Foreign Affairs: An Approach to Intercultural Understanding

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Icebreaker – Draw a House

Work with the person sitting next to you.

Share a single pen or pencil and, with both persons holding the pen at the same time, draw a house on a blank sheet of paper.

Turn the paper over and, without talking, draw a house together from a uniquely different culture.
Three Levels of Uniqueness in Human Mental Programming

Hofstede, 1980
Universalism/particularism

The universalist approach is roughly: “What is good and right can be defined and always applies.” In particularist cultures far greater attention is given to the obligations of relationships and unique circumstances.

- Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 11
You are riding in a car driven by a close friend. He hits a pedestrian. You know he was going at least 35 mph in an area where the maximum allowed speed is 20 mph. There are no witnesses.
His lawyer says if you testify under oath that he was driving only 20 mph, it may save him from serious consequences.

What right has your friend to expect you to protect him?
A. My friend has a definite right as a friend to expect me to testify to the lower speed.

B. He has some right as a friend to expect me to testify to the lower speed.

C. He has no right as a friend to expect me to testify to the lower speed.
What do you think you would do in view of the obligations of a sworn witness and the obligations to your friend?

D. Testify that he was going 20 mph.

E. Not testify that he was going 20 mph.

- Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 45
Masculinity stands for a society in which emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.
Femininity pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap (i.e., both men and women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life).

- Hofstede et al, 2010, p. 517
Es hätte alles auch anders kommen können, es liegt in unserer Kultur keine metaphysische Zwangsläufigkeit.

*Everything could have happened differently, there is no metaphysical inevitability in one’s culture.*

- Peter Bieri
We expect others to be like us, but they aren’t.

Thus, a cultural incident occurs,

c Timestamp causing a reaction (anger, fear, etc.),

and we withdraw.

We become aware of our reaction.
We become aware of our reaction.

We reflect on its cause,

and our reaction subsides.

We observe the situation,

which results in developing culturally appropriate expectations.

Source: Craig Storti, *The Art of Crossing Cultures*. 
Kolb’s Quadrants
Auch hier heisst gebildet sein: Wissen um die Vielfalt, Respekt vor dem Fremden, Zurücknahme von anfänglicher Überheblichkeit.

*Education also means knowledge of diversity, respect towards alterity, retraction of one’s initial pretensions.*

- Peter Bieri
Contingency

Irony

Solidarity
“Culture hides more than it reveals and, strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study have convinced me that the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own.”

- Edward T. Hall

*The Silent Language*
“A civilized society is one whose members do not humiliate one another, while a decent society is one in which the institutions do not humiliate people.

A Very Short Bibliography


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<th>Monochronic</th>
<th>Polychronic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) do one thing at a time</td>
<td>1) do many things at once</td>
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<td>2) concentrate on the job</td>
<td>2) are subject to interruptions</td>
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<td>3) take time commitments seriously</td>
<td>3) consider time commitments an ideal to be achieved, if possible</td>
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<td>4) are low-context and need information</td>
<td>4) are high-context and already have information</td>
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<td>5) are committed to the job</td>
<td>5) are committed to people</td>
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<td>6) adhere religiously to plans</td>
<td>6) change plans often and easily</td>
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<td>7) are concerned about not disturbing others</td>
<td>7) are more concerned with family and friends than with privacy</td>
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<td>8) show great respect for private property</td>
<td>8) borrow and lend things often and easily</td>
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<td>9) emphasize promptness</td>
<td>9) base promptness on relationship</td>
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<td>10) are accustomed to short-term relationships</td>
<td>10) tend to build lifetime relationships</td>
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