Bertagni)

Speed, interconnection, immateriality, net-economy, global and local worlds... The increasing globalisation also brings with it a rise in the differentiations, not just in the homologations. Therefore it is better to talk about '*glocalization*' rather than globalization: global integration and micro-territorial fragmentation are two complementary processes. We live within a society that is based on multiplicities, often very different among themselves, but with some lines of convergence. Working in intercultural contexts means taking into account different cognitive paradigms, relational set-ups and reference values. The greatest barrier that often comes between us and a successful business is that made up of cultural difference. In order to do global business effectively a lot of cross-cultural intelligence is needed. Dealing with *global business* also means that misunderstandings, ambiguity, mistakes are always around the corner. What we need are ways of thinking and acting that are able to make us understand and frequent the many particularities, contrasts and differences that characterise the many local markets in our increasingly global world.

On being international: reflections on living an international life: with observations and suggestions / France – US comparisons: some comparisons between France and the United States (*Mark Louis Uhrich*)

Being international can run the range from traveling to different countries, to being on assignment in other countries, to immigrating to another country and becoming integrated into that other culture. In all variations, it can be immensely enriching. But at the same time, there are risks of failure – both personal and professional. Accordingly, it can be important to develop an understanding of the risks and the factors for achieving success

in "being international." This paper explores the dimensions of being international. In it are profiled, aspects of the experience, an examination of reasons for difficulty and a development of what is involved in achieving success in the international environment. These are related to personality factors, skills and environmental factors. The insight is developed from the perspective of the personal experience of the author, study on the subject and observation of numerous people in several countries. Using what has been learned, the author presents practical guidelines for both individuals involved and for organizations seeking to have people succeed in the international environment. He also presents the richness of being international and offers encouragement to those who have an interest in being so. Last but not least, a few general and relative comparisons between France and the United States.

Skills for global business: cultural intelligence & business development (Fernando Salvetti)

Do we know how to contribute to the business development of active organizations in today's world that is global and local at the same time? Are we ready to identify new business opportunities in world markets? Are we able to sustain our business, ourselves and our colleagues with effective intercultural intelligence? We belong to working groups in which the concepts of service, team-working, hierarchy, time and quality are so different. Working in intercultural contexts means facing cognitive paradigms, relational systems and different reference values. Cultural intelligence opens up significant dimensions to us, not only in terms of understanding and analysing the world we are living in but also in direct terms of management and business development. This is the key that allows us to "listen" and understand habits, behaviours, contexts and markets that are different from our own.

"Glocalizing" visual communication in organizations: when and how to adapt visual communication to local standards (Sabrina Bresciani and Martin Eppler)

Visual communication is increasingly being used in organizations for its unique power to attract attention, engage the audience and enhance recall and comprehension. Business visualization is by no means limited to bar charts or flowcharts, but encompasses a wide variety of forms, from mind maps to visual metaphors, sketches to diagrams. Visual templates based on these genres can be used for supporting collaborative tasks such as strategy development, project management, knowledge management, learning, risk management or planning. Organizations are learning to exploit the power of visualization for communication and collaboration across organizations and often across organizational branches that are located in different countries. As the (business) world becomes more and more flat, visual communication can be particularly helpful for getting a message across various cultures, thanks to its ability to convey a message with symbols and pictograms that can be – often – universally understood. However, the impact of cultural differences on visualization interpretation is frequently overlooked. In this article we thus aim to give an overview of how visualization can be successfully used in an international organizational context, by leveraging the universality of perception and, in particular, by addressing the major differences in the cross-cultural interpretation of visualizations.

Generation Y and "glocal" working (Lorenzo Cantoni, Emanuele Rapetti and Stefano Tadini)

In recent years, the very successful metaphor of "digital natives" has been proposed in order to characterize how young generations – also called as Generation Y, connected generation, screen generation, homo sapiens, Millennials… – interact with global information and communication technologies (ICT) and in contrast with the approach of so-called "digital immigrants." A detailed review of the concerned literature and a

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presentation of the debate about those terms and concepts, allow framing of this debate within the wider discourse about determinism vs. instrumentalism when it comes to technologies. Moreover, the analysis clearly shows a "US centric" bias which tends to over-generalize results that are applicable only to given groups of people in given areas. Globalization of ICT does not produce automatically a globalization of meanings and practices related to them and at the same time, they cannot be simply reduced to mere neutral tools... The presentation of an empirical research involving young – Gen Y – people in two higher education institutions and in six companies in Tessin (Switzerland) helps better understanding the relevant parameters when it comes to usage of ICT and at the same time helps to value how personal, local and cultural factors do play a major role in this game.

Drumstorming music: a percussion and training experience based method (Vittorio Simonelli)

Drumstorming, in its most basic form, finds a common thread through the use of orchestral metaphors. It focuses on aspects linked to productive attitudes for team work, emotional agreement, interpersonal harmony, listening capabilities, and all other aspects which characterize the sharing of workplace processes. Compared to other "narrated" metaphors, Drumstorming represents an "experienced" one in that it is characterized by one fundamental rule: "There aren't any spectators - just active participators."

What instruments and practices for the management of a multicultural staff? (Helena Karjalainen)

Nowadays, faced with the internationalisation and the reapproaching of different cultures in the working place, a new challenge seems to force itself upon the management of businesses and the direction of human resources to understand what are the strategies and management solutions suited to a multicultural environment - How to connect the interactions

among cultures, cooperation and performance? What management instruments to get the maximum efficacy from staff made of different cultures? What role must be played first by the manager and then by the management of human resources in this process? This contribution tries to examine what management practices must be used for multicultural staff. To do this, we must offer the example of Prometheus, an international business present in around a hundred countries, representing 123 nationalities that has been able to solve the problem of the management of staff made of different cultures with policy and practices suited to the business environment. First of all, the article will touch on the conceptual and theoretical groundwork of the study of the case as well as on the methods that allowed the collection of the empiric data. It will show after that, the results of the research : the management practices of Prometheus that are located at various levels in the business and concern the organisation of the work of the staff, the management of the multicultural staff and the construction of a common business culture. Thirdly, the article will study in deep, the application field and the conditions of success of these practices, showing the two strong points of this management policy, to get to know British management flexibility and the role of business culture. This contribution will end at last, with the teachings of the Prometheus model. The example of the Prometheus management shows that the management success of multicultural staff is not due to case, but it is, rather, due to the degree of intervention of the direction of human resources. Various factors seem to contribute to management success, like structural layout (almost 'the adhocracy') as also management aptitudes, that are strongly connected with the personality of the manager in question. Keywords: Direction of human resources, multicultural management, cultural differences, management practices, British management.

Cross-cultural coaching (Barbara Köhne)

In the modern multinational companies, not only managers who are expatriated, but also the locals are getting a special training for working with people of another cultural background. They learn about power distance, masculinity index, uncertainty avoidance, individualism and collectivism, long and short term orientation and get an idea of what could be different and difficult. They learn about traditions, rituals and things to do or better not to do.

Be innovative and learn how to learn! Cultural intelligence to a better learning (Fernando Salvetti)

How can we manage knowledge, human and intellectual resources and cognitive and behavioral dynamics at their best within corporations? How do we create and manage, in a flexible and dynamic way, an effective organization filled with people always ready to learn and develop? In the current scenario, the primary economic and natural resources are not (or not only) financial capital or work itself; they are also relationships, knowledge and human and intellectual capital. Knowledge, abilities and imagination - as well as the networking used to share experiences, competencies and knowledge (therefore, the ability to learn) - are more important than physical, technological and financial capital traditionally at the center of economic and organizational scenarios. One of the most important competitive differentiation factors among companies lies in the capacity for cultivating and enhancing the (famous but not necessarily widespread) intangible assets: intelligence, experience, imagination and, more generally, the soft skills as well as the specialized and transversal competencies, the know-how and know-what competencies. To increase people's learning ability means to allow them to develop their creativity and spirit of innovation. In recent years experiential learning has developed significantly. It is a client-focused, supported approach to individual, group and organizational development that engages learners by using the elements of action, reflection and transfer. Developing learning ability requires flexible strategies and good tools that foster the aptitude to adapt and to

orient oneself in dynamic situations. Last but not the least, a dimension of great importance to facilitate the implementation of learning ability is fostering cultural intelligence mainly as it relates to the anthropology of knowledge and epistemology.

Knowledge sharing + Networking = Product's Innovation (x 2… x 3… ∞) (Fernando Salvetti)

Sharing knowledge and networking allows us to significantly increase levels of product innovation. Product innovation is indispensable for a company's good health in both the long and short run, especially for those organizations dealing with international markets. Nowadays in order to do business, many companies are learning how to develop new products and services more quickly than ever - but how? This can be done by ensuring that employees work together at the same time, simultaneously progressing towards a determined finished project rather than in time intervals. A *knowledge based* organization is a space (perhaps physical but most certainly cultural) where people - through *networking* and *knowledge sharing* - activate circles of experience in which all shared knowledge on an organizational level becomes the starting block for new applications and products.

What is global and what is local? A theoretical discussion around globalization (Jean-Sébastien Guy)

This article develops a new sociological understanding of the difference between global and local relating to the phenomena of globalization. Globalization itself is redefined as one of society's self-description insofar as, following Niklas Luhmann's theory, society is conceived as a cognitive system that can only handle information (about the world, about itself) only through its own specific operation (communication), so that globalization affects society solely when the latter communicates about the former. This

effectively happens, it is argued, because communications about globalization convey an account of society's current state, i.e. a description of society within society, hence fulfilling the system's need for self-knowledge. The global value then coincides with the content of the particular self-description that globalization is, whereas the local value corresponds to the content of all other self-descriptions as seen from the previous perspective. Global and local are not spatial structures (levels, scales, places, distances, etc.), but different representations of space competing with each other in a process to determine within society, the reality that society is. In the second part of the article, the ideas of Roland Robertson about globalization are reinterpreted so as to provide support to this new understanding of the difference global/local. Robertson distinguished four images of world-order which can be taken as equivalent to four self-descriptions of society. Globalization is precisely one of them. Contrasts between images of world-order as imagined by Robertson himself can thus illuminate what the global and the local have in common and how they diverge from each other.

Global / Local services (Fernando Salvetti)

Global services open up interesting prospects and not just for globe-trotters. Homologation and standardisation, as the drivers of action preclude the occasion to "listen" to the local context, to interpret it and to revise the singularities within a business strategy effectively suited to the geo-cultural chessboards of reference. One requires cross-cultural intelligence, the ability to "grasp" at a deep level the local context and the most common thought processes, whilst being aware that "the receiver, not the sender, defines communication." To this day, there are many actions implied in terms of cultural colonialism/tailorism, of standardisation. The interpretations of local contexts aimed at supporting global business initiatives with real cultural knowledge of the more common thought processes and actions, rooted in the different market contexts, are still few

in number. The risk is obvious, especially if we believe as Michael Porter does, that "strategy is to be different."

Managing in Asia: conflict, incomprehension, or successful relations? The difficulties encountered by Western expatriate managers in Asia (Pascale Reinhardt)

Working and succeeding in Asia depends more on "knowing how to be" rather than on "know-how." Long-term cultural and psychological support of these new expatriates is one of the most effective means to help them accomplish their mission and to develop both professional efficiency and personal "alignment." Western people working in Asia are confronted with a dual reality which they perceive as contradictory. With their sense of adaptation, their desire to learn and to help those around them, progress can be sorely tried by this double constraint. Time is the best factor for professional integration in Asia, more than elsewhere and a minimum of 2 years after arrival is indispensable to become effective. Among the most frequent traps, the idea of cuddling the newly-arrived expatriate and protecting him from the inevitable "culture shock" does not seem to facilitate adaptation. Those most protected on arrival are also those who later have the most difficulty in adapting their methods to the differences manifested by their Asians subordinates, or able even to question these methods.

Living "glocally" with literacy success in the US Midwest (Loukia Sarroub)

This article examines the concept of glocality as a way to better understand why immigrants, poor people, print-illiterate families and boys are short-changed by schools that often operate under a deficit model or deprivation model in which students' economic, language and gender status is the main determinant for school success. The author offers for discussion a set of

themes that address (a) the challenges of recent immigration and resettlement in the Midwestern region of the United States, (b) the concept of glocality in connection to youth literacies and transnationalism, (c) the Midwest as a glocal context, and (d) the implications of success in relation to teachers and schools. Examples of glocality are drawn from research on Middle Eastern youth immigrant and refugee populations from Yemen and Iraq, as well as low socio-economic American youth.

Glamour and honor: going online and reading in West African culture (Wendy Griswold, Erin Metz McDonnell and Terence Emmett McDonnell)

In the fragile reading cultures of the developing world, will people abandon print as they embrace the Internet? Whether the media will compete or collaborate depends on place-specific factors. West Africans insert online practices into a local context of material circumstances, social roles and cultural values. In Nigeria and Ghana, these include (1) unreliable electricity and execrable telephone service; (2) overworked women, jobless young men, scammers and ambitious teenagers; and (3) a reading culture of limited penetration but enormous prestige. Internet access via cybercafés has intensified personal communications, reinforced gender inequality and enabled petty crooks to go global. It has not, however, encroached on reading's all-but-sacred status. Both netsavvy youth and the adult "reading class" protect reading practices through spatial and temporal separation, time management and functional differentiation. These preserve the honored position of reading despite West Africans' enthusiasm for the glamour of going online.

Wal-Mart: a glocalized company (David Towers)

Wal-Mart is not just the world's largest retailer. It's also the world's largest company. The scale of Wal-Mart is difficult to comprehend. Wal-Mart, because of its scale and intensity is an interesting organisation to look at, particularly with regards to its overseas development.

Authors

Barbara Bertagni, *LKN-LOGOS Knowledge Network, Paris, Turin and Bern*

Sabrina Bresciani, *University of the Italian Switzerland, Lugano*

Lorenzo Cantoni, *New MinE Lab and University of the Italian Switzerland, Lugano*

Martin Eppler, *University of St. Gallen*

Martin Gannon, *California State University San Marcos*

Wendy Griswold, *Northwestern University, Chicago*

Jean-Sébastien Guy, *Dalhouisie University*

Michele La Rosa, *CIDOSPEL and University of Bologna*

Geert Hofstede, *University of Maastricht and University of Tilburg*

Helena Karjalainen, *Normandy Business School, Caen and Le Havre*

Barbara Köhne, *Executive coach and consultant for international business and management development, Berlin, Paris, and Rome*

Terence Emmett McDonnell, *Northwestern University, Chicago*

Erin Metz McDonnell, *Northwestern University, Chicago*

Brooks Peterson, *Consultant for international business and management training, Minneapolis*

Elisabeth Plum, *Consultant for international business and management training, Copenhagen*

Clotaire Rapaille, *Consultant for international marketing, archetype discovery and creativity, New York, Rio and Paris*

Emanuele Rapetti, *New MinE Lab and University of the Italian Switzerland, Lugano*

Pascale Reinhardt, *Executive coach, facilitator and consultant for international business and management development, Paris*

Fernando Salvetti, *LKN-LOGOS Knowledge Network, Bern, Paris and Turin*

Loukia Sarroub, *College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln*

Edgar Schein, *MIT Sloan School of Management, Boston*

Vittorio Simonelli, *Consultant for artistic and experiential team building, Milan*

Stefano Tadini, *New MinE Lab and University of the Italian Switzerland, Lugano*

David Towers, *Consultant for international business and management training, Leyland, Lancashire*

Mark Louis Uhrich, *Consultant for international business and management training, Paris and Boston*

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