

# An Introduction to Cultural Intelligence

Kirk J. Franklin, PhD

(Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Melbourne School of Theology, Wycliffe Global Alliance)

kirkfranklin31@gmail.com

## Introduction

Douglas McConnell gives this challenge: 'We must become students of culture so as to lead wisely in an era of globalization.... *What are we learning about culture that will help shape, catalyze, and propel our organizations?*'<sup>1</sup>

## Culture

Erin Meyer notes, 'the culture in which we grow up has a profound impact on how we see the world.'

The way this works, according to Meyer is how, 'In any given culture, members are conditioned to understand the world in a particular way, to see certain communication patterns as effective or undesirable, to find certain arguments persuasive or lacking merit, to consider certain ways of making decisions or measuring time "natural" or "strange".'<sup>2</sup>

## Defining Culture

The word's roots come from the Latin *cultūra*, meaning 'cultivation, agriculture, tillage, care,'<sup>3</sup> or the tilling of the soil. Culture is, therefore 'a collection of behaviours and beliefs associated with a particular group.'<sup>4</sup> (Anthropology): 'the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.'<sup>5</sup> Geert Hofstede describes culture as a person's 'mental software' because culture functions as our software for our behaviour of 'thinking, feeling, and acting'.<sup>6</sup>

Culture '*distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.*'<sup>7</sup> 'Culture is often a way that ethnicities, religions, races, and various social and personal factors are lumped together to describe someone's background.'<sup>8</sup>

Culture 'is not a thing'<sup>9</sup> or an individualized experience but is a collective, communal experience learned and shared through 'unwritten rules' amongst people within 'the same social environment'.<sup>10</sup> Culture is 'developed through explicit teaching and implicit observation of others.'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas McConnell, *Cultural Insights for Christian Leaders: New Directions for Organizations Serving God's Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Erin Meyer, *The Culture Map* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014), 252.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/culture>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/culture>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/culture>

<sup>6</sup> Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd ed. (McGraw Hill, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 6.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/culture>

<sup>9</sup> John R. Franke, "Intercultural Hermeneutics and the Shape of Missional Theology," in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, ed. Michael Goheen (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), 2105/7332.

<sup>10</sup> Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 6.

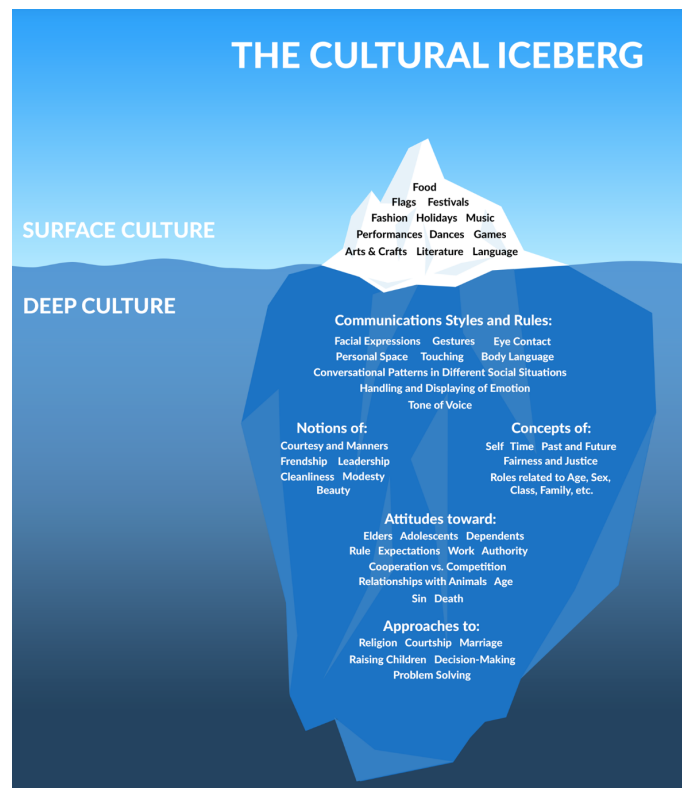
<sup>11</sup> Franke, in *Reading the Bible Missionally*, 2121/7332.

## The Cultural Iceberg

Richard and Evelyn Hibbert observe that 'each culture has a more superficial, easily visible level and deeper level that is harder to see.'<sup>12</sup> A way of visualizing this comes from Edward T. Hall (1976), who suggested that culture is like an iceberg in that only about 10% of the iceberg is visible at any given time and that a large part of it is hidden beneath the surface. Hall suggests that there is:

- **Surface Culture** is everything above the water; this is everything you can visualise, such as food, dress code, and language.
- **Deep Culture** is everything below the water, not visible at first inspection. It includes cultural values, beliefs, traditions, and 'the way we do things around here'.

There are numerous ways this has been visualised. For example:



Source: <https://medium.com/@inalisna17/cultural-all-knowledge-and-values-shared-by-a-group-3456b72b9ffd>

## Cultural Environment

Intelligent behaviours are a way of exploring how we respond in various situations and contexts. Intelligence can be seen in one's behaviour in addition to the mental actions that lead to those behaviours. The cultural environment in which a person lives

<sup>12</sup> Evelyn Hibbert, and Richard Hibbert, *Multiplying Leaders in Intercultural Contexts* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2023), 13.

influences their intelligence. For example, intelligent people in these cultural contexts display these attributes:

- Western: The natural goal to pursue learning and lifelong learning.<sup>13</sup>
- Eastern: Naturally 'benevolent, humble, has full knowledge of oneself and external conditions, and does what is right.'<sup>14</sup>
- Chinese: Cognitive capacity, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, and intellectual self-assertion and self-effacement tendencies.<sup>15</sup>
- US: 'Practical problem solving, verbal ability, and social competence.'<sup>16</sup>
- India and Eastern (not Chinese): 'Tied to Buddhist and Hindu philosophies; thus intellectual elements of waking up, noticing, recognizing, understanding, and comprehending;... determination, mental effort, feelings, and opinions'.<sup>17</sup>
- Wolof (West Africa): 'Silence is a characteristic of people of higher social class and distinction.' In contrast, in Western contexts, silence is interpreted as a lack of knowledge.<sup>18</sup>
- Chewa (Zambia): 'Social responsibilities, cooperation, and obedience'.<sup>19</sup>
- Kenya: 'Responsible participation in family and social life'.<sup>20</sup>
- Australia: practical problem-solving, adaptability, effective communication, critical thinking, community engagement, and educational or professional achievements.

### Defining Cultural Intelligence

Mai Moua defines CQ as one's 'ability to successfully adapt to unfamiliar cultural settings.'<sup>21</sup> Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne define CQ 'as an individual's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity.... CQ has relevance to groups, teams, organizations, and even nations.'<sup>22</sup>

David Livermore states that CQ 'can be developed and learned by anyone.'<sup>23</sup> It involves developing skills to understand, learn from, and adapt to a culture through interactions, fostering empathy and appropriate behaviours when engaging with individuals from that culture.<sup>24</sup>

Harry Triandis notes that research about CQ gives examples of how it can be learned and developed:<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> P. Christopher Earley, and Soon Ang, *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions across Cultures* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 54.

<sup>14</sup> Earley, and Ang, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Earley, and Ang, 54.

<sup>16</sup> Earley, and Ang, 54.

<sup>17</sup> Earley, and Ang, 54.

<sup>18</sup> Earley, and Ang, 54.

<sup>19</sup> Earley, and Ang, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Earley, and Ang, 54.

<sup>21</sup> Mai Moua, *Cultural Intelligent Leadership: Leading through Intercultural Interactions* (New York: Business Expert Press, 2010), 59.

<sup>22</sup> Soon Ang, and Linn Van Dyne, "Preface and Acknowledgments," in *Handbook of Cultural Intelligence Theory, Measurement, and Applications*, ed. Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), xv.

<sup>23</sup> David Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence* (New York: AMACOM, 2105), ix-x.

<sup>24</sup> David C. Thomas, and Kerr Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for Global Business* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publications, 2003), 12.

<sup>25</sup> Harry C. Triandis, "Foreward: Cultural Intelligence," in *Handbook of Cultural Intelligence Theory, Measurement, and Applications*, ed. Soon Ang and Linn Van Dyne (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2008), xii.

- knowing a local language
- cross-cultural work experience
- living in diverse cultural settings
- studying abroad
- taking short trips to other cultures
- interaction with unfamiliar cultures
- openness to new intercultural situations and experiences
- learning about how people of other cultures think, behave and believe

Triandis notes that people with CQ can focus on ‘aspects of culture that are different and respond appropriately.’<sup>26</sup>

### **Cultural Differences that Confuse<sup>27</sup>**

Duane Elmer identifies ‘values that express themselves very differently in different cultures.’ These eight are ‘the more prominent values that Westerners may benefit from knowing about in advance.’<sup>28</sup> Each are on a sliding scale between the two values.

**Time and Event:** describe how different cultures perceive and manage time, and how this affects their approach to scheduling, planning, and prioritizing activities. These orientations can significantly influence how people approach work and social interactions. ‘Different cultures may prefer one over the other but move back and forth’.<sup>29</sup>

**Monochronic or synchronic cultures** view time as linear, segmented, and structured. People in these cultures tend to value punctuality, adhere to schedules, and focus on completing one task at a time. Time is seen as a finite resource that should be managed efficiently. Interruptions are often seen as disruptive. Examples include many Western European, North American, and East Asian cultures.

**Polychronic cultures** approach time views as flexible, fluid, and less structured. People from polychronic cultures tend to multitask, prioritize relationships over schedules, and are comfortable with interruptions and changes in plans. Examples include many Latin American, African, and Middle Eastern cultures.

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:

<i>Time</i>											<i>Event</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

**Task and Relationship:** Different orientations that people and cultures may have when managing work and interactions.

<sup>26</sup> Triandis, in *Handbook of Cultural Intelligence Theory, Measurement, and Applications*, xii.

<sup>27</sup> This heading is what Elmer uses: Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Connections: Stepping out and Fitting in around the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 115.

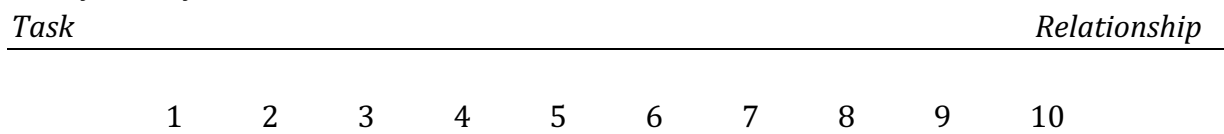
<sup>28</sup> Elmer.

<sup>29</sup> Elmer, 118.

**Task-oriented cultures** focus primarily on achieving goals, completing assignments, and efficiently completing work. In these cultures, productivity and results are highly valued, and people often prioritize tasks over relationships. Communication tends to be direct and explicit, and schedules and deadlines are strictly followed.

**Relationship oriented** place a 'higher premium on nurturing relationships', social harmony over merely achieving tasks; where 'socializing lays the foundation for achieving goals together'<sup>30</sup> (i.e., Brazil, personal connections and social interactions are highly valued; and Japan, emphasis on harmony, respect, and long-term relationships. Meetings often involve a lot of negotiation and consensus-building).

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:

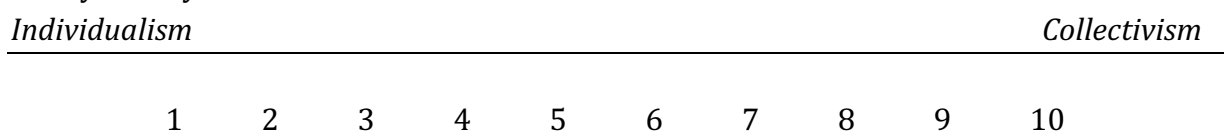


**Individualism and Collectivism:** Two different ways that cultures prioritize the needs and goals of individuals versus groups. These concepts affect how people view themselves to others, how they interact, and how they approach work and social relationships.

**Individualism** is 'at the very core of American culture' as well as most if not all Western cultures.<sup>31</sup> People in these cultures prioritize personal goals, autonomy, and self-reliance. They view themselves as independent entities and often make decisions based on their own interests and preferences rather than group needs. Relationships are often formed based on personal choice and are more flexible.

On the other end of the spectrum is **Collectivistic** cultures that prioritize the needs and goals of the group over the individual. In these cultures, people view themselves as part of a larger social network, such as family, community, or organization. Group harmony, loyalty, and mutual support are highly valued. Decisions are often made with the group's welfare in mind, and relationships tend to be more stable and enduring. being 'a member of a group, as part of the collective whole.'<sup>32</sup>

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:



**Categorical and Holistic Thinking:** Two different cognitive approaches to understanding and processing information. These thinking styles can influence how people from different cultures perceive, analyze, and respond to various situations.

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<sup>30</sup> Elmer, 129.

<sup>31</sup> Elmer, 136.

<sup>32</sup> Elmer, 136.

**Categorical thinking** sees 'life as rather black and white... in a two-dimensional perspective such as we and they, good and bad, moral and immoral, right and wrong... the glass half full or half empty'.<sup>33</sup> Clear definitions, classification, and separation of concepts are valued. People focus on individual elements and their characteristics, often analysing them in isolation from the broader context. Many Western cultures use categorical thinking in problem-solving and decision-making, such as data analysis by breaking it down into discrete categories and focusing on specific variables.

**Holistic thinking** involves understanding information as part of a larger, interconnected whole. This approach emphasizes the relationships between elements and the broader context in which they exist. People who use holistic thinking tend to consider multiple factors and how they interact, rather than isolating individual components. Life is 'not so much as a timeline but as a tapestry where one sees threads and colour touching, overlapping, and reinforcing each other, forming a whole... Life is unfolding; each layer is connected to the former and must be understood in relation to the whole and, indeed, part of the whole.'<sup>34</sup> For example, Eastern Asian may focus on the relationships between individuals and the broader social and environmental context.

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:

<i>Categorical thinking</i>	<i>Holistic thinking</i>
1	10
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

**Linear or Curved Logic:** Different reasoning, communication, and problem-solving approaches. These styles reflect how cultures perceive and approach arguments, discussions, and decision-making.

**Linear logic** is 'sometimes likened to the links of a chain because of its connectedness, allows for more direct communication' so that people 'get to the point and want you to give it to them straight without beating around the bush.' Western cultures often value direct communication and linear reasoning. Arguments are typically presented with a clear structure and logical flow, and directness is appreciated in personal and professional settings. People may prefer structured, precise communication and systematic problem-solving. Discussions are usually straightforward and focused on factual information.

**Indirect, curved or spiral logic**, which uses 'more indirect communication [that is] important for protecting people's face and not causing shame.'<sup>35</sup> For example, Japanese communication often involves indirectness and a contextual approach. Discussions may involve a more nuanced, spiralling exploration of ideas, focusing on harmony and relationships. Chinese reasoning and communication may be more indirect and context-dependent, emphasising the broader social and relational context rather than a strict, linear argument.

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<sup>33</sup> Elmer, 136.

<sup>34</sup> Elmer, 143.

<sup>35</sup> Elmer, 153.

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:

*Straight logic*

*Curved logic*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**Achieved or Ascribed Status:** How cultures perceive and assign social roles and authority. These concepts help explain how individuals in various cultures gain and maintain their positions within a social hierarchy.

**Achieved status** refers to an individual's social position through their actions, efforts, and accomplishments. It is based on personal achievements, skills, education, and performance. Individuals are recognized and rewarded based on their abilities and contributions. 'Status is something anyone can achieve through diligence and hard work'. For example, Australians place a high value on merit and personal achievements. Success in professional and personal endeavours can significantly influence one's social position.

**Ascribed status** refers to a social position that an individual is born into or assigned involuntarily based on age, gender, ethnicity, or family background. In cultures emphasising ascribed status, social roles and authority are often determined by these inherent attributes rather than individual achievements. One's status is based on 'birth order, parentage and even gender.'<sup>36</sup> In 'status ascribed cultures, people are treated differently depending upon their statuses. Status is determined by age, by rank in a company, by education, family of origin, title, possibly wealth, ... even by the caste was ins born into'.<sup>37</sup> Indian society traditionally emphasizes ascribed status through caste and family lineage. Social roles and hierarchies are often determined by one's birth and background rather than individual achievements.

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:

*Achieved status*

*Ascribed status*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**Guilt and Shame:** Reflect different ways cultures perceive and respond to personal and social behaviour. Understanding these concepts can help navigate cultural differences in moral reasoning, social expectations, and personal conduct.

**Guilt** is an emotion that arises when an individual feels they have violated their own moral standards or ethical principles. It is typically associated with recognising that one's actions have harmed others or fallen short of personal values. Guilt is often seen as an internal, self-directed emotion that focuses on a specific action or behaviour perceived as wrong. Guilt happens when 'we association it with our conscience telling us

<sup>36</sup> Elmer, 160.

<sup>37</sup> Elmer, 161.

we have done something wrong.’<sup>38</sup> ‘One feels guilty for what they have done’ such as breaking or violating any of the ‘external laws of the land, rules of the institution, morals of the church and code of the home’.<sup>39</sup> For example, many Western cultures are guilt-based and often emphasize personal responsibility, a high value on personal responsibility and adherence to individual, moral and ethical standards. individual moral standards. People are encouraged to reflect on their actions and seek to make amends if they feel they have done something wrong.

**Shame** is an emotion that arises from a perceived failure to meet social or cultural expectations, often leading to a negative evaluation of oneself. Shame is more concerned with the individual’s identity or self-worth. It is typically associated with feeling exposed or inadequate in the eyes of others. Shame-based societies are concerned with not bringing ‘shame upon oneself, upon one’s family, one’s tribe or even one’s country. One strives to succeed, driven by the desire to uphold family, school, company or national honor.’<sup>40</sup> Shame-based cultures may emphasize social harmony and adherence to societal norms. Shame can play a significant role in maintaining social order and encouraging conformity to cultural expectations.

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:

<i>Guilt</i>											<i>Shame</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

**Low-Context and High-Context:** Erin Meyers<sup>41</sup> and others note the effects of context. describe how cultures convey and interpret messages based on the amount of reliance on explicit information versus contextual cues.

**Low context** is a style of communication where messages are conveyed primarily through explicit, clear, and direct verbal statements. The emphasis is on the content of the message itself, and there is less reliance on the context or non-verbal cues to understand the meaning. Communication is explicit, meaning it is simple and clear. The main source of meaning is the spoken or written word, and verbal articulation is strongly emphasised. For example, in Western cultures, where communication values preciseness, directness, clarity and logical expression of ideas, people are encouraged to be explicit about their intentions, opinions, and requests.

**High context** is a high level of shared context, implicit communication, layered or nuanced. Messages are conveyed largely through non-verbal cues, context, and shared understanding. In high-context cultures, much of the meaning is derived from the context in which communication occurs, including relationships, social roles, and situational factors. For example, in societies like Japan, communication involves reading between the lines and understanding unspoken nuances. Relationships and social

<sup>38</sup> Elmer, 171.

<sup>39</sup> Elmer, 173.

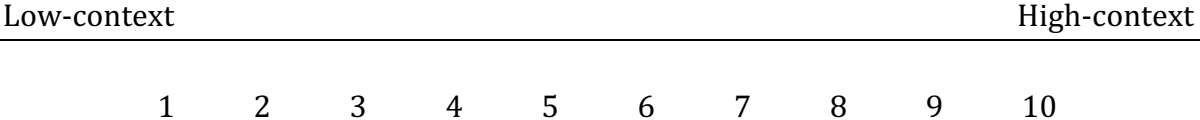
<sup>40</sup> Elmer, 173.

<sup>41</sup> Erin Meyer: Low Context vs High Context scenarios



harmony are prioritized, and direct confrontation is typically avoided. In Saudi culture, communication may rely heavily on contextual understanding and non-verbal cues, focusing on preserving social relationships and avoiding direct criticism.

Place an x indicating where you fall on this continuum. Do this for others in your family or on your team:



**Third Culture Kids (Adults)**

TCK is a term used to describe children who spend a significant portion of their formative years living in a culture different from their parents’ culture(s). These children often develop a unique cultural identity influenced by both their parents’ culture (first culture) and the culture of the country in which they live (second culture), resulting in a ‘third culture’ that is a blend of these influences. As TCKs grow up and enter adulthood, they carry their cross-cultural experiences with them as they become TCA (Adults).

**Characteristics of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)**

**1. Cross-Cultural Experience:** TCKs grow up in a context different from their parents’ culture(s). For example, a child whose parents are from the United States but who grows up in Japan will be exposed to and influenced by both American and Japanese cultures.

**2. Cultural Adaptability:** TCKs often become highly adaptable and skilled at navigating different cultural environments. They learn to understand and integrate different cultural norms, values, and behaviours, which can make them more flexible and open-minded.

**3. Unique Cultural Identity:** Instead of fully identifying with their parents’ or host culture, TCKs often develop a hybrid identity incorporating elements from both. This "third culture" is unique to their experience and can simultaneously lead to a sense of belonging everywhere and nowhere.

**4. Sense of Rootlessness:** While TCKs may feel at home in multiple cultures, they may also experience a sense of rootlessness or lack of a single, clearly defined cultural identity. This can sometimes lead to feelings of not fully belonging to any culture.

**5. Strong Relationships Across Cultures:** TCKs often form deep connections with people with similar cross-cultural experiences. These relationships can be especially meaningful, as TCKs share a common understanding of the complexities of growing up between cultures.

**6. Global Perspective:** Due to their exposure to multiple cultures, TCKs tend to have a broader, more global perspective. They are often more aware of global issues and more likely to think beyond the confines of a single national or cultural framework.

### Examples of Third Culture Kids

**Diplomat's Children:** The children of diplomats often move frequently between countries, experiencing various cultures throughout their childhood.

**Military Brats:** Children of military personnel stationed abroad often grow up in different countries, adapting to various cultural environments.

- **Expatriate Families:** Children whose parents work overseas for international companies, NGOs, or other organizations often live in countries different from their home country, contributing to their TCK identity.

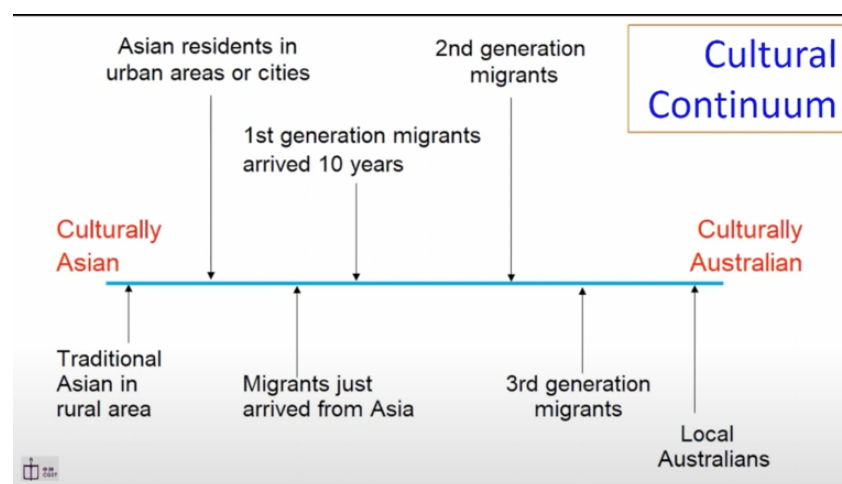
**Missionary Kids:** The children of missionaries who live in foreign countries for extended periods also fit the TCK profile.

### Conclusion

Understanding the TCK experience is crucial in cultural intelligence, as it highlights the complexities of cultural identity and the dynamic nature of cultural adaptation.

### Cultural Continuum

In cultural intelligence, the cultural adaptation process for migrants can be understood as a *cultural continuum*, which outlines the stages that individuals and subsequent generations may go through as they assimilate into a new culture. This continuum reflects the complex interplay between maintaining one's original cultural identity and adopting the norms and values of the host culture.



(Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qMI5XzN98>).

### 1st Generation: The Migrants

- **Strong Attachment to Original Culture:** The first generation of migrants tends to maintain a strong connection to their home culture, including language, traditions, and

social practices. They often seek to preserve their cultural identity within the context of the new environment.

- *Limited Integration*: While they may adopt certain aspects of the host culture, such as language or work practices, they often maintain distinct cultural practices at home and within their community. Integration into the host society may be limited, particularly in social and cultural contexts.

- *Cultural Preservation*: This generation typically emphasizes passing down their cultural heritage to their children, ensuring that the next generation retains knowledge of their origins.

***Example for Malaysians in Australia***: A Malaysian immigrant in Australia might continue speaking Malay or Mandarin at home, celebrate Malaysian festivals, and maintain a diet that reflects traditional Malaysian cuisine. They might engage primarily with other Malaysians or individuals from similar backgrounds, participating in culturally specific religious or community groups.

### ***2nd Generation: The Children of Migrants***

- *Bicultural Identity*: The second generation often develops a bicultural identity, balancing elements of their parents' culture with those of the host culture. They are typically more fluent in the host country's language and more integrated into its social and educational systems.

- *Cultural Bridging*: This generation often acts as a bridge between the original and host cultures. They may face internal and external pressures to assimilate more fully into the host culture while still retaining aspects of their parents' cultural identity.

- *Navigating Dual Expectations*: They may experience conflicts between the expectations of their parents and the norms of the wider society, leading to a complex negotiation of identity.

***Example for Malaysians in Australia***: A second-generation Malaysian-Australian might speak English fluently, attend Australian schools, and participate in mainstream Australian social activities, but still observe certain Malaysian cultural practices at home. They might navigate dual identities, feeling both Australian and Malaysian, and participate in Malaysian community events and broader Australian cultural activities.

### ***3rd Generation: The Grandchildren of Migrants***

- *Greater Assimilation*: The third generation is often more fully assimilated into the host culture. They may identify primarily with the host culture, with less emphasis on their ancestral cultural heritage.

- *Weaker Ties to Original Culture*: While they may still be aware of their cultural roots, their connection to the original culture is often weaker. Language use, traditional practices, and cultural customs from the original culture may diminish or become symbolic rather than central to daily life.

- *Hybrid Identity*: This generation may develop a hybrid identity, incorporating elements of both the original and host cultures, but with a stronger orientation towards the host culture. They will likely participate fully in the host country's social, educational, and economic systems.

***Example for Malaysians in Australia***: A third-generation Malaysian-Australian might primarily identify as Australian, with only a peripheral connection to Malaysian culture. They may not speak Malay or Mandarin, but they might still celebrate major Malaysian holidays more symbolically or have a nostalgic interest in their heritage. Their social circles and lifestyle would largely reflect mainstream Australian culture.

### ***Factors Influencing the Continuum***

**The process of cultural adaptation and assimilation is influenced by several factors, including:**

- ***Societal Attitudes***: The openness and inclusiveness of the host society can significantly impact the ease with which migrants and their descendants assimilate.
- ***Community Support***: The presence of a strong immigrant community can help maintain cultural practices across generations while also providing support for navigating the host culture.
- ***Education and Media***: Exposure to the host culture through education, media, and social interactions can accelerate assimilation.
- ***Intermarriage***: Marriages between individuals from different cultural backgrounds can further blend cultures and influence the degree of assimilation across generations.

***Conclusion***: The cultural continuum for migrants illustrates the gradual process of adaptation, where the first generation often holds tightly to their cultural roots, the second generation navigates a bicultural identity, and the third generation is more likely to assimilate into the host culture while still retaining some aspects of their heritage. This continuum highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of cultural identity in the context of migration.

### **GLOBE Universals**

Various studies have been done to illustrate the spectrum of cultural values and behaviours. The most famous and often quoted one is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE), published by Robert House et al. in 2004. 'The GLOBE researchers examined leaders and followers across sixty-two countries to determine the leadership differences and universals across these diverse cultures.'<sup>42</sup> As a result, the identified nine universals:

**Performance Orientation** (cooperative-competitive): To the extent to which a context 'encourages and rewards group members for improved performance and excellence.'

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<sup>42</sup> Livermore, 16.

For example, ‘whether people in a culture are rewarded for setting and meeting challenging goals.’<sup>43</sup> In other words, whether cultures are cooperative versus competitive. At one extreme is: ‘Encourages and rewards group performance’; and at the other extreme: ‘No rewards and encouragement for goals; more relaxed in terms of achievement.’<sup>44</sup>

- Leading *cooperative* individuals means to ‘establish the relationship before completing the task; and ‘build trust on the basis of care for personnel and family’ and leading *competitive* individuals means to ‘complete the task before building the relationship; and to ‘build trust on the basis of results.’<sup>45</sup>
- *Cooperative*: Nordic countries, Sub-Saharan Africa; *Moderate*: Arab, Confucian Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Latin Europe, and Southern Asia (variations); and *Competitive*: Anglo and Germanic Europe.<sup>46</sup>

**Assertiveness** (low context-high context): To the extent to which a context is ‘determined, assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their social relationships.’ For example, ‘how much a culture or society encourages people to be forceful, aggressive, and tough, as opposed to encouraging them to be timid, submissive, and tender in social relationships.’<sup>47</sup> Livermore refers to this as ‘low context (direct)’ that emphasizes ‘explicit communication (words)’ versus ‘high context (indirect)’ that emphasizes ‘indirect communication (tone, context).’<sup>48</sup> At one extreme is ‘assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships’ and the other extreme is ‘timid, submissive, and tender in social relationships.’<sup>49</sup>

- A leader leads *low-context* individuals by emailing ‘instructions and updates’, being clear of expectations and apologizing for any mistakes; and for *high-context* individuals, discussing ‘instructions and updates’, being ‘indirect’, and apologizing ‘when harmony is disrupted.’<sup>50</sup>
- *Low context*: Anglo, Germanic Europe, Nordic countries; *Moderate*: Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Latin Europe; and *High context*: Arab, Confucian Asia, Southern Asia (variations), Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>51</sup>

**Future Orientation** (short term-long term): To the extent to ‘which people engage in future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification.’ For example, how ‘people in a culture prepare for the future as opposed to enjoying the present and being spontaneous.’<sup>52</sup> Livermore refers to this as short term (‘immediate outcomes, success now’) versus long term (‘success later’).<sup>53</sup> For example at

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2019), 439.

<sup>44</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>45</sup> Livermore, 113.

<sup>46</sup> Livermore, 113.

<sup>47</sup> Northouse, 439.

<sup>48</sup> Livermore, 119.

<sup>49</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>50</sup> Livermore, 119.

<sup>51</sup> Livermore, 119.

<sup>52</sup> Northouse, 439.

<sup>53</sup> Livermore, 115.

one extreme: 'Planning, investing, and delays of individual or collective gratification' and the other extreme: 'Spontaneity, enjoying the present.'<sup>54</sup>

- A leader leads *short-term* oriented individuals by helping them 'get to "quick wins"', and to 'focus on the present'; and *long-term* oriented individuals to 'save now for the future', and 'emphasize the long-term success—past and future.'<sup>55</sup>
- *Short term*: Anglo, Arab, Eastern Europe, Nordic countries and Sub-Saharan Africa; *Moderate*: Germanic Europe, Latin America, Latin Europe and Southern Asia; and *Long term*: Confucian Asia.<sup>56</sup>

**Humane Orientation** (being-doing): 'The degree to which a culture encourages and rewards people for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others.'<sup>57</sup>

Livermore refers to this as 'being (emphasis on quality of life)' versus 'doing (emphasis on being busy and meeting goals)'.<sup>58</sup> For example, at one extreme: 'Encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring' and at the other extreme: 'Concern for a self, not sensitive, not encouraging of social supports and community values.'<sup>59</sup>

- A leader leads *being* oriented individuals by creating 'opportunities for personal growth', affirming 'who the person "is" first and foremost', and managing 'the relationship', and *doing* oriented individuals by providing 'training and development', affirming achievements, and managing 'the process'.<sup>60</sup>
- *Being*: Arab, Latin America, Nordic Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa; *Moderate*: Confucian Asia (variations), Eastern Europe, Latin Europe, and Southern Europe (variations); *Doing*: Anglo and Germanic Europe.<sup>61</sup>

**Institutional Collectivism** (universalist-particularist): To the degree to which an organization or society encourages institutional or societal action. For example, it refers to whether cultures identify with broader societal interests rather than individual goals and accomplishments.<sup>62</sup> Livermore refers to this as 'universalism (emphasis on rules; standards that apply to everyone)' versus 'particularism (emphasis on specifics; unique standards based on relationships)'.<sup>63</sup>

- *Universalist*: Anglo, Germanic Europe and Nordic countries; *Moderate*: Eastern Europe and Latin America; and *Particularist*: Arab nations, Confucian Asia (variations), Latin America, Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>55</sup> Livermore, 115.

<sup>56</sup> Livermore, 110.

<sup>57</sup> Northouse, 440.

<sup>58</sup> Livermore, 122.

<sup>59</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>60</sup> Livermore, 122.

<sup>61</sup> Livermore, 110.

<sup>62</sup> Northouse, 438.

<sup>63</sup> Livermore, 125.

<sup>64</sup> Livermore, 121.

**In-Group Collectivism** (individualist-collectivist): ‘The degree to which people express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.’ For example, ‘the extent to which people are devoted to their organizations or families’, such as whether ‘individual action’ is more valuable than ‘consensus and collaborative efforts’.<sup>65</sup> David Livermore refers to this as the difference between *individualism* (‘emphasis on individual goals and rights’) and *collectivism* (‘emphasis on group goals and personal relationships’).<sup>66</sup> For example, at one extreme: ‘Collective actions and sharing of resources encourage’ and the other extreme: ‘Individual actions and goals are encouraged.’<sup>67</sup>

A leader leads *individualists* by motivating ‘them with personal incentives and goals’ and ‘partnership usually involves one or two people, not a group.’ A leader leads *collectivists* by motivating ‘with group goals’ and recognizes ‘long-term relationships.’<sup>68</sup>

- *Individualist*: Anglo, Germanic Europe and Nordic countries; *Moderate*: Eastern Europe and Latin America; and *Collectivist*: Arab nations, Confucian Asian, Latin America, Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>69</sup>

**Gender Egalitarianism** (differentiation-equality): To the degree to ‘which an organization or a society minimizes gender role differences and promotes gender equality.’<sup>70</sup> For example, how leaders promote gender equality and minimize gender-based disparities. On one extreme: ‘Nurture, care, relationships, sharing’ and on the other extreme: ‘Ambition, assertiveness, control.’<sup>71</sup> (Livermore doesn’t use this category.)

**Power Distance** (hierarchy-egalitarian): To the degree ‘which members of a group expect and agree that power should be shared unequally.’<sup>72</sup> For example, the amount of distance that is expected between leaders and followers. ‘Power represents the level of inequality and equality, as well as the level of hierarchy and upward mobility, within a cultural group.’ For example, ‘low-power-distance cultures emphasised equality and minimised power and status.’<sup>73</sup> On one extreme: ‘Egalitarian and nonhierarchical’, and on the other extreme: ‘Hierarchy, authority, disparity in status and wealth.’<sup>74</sup>

- A leader leads *low power-distance* individuals by forgoing ‘formalities’ and creating ‘ways to question or challenge authority’; and *high power-distance* individuals by following the ‘chain of command carefully’ and not to ‘question or challenge authority.’<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Northouse, 438.

<sup>66</sup> Livermore, 102.

<sup>67</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>68</sup> Livermore, 102.

<sup>69</sup> Livermore, 102.

<sup>70</sup> Northouse, 439.

<sup>71</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>72</sup> Northouse, 438.

<sup>73</sup> Moua, 45.

<sup>74</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>75</sup> Livermore, 107.

- *High power distance*: Anglo, Germanic Europe and Nordic countries; *Moderate*: Confucian Asian, Eastern Europe (variations), Latin Europe (variations), Sub-Saharan Africa; *Low*: Arab nations, Latin America, Southern Asia (variations).<sup>76</sup>

**Uncertainty Avoidance** (certainty-uncertainty): To the ‘extent to which a society, an organization, or group relies on established social norms, rituals, and procedures to avoid uncertainty.’<sup>77</sup> For example, the degree to which one is at ‘ease with unknown, unpredictable outcomes.’ This ‘emphasises cultures that are either oriented toward uncertainty or toward creating certainty and stability.’<sup>78</sup> One on extreme: ‘Need for established social norms and rituals, and practices’ and on the other extreme: ‘Comfortable with ambiguity and predictability.’<sup>79</sup>

- Leading *low uncertainty avoidance* individuals means to ‘avoid dogmatic statements’, ‘invite them to explore the unknown’, and to ‘let them act and keep you informed’; and leading *high uncertainty avoidance* individuals means ‘to give explicit instructions’, ‘rely on formalized procedures and policies’, and to ‘ask them to recommend action; then offer feedback and support.’<sup>80</sup>
- *Low uncertainty avoidance*: Anglo, Eastern Europe and Nordic countries; *Moderate*: Arab, Confucian Asia (variation), Germanic Europe, Southern Asia (variations), Sub-Saharan Africa; *High uncertainty avoidance*: Latin America and Latin Europe.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusion

The bottom line? Today, it’s no longer enough to know how to lead in the Dutch, Mexican, American, or Chinese ways. You must be informed and flexible enough to choose which style will work best in which cultural context and then deliberately decide how to adapt (or not) to get the desired results.

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<sup>76</sup> Livermore, 107.

<sup>77</sup> Northouse, 437.

<sup>78</sup> Moua, 47.

<sup>79</sup> Moua, 51.

<sup>80</sup> Livermore, 109.

<sup>81</sup> Livermore, 109.



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