

Intercultural communication

Professor Luciano Traquandi

A.Y. 2014-2015

Didactic Materials

PART 1 (lessons held on February 16th and 23rd)

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- 1. The three classic schools for intercultural management**
- 2. The western, Indian and Chinese vision of the world**
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3 schools of thought

1) The **culturalistic** School.

Every country, linguistic community (including dialects) and cultural race have their own specificity, which is to be taken into account, case by case.

Following this approach, anthropologists seem to be the best trainers for professionals and businessmen (business anthropology is, as a result, becoming popular).

2) The **convergence hypothesis**: we are all tending towards a single global culture, the one of the «winner», an approach typically adopted in U.S. Companies but now pervading European organisations.

According to this school, once we get to the final convergence we are able to solve multicultural problems adopting «the» Culture, at least as far as the business is concerned.

3) The **contingence** school

This school says «it depends»



Geert Hofstede™ Cultural Dimensions

Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster." Prof. Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor, Maastricht University.

What are the practical applications for Geert Hofstede's research on cultural differences?

For those who work in international business, it is sometimes amazing how different people in other cultures behave. We tend to have a human instinct that 'deep inside' all people are the same - but they are not. Therefore, if we go into another country and make decisions based on how we operate in our own home country - the chances are we'll make some very bad decisions.

Geert Hofstede's research gives us insights into other cultures so that we can be more effective when interacting with people in other countries. If understood and applied properly, this information should reduce your level of frustration, anxiety, and concern. But most important, Geert Hofstede will give you the 'edge of understanding' which translates to more successful results.

What are Hofstede's five Cultural Dimensions?

Power Distance Index (PDI) 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'.

Individualism (IDV) 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: 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.

Masculinity (MAS) versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society to 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 maximally different from women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and 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.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) 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, 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.

Long-Term Orientation (LTO) 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. 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.

Table 4.1 Masculinity index (MAS) values for 50 countries and 3 regions

<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>MAS score</i>	<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>MAS score</i>
1	Japan	95	28	Singapore	48
2	Austria	79	29	Israel	47
3	Venezuela	73	30/31	Indonesia	46
4/5	Italy	70	30/31	West Africa	46
4/5	Switzerland	70	32/33	Turkey	45
6	Mexico	69	32/33	Taiwan	45
7/8	Ireland	68	34	Panama	44
	(Republic of)		35/36	Iran	43
7/8	Jamaica	68	35/36	France	43
9/10	Great Britain	66	37/38	Spain	42
9/10	Germany FR	66	37/38	Peru	42
11/12	Philippines	64	39	East Africa	41
11/12	Colombia	64	40	Salvador	40
13/14	South Africa	63	41	South Korea	39
13/14	Equador	63	42	Uruguay	38
15	USA	62	43	Guatemala	37
16	Australia	61	44	Thailand	34
17	New Zealand	58	45	Portugal	31
18/19	Greece	57	46	Chile	28
18/19	Hong Kong	57	47	Finland	26
20/21	Argentina	56	48/49	Yugoslavia	21
20/21	India	56	48/49	Costa Rica	21
22	Belgium	54	50	Denmark	16
23	Arab countries	53	51	Netherlands	14
24	Canada	52	52	Norway	8
25/26	Malaysia	50	53	Sweden	5
25/26	Pakistan	50			
27	Brazil	49			

Table 2.1 Power distance index (PDI) values for 50 countries and 3 regions

<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>PDI score</i>	<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>PDI score</i>
1	Malaysia	104	27/28	South Korea	60
2/3	Guatemala	95	29/30	Iran	58
2/3	Panama	95	29/30	Taiwan	58
4	Philippines	94	31	Spain	57
5/6	Mexico	81	32	Pakistan	55
5/6	Venezuela	81	33	Japan	54
7	Arab countries	80	34	Italy	50
8/9	Equador	78	35/36	Argentina	49
8/9	Indonesia	78	35/36	South Africa	49
10/11	India	77	37	Jamaica	45
10/11	West Africa	77	38	USA	40
12	Yugoslavia	76	39	Canada	39
13	Singapore	74	40	Netherlands	38
14	Brazil	69	41	Australia	36
15/16	France	68	42/44	Costa Rica	35
15/16	Hong Kong	68	42/44	Germany FR	35
17	Colombia	67	42/44	Great Britain	35
18/19	Salvador	66	45	Switzerland	34
18/19	Turkey	66	46	Finland	33
20	Belgium	65	47/48	Norway	31
21/23	East Africa	64	47/48	Sweden	31
21/23	Peru	64	49	Ireland (Republic of)	28
21/23	Thailand	64	50	New Zealand	22
24/25	Chile	63	51	Denmark	18
24/25	Portugal	63	52	Israel	13
26	Uruguay	61	53	Austria	11
27/28	Greece	60			

Exhibit 7.1 Long-Term Orientation Index Values
for 23 Countries

Score Rank	Country or Region	LTO Score
1	China	118
2	Hong Kong	96
3	Taiwan	87
4	Japan	80
5	South Korea	75
6	Brazil	65
7	India	61
8	Thailand	56
9	Singapore	48
10	Netherlands	44
11	Bangladesh	40
12	Sweden	33
13	Poland	32
14	Germany (F.R.)	31
15	Australia	31
16	New Zealand	30
17	United States	29
18	Great Britain	25
19	Zimbabwe	25
20	Canada	23
21	Philippines	19
22	Nigeria	16
23	Pakistan	00

Table 5.1 Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) values for 50 countries and 3 regions

<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>UAI score</i>	<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>UAI score</i>
1	Greece	112	28	Ecuador	67
2	Portugal	104	29	Germany FR	65
3	Guatemala	101	30	Thailand	64
4	Uruguay	100	31/32	Iran	59
5/6	Belgium	94	31/32	Finland	59
5/6	Salvador	94	33	Switzerland	58
7	Japan	92	34	West Africa	54
8	Yugoslavia	88	35	Netherlands	53
9	Peru	87	36	East Africa	52
10/15	France	86	37	Australia	51
10/15	Chile	86	38	Norway	50
10/15	Spain	86	39/40	South Africa	49
10/15	Costa Rica	86	39/40	New Zealand	49
10/15	Panama	86	41/42	Indonesia	48
10/15	Argentina	86	41/42	Canada	48
16/17	Turkey	85	43	USA	46
16/17	South Korea	85	44	Philippines	44
18	Mexico	82	45	India	40
19	Israel	81	46	Malaysia	36
20	Colombia	80	47/48	Great Britain	35
21/22	Venezuela	76	47/48	Ireland (Republic of)	35
21/22	Brazil	76	49/50	Hong Kong	29
23	Italy	75	49/50	Sweden	29
24/25	Pakistan	70	51	Denmark	23
24/25	Austria	70	52	Jamaica	13
26	Taiwan	69	53	Singapore	8
27	Arab countries	68			

Table 3.1 Individualism index (IDV) values for 50 countries and 3 regions

<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>IDV score</i>	<i>Score rank</i>	<i>Country or region</i>	<i>IDV score</i>
1	USA	91	28	Turkey	37
2	Australia	90	29	Uruguay	36
3	Great Britain	89	30	Greece	35
4/5	Canada	80	31	Philippines	32
4/5	Netherlands	80	32	Mexico	30
6	New Zealand	79	33/35	East Africa	27
7	Italy	76	33/35	Yugoslavia	27
8	Belgium	75	33/35	Portugal	27
9	Denmark	74	36	Malaysia	26
10/11	Sweden	71	37	Hong Kong	25
10/11	France	71	38	Chile	23
12	Ireland	70	39/41	West Africa	20
	(Republic of)		39/41	Singapore	20
13	Norway	69	39/41	Thailand	20
14	Switzerland	68	42	Salvador	19
15	Germany F.R.	67	43	South Korea	18
16	South Africa	65	44	Taiwan	17
17	Finland	63	45	Peru	16
18	Austria	55	46	Costa Rica	15
19	Israel	54	47/48	Pakistan	14
20	Spain	51	47/48	Indonesia	14
21	India	48	49	Colombia	13
22/23	Japan	46	50	Venezuela	12
22/23	Argentina	46	51	Panama	11
24	Iran	41	52	Equador	8
25	Jamaica	39	53	Guatemala	6
26/27	Brazil	38			
26/27	Arab countries	38			

Cross culture, Diversity and Inclusion



The Tao of Philosophy

Alan Watts

Alan Watts presents the basic visions of the world which sustain three fundamental cultures for our present and future: the Western, Indian and Chinese vision of the nature. The reader can consequently imagine the impact on our economic and personal life

In the history of philosophy there are **three dominant theories of nature**. The first theory is the Western theory, which is that nature is a machine, or an artifact. We inherited this idea from the Hebrews who believed that nature was made by God in somewhat the same way a potter makes a pot out of clay or a carpenter makes a table out of wood. It is not insignificant that Jesus is the son of a carpenter because our tradition has been to look upon the world as a construct, as if somebody knows how it was put together. Somebody understands how it was done, and that is the constructor, the architect, the Lord God. However, it so happens that in the eighteenth century Western thought began to change. People became increasingly doubtful as to whether there was a maker—whether there was a God—but they continued to look upon the creation as an artifact, as a machine. By the time of Newton, people were explaining the world in terms of mechanism and we are still under the influence of that idea today. After all, in an article on human physiology the author will usually include drawings which show the human body as a sort of factory. They show how peristaltic action carries the food in and how it is processed by this organ and that organ, just as if a certain product is fed into a factory as a cow at one end and comes out canned corned beef at the other. The human being is illustrated in just such a way, and in some kinds of rather degraded medicine, that is now practiced when you go to the hospital for a medical examination, you are treated as a machine and they process you. Even if you are perfectly healthy and can walk, nevertheless they have to have you in a wheelchair immediately. Then they put you through a process whereby the heart specialist looks only at your heart, because he does not understand anything else. The otorhinolaryngologist, which means an ear, nose, and throat doctor, looks at that section of you, and he does not know about anything else. Then perhaps a psychiatrist takes a look at you and goodness knows what happens there; and so on, and so on. Everybody looks at you from their specialized point of view as if they were a bunch of mechanics examining your automobile. However, as I said last night, we just ask for this because most of us consider ourselves as chauffeurs inside our bodies, which we own in the same way as we own a car. When it goes wrong we take it to the mechanic to fix it and we do not really identify with our body, just as we do not really identify with our car. So this is the theory which has grown up in the West of nature as an artifact, or something that is made. The second theory of nature is an East Indian theory. Nature is seen not as an artifact but as drama. Basic to all Hindu thought is the idea that the world is *maya*, a Sanskrit word which means many things. It means magic, illusion, art, and play. All the world is a stage, and in the Hindu idea of nature the ultimate reality of the universe is the self which they call *Brahman*, or *atman*. That is what there is: the self—universal, eternal, boundless, indescribable—and everything that

happens happens on the self. This is the same as saying, "It's on me, the drinks tonight are on me," or as we say when we hear the radio, "It's on the speaker." Everything you hear on the radio, whether it be flutes, drums, human voices, or traffic noises, are vibrations of the diaphragm in the speaker. However, the radio does not tell you that. The announcer does not come on every morning and say, "Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The following sounds that you are going to hear are vibrations of the diaphragm in your speaker, and they are not really human voices or musical instruments, but just vibrations." They never let you in on that, and in exactly the same way, the universe does not let you in on the truth that all sense experiences are vibrations of the self; not just your self, but *the* self, and all of us share this self in common because it is pretending to be all of us. In this way *brahman*, the ultimate principle, plays hide and seek eternally, or at least for unspeakably long periods of time. The Hindus measure time in what is called a *kalpa*; that is 4,320,000 years. Perhaps this figure is not meant to be taken literally, but for an unspeakably long time, the brahman, the self, pretends that it is lost, and is us. It gets mixed up in all of our adventures and all our troubles, and all our agonies and tragedies. Then, after the period of 4,320,000 years has elapsed, there is a catastrophe. The universe is destroyed in fire, and after that the brahman wakes up (as Brahma, the mythological creator of the universe) and says, "Well, good, crazy! What an adventure that was!" Then he wipes the sweat off his brow and says, "Shwooo, let's rest a while." So, for another 4,320,000 years the Divine Self rests, and knows who It is. Then It says, "Well, this is rather boring. Let's get going; let's get mixed up again."

Now it does this in a very strange way because the way the Hindus time it, the first period of getting mixed up, or getting lost is beautiful. That is the longest period in which everything is right. Life is just glorious. Then there is the next period in which things get a little wonky. Something is vaguely out of order, but that does not last so long. Then the next period is when good and evil are equally balanced, and that is still shorter. And finally comes the shortest period when everything bad triumphs, and the whole universe blows up and we begin all over again. We are supposed to be living in that period now. It is what is called the Kali Yuga, the Age of Darkness, and it began on Friday, February the 23rd, 3123 B.C., and it has 5,000 years to run. However, as it goes on, time gets faster, so do not worry. Now, there is a third theory of nature which is Chinese, and it is very interesting. The Chinese word for nature is tzu-jan, and this expression means "of itself, so," or what happens of itself. We might say "spontaneity," but it almost means "automatic," because automatic is what is self moving, and we associate the word "automatic" with machinery. However tzu-jan, what is so of itself, is associated in the Chinese mind not with machinery but with biology. Your hair grows by itself; you do not have to think of how to grow it. Your heart beats by itself; you do not have to make up your mind how to beat it. This is what the Chinese mean by nature. A poem says, "Sitting quietly, doing nothing, spring comes, and grass grows of itself." Their greater principle of nature is called the Tao, pronounced "dow" in the Mandarin dialect, "tow" in the Shanghai dialect, "toe" in the Cantonese dialect, so take your choice. Tao means the course of nature, and Laotzu, who was a philosopher living a little later than 400 B.C., wrote a book about the Tao. He said, "The Tao which can be spoken is not the eternal Tao." In other words, you cannot describe it. He said the principle of the Tao is spontaneity, and that "the Great Tao flows everywhere, both to the left and to the right. It loves and nourishes all things but does not lord it over them. It accomplishes merits and lays no claim to them." Of course there is a very great difference between the Chinese idea of Tao, as the informing principle of nature, and the Judeo-Christian idea of God as nature's lord and master, because the Tao does not act as a boss. In the Chinese philosophy of nature, nature has no boss. There is no principle that forces

things to behave the way they do, and so it is a completely democratic theory of nature. Correspondingly, most Westerners, whether they be Christians or non-Christians, do not trust nature. Of all things nature is the thing least to be trusted. You must manage it. You must watch out for it and it will always go wrong if you do not watch out, just as the goblins will get you if you

THE CULTURAL CONNOTATION WITH THE 5 DRIVERS METHODS

The method of 5 drivers is inscribed within the so called “decisional psychologies” and precisely the Eric Berne’s Transactional Analysis.

It is adoptable to qualify the culture of an individual, or a group where the members are in physical contact or a whole human entity, like a company, even a country, where there is an influence (cultural impact) also if there is not an interaction among all the members of that entity, also called “virtual group”.

The basic principle underlining the driver model is that every entity, from individual to groups to extended human agglomerations, decides his connotation, his driver.

From now on we’ll refer in this script to the term “entity”, to mean indifferently the 3 forms. Or, in other cases as a matter of simplicity we’ll refer to the individual, but the conclusions are extendable to physical and virtual groups:

The choice of own characterising driver is among 5 potential drivers, which are offered by the ordinary and extraordinary events surrounding those entities.

The first basic distinction between a driver and an ordinary behaviour is that the latter is requested by the environment (hexogen event) and the former is self activated, with an endogen sake.

The 5 potential drivers that are presented to the individual (group), allowing the further choice are expressed in term of imperatives:

1) Hurry up!

It is the invitation, sometime with thrust and urgency, to act faster than useful, possible or necessary, like moving, growing, changing, stopping quicker than the real situation requires. For example several companies try to grow faster than they are requested by their mission or their external context or managers make yes or no critical decisions without the correct time requested for both answers or simply some professionals physically walk through their activity at an unnecessary speed.

If this behaviour is not demanded, is it a first clue that that entity adopted the “hurry up” driver.

In some companies if workers, from blue collars to directors take their time to achieve the result they are expected to produce there could be a form of punishment or social depreciation

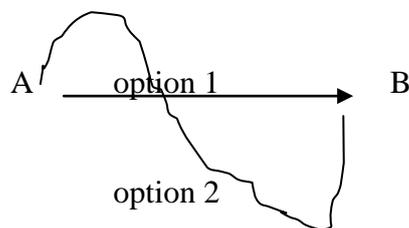
If people adjust to this “faster than necessary style” it is not said that they “have hurry up”, perhaps they simply conform. But if the same persons, when non requested or in different environment, show that behaviour, this is a clue that driver is their cultural connotation

2) *Make the effort!*

A manifestation of this driver is occurring when one person (group) has two options to reach a result and he follows the one which is the most difficult, time consuming, energy depleting and typically ends to achieve the necessary outcome but with a visible human fatigue

Some people try to impose this behaviour on their children, subordinates and they probably conform, as an imposition from un higher hierarchical status, at least so perceived. As far as it is conformed, it is not a driver of that entity, unless it operates also when non requested.

Using a graph representation



Sometime there is not the second “harder” option so the entity makes the effort to create it and then choose it.

The frequent failure when an individual/ an organization try to impose this driver is a further proof that is not possible to transfer or build a culture but that every entity decides his own culture.

In several companies, the performance has to be accompanied by a demonstration of strong effort, such as devoting a long time or preparing thick and complex reports and a relaxed person, although successful, is not appreciated. These kinds of companies generally unwillingly can discourage efficiency.

At the opposite in other cultures or organization is very appreciated an “elegant performance”, which employs what is necessary for the sake, not more.

3) *be strong!*

This driver is manifested by such a behaviour: when all the external/ internal clues and signals are suggesting that one person (or entity) should stop his activity, that person removes those signals and proceeds, even if not requested, non productive or when there is another person that could make the initiative for him. It could be defined “unnecessary sacrifice”

For example, there could be circumstances where a person is stressed, tired, exhausted or there could be an advantage in postponing the action (or decision) or another person could be more able to deal with the occurrence, but the “be strong” person ignores all these factors and option and goes on anyway.

“Be strong” individuals or companies generally make at late night important decisions or act when in bad shape, physically, financially, when the personnel is not ready and similar characteristics.

A “be strong” organisation generally promotes people which make unnecessary sacrifice and defines incorrectly this behaviour “availability”. It is important not to confuse this driver with organisational behaviours which are appropriate or inevitable.

4) Be perfect!

This driver leads people/ organisations to care with the same importance the most critical core factors and the slighted details, with no priority. For examples a decision will be made later than necessary for a need to evaluate also the non relevant aspects or a report will insist to describe meaningless facts or remarks. Delay and confusion are the risk with this driver.

Programming short and simple activities is sometime necessary, sometimes is a clue of “be perfect”.

This driver is also evident in companies/ product introductions to customers or external actors.

5) Try to please

The Try to Please driver invites people/ organisations to make decision or to act in order to please somebody else when this is not the appropriate criterion.

The person to comply could be a hierarchical superior, subordinate, even the customer. Of course there are many situations where this form of compliance is functional and due and in this case we are not experiencing the presence of this driver. The driver is evident when there is no request for the compliance or even worse, this driver is combined with the other’s “mind reading”. In some companies a person would be appreciated if he doesn’t ask but “guess” the right thing to do, to say, to decide etc.

A “law” about the 5 drivers.

A driver is a cultural decision of an entity, from individuals to large group.

The decided driver is not evident in regular conditions but tends to emerge in situation of stress, or when a high risk or a great opportunity is facing that entity.

The driver is a “point of failure”, the weak ring of the chain.

If a company (person) “has” the driver Hurry up could arrive late, as there could be the need for remaking unfinished works. It is a classic way to lose time.

“Make the effort” could deplete people and organisation energy, resulting in a failure to achieve the wished result or arriving to it but compromising the resources (psychological but also financial) to tackle the other or future needs.

“Be strong could cause that an individual or an organisational collapses in situations where they need the access to all their strengths.

“Be perfect” people or companies care obsessively all aspect but miss the one that was critical for the situation

“Trying to please” everybody generally results in a loss of credibility, which is the very opposite of the driver intention.

Strategies to deal with the individual or organisational drivers

Individuals and organization can manifest more than one driver but in most cases, in condition of high stress it emerges the most significant one.

Although there are some ways to reduce or remove a driver, which anyway requires the conscious collaboration of the person (group), it seems simpler and more efficient to take the driver into account.

Some considerations:

- when composing a team, try to avoid team members with the same driver, although it is instinctual to look for those with the same driver.
- If in condition of high stress (both for risks and opportunity), avoid to give a person or team a task whose characteristics would trigger the person/ team driver. For example if a real urgency is faced and the conditions are very critical, the “hurry up” person should be avoided.
- “Try to please” driver is one of the most dangerous. To neutralize it in critical conditions it is a safe precaution to introduce in the team one or more people whose driver is not this one.