

# In the Eye of the Beholder:

## Cross Cultural Lessons in Leadership from Project GLOBE

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### Executive Overview

Global leadership has been identified as a critical success factor for large multinational corporations. While there is much writing on the topic, most seems to be either general advice (i.e., being open minded and respectful of other cultures) or very specific information about a particular country based on a limited case study (do not show the soles of your shoes when seated as a guest in an Arab country). Both kinds of information are certainly useful, but limited from both theoretical and practical viewpoints on how to lead in a foreign country. In this paper, findings from the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research program are used to provide a sound basis for conceptualizing worldwide leadership differences. We use a hypothetical case of an American executive in charge of four similar teams in Brazil, France, Egypt, and China to discuss cultural implications for the American executive. Using the hypothetical case involving five different countries allows us to provide in-depth action oriented and context specific advice, congruent with GLOBE findings, for effectively interacting with employees from different cultures. We end the paper with a discussion of the challenges facing global executives and how corporations can develop useful global leadership capabilities.

### Impact of Globalization

**A**lmost no American corporation is immune from the impact of globalization. The reality for American corporations is that they must increasingly cope with diverse cross-cultural employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, and creditors, a situation well captured by the following quote.

*So I was visiting a businessman in downtown Jakarta the other day and I asked for directions to my next appointment. His exact instructions were: Go to the building with the Armani Emporium upstairs—you know, just above the Hard Rock café—and then turn right at McDonalds. “I just looked at him and laughed, “Where am’ I?”*

Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, July 14, 1997

Notwithstanding Tom Friedman’s astonishment about the global world in Jakarta, the fact is that people are not generally aware of the tremendous

impact that national culture has on their vision and interpretation of the world. Because culture colors nearly every aspect of human behavior, a working knowledge of culture and its influences can be useful to executives operating in a multicultural business environment. It is a truism by now that large corporations need executives with global mindsets and cross-cultural leadership abilities. Foreign sales by multinational corporations have exceeded \$7 trillion and are growing 20 percent to 30 percent faster than their sales of exports.<sup>1</sup> But while the importance of such business grows, 85 percent of *Fortune* 500 companies have reported a shortage of global managers with the necessary skills.<sup>2</sup> Some experts have argued that most U.S. companies are not positioned to implement global strategies due to a lack of global leadership capabilities.<sup>3</sup>

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How can companies best use the available information for executive development and, moreover, what is the validity and value of such information? U.S. and European executives have plenty of general advice available to them on how to perform in foreign settings. During the past few years much has been written about global leadership, including several books.<sup>4</sup> Journals are also getting into the global action as seen in *The Human Resource Management Journal* which recently published a special issue on global leadership.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, in a recent review of the literature, Morrison concluded that despite the importance of global leadership, “relatively little research has thus far been carried out on global leadership characteristics, competencies, antecedents, and developmental strategies.”<sup>6</sup>

Advice to global managers needs to be specific enough to help them understand how to act in different surroundings. For example, managers with an overseas assignment are frequently exhorted to have an open mind and to show respect for other cultures.<sup>7</sup> They may also be told of the importance of cross-cultural relationship management and communication. Some will wrestle with the idea that they need to develop a global perspective while being responsive to local concerns.<sup>8</sup> Or they may wonder if they have the “cognitive complexity” and psychological maturity to handle life and work in a foreign setting. And they are likely to hear or read that they must “walk in the shoes of people from different cultures” in order to be effective.<sup>9</sup> There is nothing wrong with such advice, and the scholars and writers who proffer it have often been pioneers in the field. But it is insufficient for a manager who is likely to assume, mistakenly, that being open minded in Atlanta, Helsinki, and Beijing will be perceived identically, or that walking in someone else’s shoes will feel the same in Houston, Jakarta, and Madrid. Because of the lack of scientifically compiled information, businesspeople have not had sufficiently detailed and context-specific suggestions about how to handle these cross-cultural challenges. This is a particular problem for those in leadership positions.

Although there are universal aspects of leadership, information about which will be presented

shortly, people in different countries do in fact have different criteria for assessing their leaders.<sup>10</sup> The issue for the American manager is whether the attributes that made him or her successful as a leader in the United States will also lead to success overseas, be of no value or, worst of all, cause harm in the foreign operation. Using the findings from an extensive research effort known as the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project, this article provides a few answers to the questions about the universal and culture specific aspects of leadership. We will present specific information about key cultural differences among nations and connect the “dots” on how these differences influence leadership. This information should help a typical global executive better understand the leadership challenges s/he faces while managing operations outside the United States. It will also provide suggestions on how to more effectively cope with such challenges.

To make the GLOBE findings come alive, we will follow a hypothetical American executive who has been given two years to lead a project based in four different countries: Brazil, France, Egypt, and China. This hypothetical project involves developing a somewhat similar product for the four different markets. The project team in each country is tasked with the marketing of a new technology in the telecommunications industry. The executive will work with local employees in each location. Success will be determined by two criteria: the executive’s ability to produce results and to show effective leadership in different cultures and settings.

The four countries represent different continents and very diverse cultures. Brazil is the most populous and economically important South American country. France is the largest, most populous, and most economically developed Latin European country. Egypt is the largest and most populous Arab country. China is the fast growing giant economy with unprecedented growth in its economic and diplomatic power in the world. We chose these countries to provide context specific analysis leading to general recommendations for global executives. Our choice of countries was guided by our efforts to cover a wide range of

cultures. Before turning to our hypothetical scenario, we will examine common cultural dimensions that characterize nations and discuss why these dimensions are important for the development of global leaders.

### Common Cultural Dimensions

To be open minded and to understand the cultures of the different countries, managers need to be able to compare their own cultures with those of other countries. After a review of the available literature, especially the work of Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck,<sup>11</sup> GLOBE conceptualized and developed measures of nine cultural dimensions. These are aspects of a country's culture that distinguish one society from another and have important managerial implications. While a few of these dimensions are similar to the work of other researchers, the manner in which we conceptualized and operationalized them was different.<sup>12</sup> We reconceptualized a few existing dimensions and developed a few new dimensions. In all cases, the scales designed to capture and measure these cultural dimensions passed very rigorous psychometric tests. A brief description of each cultural dimension is provided below along with the basic research design of GLOBE. Further details can be found on GLOBE's website, <http://www.thunderbird.edu/wwwfiles/ms/globe/>.

It might be noted that the GLOBE Project has been called "the most ambitious study of global leadership."<sup>13</sup> Our world-wide team of scholars proposed and validated an integrated theory of the relationship between culture and societal, organizational, and leadership effectiveness. The 170 researchers worked together for ten years collecting and analyzing data on cultural values and practices and leadership attributes from over 17,000 managers in 62 societal cultures. The participating managers were employed in telecommunications, food, and banking industries. As one output from the project, the 62 cultures were ranked with respect to nine dimensions of their cultures. We studied the effects of these dimensions on expectations of leaders, as well as on organizational practices in each society. The 62 societal cultures were also grouped into a more

parsimonious set of ten culture clusters (list provided in the next section). GLOBE studies cultures in terms of their cultural practices (the ways things are) and their cultural values (the way things should be). The nine cultural attributes (hereafter called culture dimensions) are:

**Performance Orientation.** The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards (and should encourage and reward) group members for performance improvement and excellence. In countries like the U.S. and Singapore that score high on this cultural practice, businesses are likely to emphasize training and development; in countries that score low, such as Russia and Greece, family and background count for more.

**Assertiveness.** The degree to which individuals are (and should be) assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others. People in highly assertive countries such as the United States and Austria tend to have can-do attitudes and enjoy competition in business; those in less assertive countries such as Sweden and New Zealand prefer harmony in relationships and emphasize loyalty and solidarity.

**Future Orientation.** The extent to which individuals engage (and should engage) in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future. Organizations in countries with high future oriented practices like Singapore and Switzerland tend to have longer term horizons and more systematic planning processes, but they tend to be averse to risk taking and opportunistic decision making. In contrast, corporations in the least future oriented countries like Russia and Argentina tend to be less systematic and more opportunistic in their actions.

**Humane Orientation.** The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards (and should encourage and reward) individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others. Countries like Egypt and Malaysia rank very high on this cultural practice and countries like France and Germany rank low.

**Institutional Collectivism.** The degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward (and should encourage and reward) collective distribution of resources and collective action. Organizations in collectivistic countries like Singapore and Sweden tend to emphasize group performance and rewards, whereas those in the more individualistic countries like Greece and Brazil tend to emphasize individual achievement and rewards.

**In-Group Collectivism.** The degree to which individuals express (and should express) pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. Societies like Egypt and Russia take pride in their families and also take pride in the organizations that employ them.

**Gender Egalitarianism.** The degree to which a collective minimizes (and should minimize) gender inequality. Not surprisingly, European countries generally had the highest scores on gender egalitarianism practices. Egypt and South Korea were among the most male dominated societies in GLOBE. Organizations operating in gender egalitarian societies tend to encourage tolerance for diversity of ideas and individuals.

**Power Distance.** The degree to which members of a collective expect (and should expect) power to be distributed equally. A high power distance score reflects unequal power distribution in a society. Countries that scored high on this cultural practice are more stratified economically, socially, and politically; those in positions of authority expect, and receive, obedience. Firms in high power distance countries like Thailand, Brazil, and France tend to have hierarchical decision making processes with limited one-way participation and communication.

**Uncertainty Avoidance.** The extent to which a society, organization, or group relies (and should rely) on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events. The greater the desire to avoid uncertainty, the more people seek orderliness, consistency, structure, formal procedures and laws to cover situations in their daily lives. Organizations in high uncertainty avoidance countries like Singapore and Switzerland tend to establish elaborate processes and procedures and prefer formal detailed strategies. In contrast, firms in low uncertainty avoidance countries like Russia and Greece tend to prefer simple processes and broadly stated strategies. They are also opportunistic and enjoy risk taking.

### Regional Clustering of GLOBE Nations

**G**LOBE was able to empirically verify ten culture clusters from the 62-culture sample. These culture clusters were identified as: Latin America, Anglo, Latin Europe (e.g., Italy), Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Confucian Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Southern Asia, and Eastern Europe. Each culture cluster differs with

respect to the nine culture dimensions (e.g., performance orientation). Table 1 shows a summary of how the clusters compare in terms of their scores on cultural practices. The clusters that are relevant to this paper are in bold. For instance, clusters scoring highest in performance orientation were Confucian Asia, Germanic Europe and Anglo (U.S. and U.K. among other English-speaking countries). Clusters scoring lowest in performance orientation were Latin America and Eastern Europe. The Appendix shows the actual country scores for the six clusters in this paper.

### Managing and Leading in Different Countries

**G**iven the differences found in cultures around the globe, what does an effective American manager need to do differently in different countries? Everything, nothing, or only certain things? From a leadership perspective we can ask whether the same attributes that lead to successful leadership in the U.S. lead to success in other countries. Or are they irrelevant or, even worse, dysfunctional? In the following sections, we will answer these questions. We will examine some similarities and differences among cultures regarding management and leadership practices. We then assert that many of the leadership differences found among cultures stem from implicit leadership beliefs held by members of different nations.

Expatriate managers working in multinational companies hardly need to be reminded of the wide variety of *management* practices found around the world. Laurent, and more recently Trompenaars and Briscoe and Shuler,<sup>14</sup> document the astonishing diversity of organizational practices worldwide, many of which are acceptable and considered effective in one country but ineffective in another country. For instance, supervisors are expected to have precise answers to subordinates' questions in Japan, but less so in the United States. As another example, the effectiveness of working alone or in a group is perceived very differently around the world; this would certainly influence the quality, aptitude, and fair evaluation of virtual teams found in multinational organizations.<sup>15</sup> An inescapable conclusion is that acceptable management practices found in one country are hardly guaranteed to work in a different coun-

**Table 1**  
**Cultural Clusters Classified on Societal Culture Practices (As Is) Scores**

Cultural Dimension	High-Score Clusters	Mid-Score Clusters	Low-Score Clusters	Cluster-Average Range
Performance Orientation	<b>Confucian Asia</b>	Southern Asia	<b>Latin America</b>	3.73–4.58
	Germanic Europe	Sub-Saharan Africa	Eastern Europe	
	<b>Anglo</b>	<b>Latin Europe</b>		
		Nordic Europe		
Assertiveness		<b>Middle East</b>		3.66–4.55
	Germanic Europe	Sub-Saharan Africa	Nordic Europe	
	Eastern Europe	<b>Latin America</b>		
		<b>Anglo</b>		
		<b>Middle East</b>		
		<b>Confucian Asia</b>		
Future Orientation		<b>Latin Europe</b>		3.38–4.40
		Southern Asia		
	Germanic Europe	<b>Confucian Asia</b>	<b>Middle East</b>	
	Nordic Europe	<b>Anglo</b>	<b>Latin America</b>	
		Southern Asia	Eastern Europe	
		Sub-Saharan Africa		
Humane Orientation		<b>Latin Europe</b>		3.55–4.71
	Southern Asia	<b>Middle East</b>	<b>Latin Europe</b>	
	Sub-Saharan Africa	<b>Anglo</b>	Germanic Europe	
		Nordic Europe		
		<b>Latin America</b>		
		<b>Confucian Asia</b>		
Institutional Collectivism		Eastern Europe		3.86–4.88
	Nordic Europe	<b>Anglo</b>	Germanic Europe	
	<b>Confucian Asia</b>	Southern Asia	<b>Latin Europe</b>	
		Sub-Saharan Africa	<b>Latin America</b>	
		<b>Middle East</b>		
		Eastern Europe		
In-Group Collectivism	Southern Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa	<b>Anglo</b>	3.75–5.87
	<b>Middle East</b>	<b>Latin Europe</b>	Germanic Europe	
	Eastern Europe		Nordic Europe	
	<b>Latin America</b>			
	<b>Confucian Asia</b>			
Gender Egalitarianism	Eastern Europe	<b>Latin America</b>	<b>Middle East</b>	2.95–3.84
	Nordic Europe	<b>Anglo</b>		
		<b>Latin Europe</b>		
		Sub-Saharan Africa		
		Southern Asia		
		<b>Confucian Asia</b>		
Power Distance		Germanic Europe		4.54–5.39
		Southern Asia	Nordic Europe	
		<b>Latin America</b>		
		Eastern Europe		
		Sub-Saharan Africa		
		<b>Middle East</b>		
		<b>Latin Europe</b>		
		<b>Confucian Asia</b>		
Uncertainty Avoidance		<b>Anglo</b>		3.56–5.19
		Germanic Europe		
	Nordic Europe	<b>Confucian Asia</b>	<b>Middle East</b>	
	Germanic Europe	<b>Anglo</b>	<b>Latin America</b>	
		Sub-Saharan Africa	Eastern Europe	
		<b>Latin Europe</b>		
		Southern Asia		

NOTE: Means of high-score clusters are significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than the rest, means of low-score clusters are significantly lower ( $p < 0.05$ ) than the rest, and means of mid-score clusters are not significantly different from the rest ( $p > 0.05$ ).



try. Titus Lokananta, for example, is an Indonesian Cantonese holding a German passport, managing a Mexican multinational corporation producing Gummy Bears in the Czech Republic.<sup>16</sup> What management style will he be most comfortable with, and will it be successful with Czech workers and Mexican CEOs? How does he effectively manage if a conflict evolves between managing his workers and satisfying his supervisors?

Should we, however, conclude that cultural differences are so vast that common management practices among countries are the exception rather than the rule and will ever remain so? Not necessarily. Companies are forced to share information, resources, and training in a global economy. The best business schools educate managers from all over the world in the latest management techniques. Using academic jargon, the issue of common versus unique business and management practices is framed using contrasting perspectives embodied in the terms *cultural universals* versus *cultural specifics*. The former are thought to be found from the process of cultural convergence whereas the latter from maintaining cultural divergence. Perhaps not surprisingly, empirical research supports both views. For example, in their event management leadership research program Smith and Peterson found both commonalities and differences across cultures in the manner by which managers handled relatively routine events in their work.<sup>17</sup> All managers preferred to rely on their own experience and training if appointing a new subordinate, relative to other influences such as consultation with others or using formal rules and procedures. However, there were major differences in countries in the degree to which managers used formal company rules and procedures in contrast to more informal networks, and these differences covary with national cultural values.<sup>18</sup> As another example, Hazucha and colleagues<sup>19</sup> found a good deal of similarity among European countries regarding the importance of core management competencies for a Euromanager. Yet there were significant differences among countries in the perceived attainment of these skills. Javidan and Carl have recently shown important similarities and differences among Canadian, Taiwan-

ese, and Iranian managers in terms of their leadership styles.<sup>20</sup>

Should we also expect that leadership processes, like management practices, are similarly influenced by culture? The answer is yes; substantial empirical evidence indicates that leader attributes, behavior, status, and influence vary considerably as a result of culturally unique forces in the countries or regions in which the leaders function.<sup>21</sup> But, as the colloquial saying goes "the devil is in the details," and current cross-cultural theory is inadequate to clarify and expand on the diverse cultural universals and cultural specifics elucidated in cross-cultural research. Some researchers subscribe to the philosophy that the primary impact of culture depends on the level of analysis used in the research program. That is, some view the basic functions of leadership as having universal importance and applicability, but the specific ways in which leadership functions are enacted are strongly affected by cultural variation.<sup>22</sup> Other researchers, including the contributors to this article, question this basic assumption, subscribing more to the viewpoint that cultural specifics are real and woe to the leader who ignores them.

### **Do Required Leadership Qualities Differ Among Nations?**

It has been pointed out that managerial leadership differences (and similarities) among nations may be the result of the citizens' implicit assumptions regarding requisite leadership qualities.<sup>23</sup> According to implicit leadership theory (ILT), individuals hold a set of beliefs about the kinds of attributes, personality characteristics, skills, and behaviors that contribute to or impede outstanding leadership. These belief systems, variously referred to as prototypes, cognitive categories, mental models, schemas, and stereotypes in the broader social cognitive literature, are assumed to affect the extent to which an individual accepts and responds to others as leaders.<sup>24</sup>

GLOBE extended ILT to the cultural level of analysis by arguing that the structure and content of these belief systems will be shared among individuals in common cultures. We refer to this shared cultural level analog of individual implicit

leadership theory (ILT) as *culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory (CLT)*. GLOBE empirically identified universally perceived leadership attributes that are contributors to or inhibitors of outstanding leadership. Project GLOBE's leadership questionnaire items consisted of 112 behavioral and attribute descriptors (e.g., "intelligent") that were hypothesized to either facilitate or impede outstanding leadership. Accompanying each item was a short phrase designed to help interpret the item. Items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale that ranged from a low of 1 (this behavior or characteristic greatly inhibits a person from being an outstanding leader) to a high of 7 (this behavior or characteristic contributes greatly to a person being an outstanding leader). Project GLOBE also empirically reduced the huge number of leadership attributes into a much more understandable, comprehensive grouping of 21 primary and then 6 global leadership dimensions. The 6 global leadership dimensions differentiate cultural profiles of desired leadership qualities, hereafter referred to as a CLT profile. Convincing evidence from GLOBE research showed that people within cultural groups agree in their beliefs about leadership; these beliefs are represented by a set of *CLT leadership profiles* developed for each national culture and cluster of cultures. For detailed descriptions of the statistical processes used to form the 21 primary and 6 global leadership dimensions and development of CLT profiles see House et al.<sup>25</sup> Using the six country scenarios, in the last half of this paper we will show the range of leadership responses that should be effective in each cultural setting. The six dimensions of the CLT leadership profiles are:

1. **Charismatic/Value-Based.** A broadly defined leadership dimension that reflects the ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance outcomes from others on the basis of firmly held core beliefs. Charismatic/value-based leadership is generally reported to contribute to outstanding leadership. The highest reported score is in the Anglo cluster (6.05); the lowest score in the Middle East cluster (5.35 out of a 7-point scale).
2. **Team-Oriented.** A leadership dimension that emphasizes effective team building and implementation of a common purpose or goal among team members. Team-oriented leadership is generally reported to contribute to outstanding leadership (Highest score in Latin American cluster (5.96); lowest score in Middle East cluster (5.47)).
3. **Participative.** A leadership dimension that reflects the degree to which managers involve others in making and implementing decisions. Participative leadership is generally reported to contribute to outstanding leadership, although there are meaningful differences among countries and clusters. (Highest score in Germanic Europe cluster (5.86); lowest score in Middle East cluster (4.97)).
4. **Humane-Oriented.** A leadership dimension that reflects supportive and considerate leadership but also includes compassion and generosity. Humane-oriented leadership is reported to be almost neutral in some societies and to moderately contribute to outstanding leadership in others. (Highest score in Southern Asia cluster (5.38); lowest score in Nordic Europe cluster (4.42)).
5. **Autonomous.** This newly defined leadership dimension, which has not previously appeared in the literature, refers to independent and individualistic leadership. Autonomous leadership is reported to range from impeding outstanding leadership to slightly facilitating outstanding leadership. (Highest score in Eastern Europe cluster (4.20); lowest score in Latin America cluster (3.51)).
6. **Self-Protective.** From a Western perspective, this newly defined leadership dimension focuses on ensuring the safety and security of the individual. It is self-centered and face saving in its approach. Self-protective leadership is generally reported to impede outstanding leadership. (Highest score in Southern Asia cluster (3.83); lowest in Nordic Europe (2.72)).

Table 2 presents CLT scores for all 10 clusters. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if the cultures and clusters differed with respect to their CLT leadership profiles. Results indicate that cultures (i.e., 62 societal cultures)

and clusters (i.e., 10 groups consisting of the 62 societal cultures) differed with respect to all six CLT leadership dimensions ( $p < .01$ ).

Table 3 presents summary comparisons among culture clusters to indicate which clusters are most likely to endorse or refute the importance of the 6 CLT leadership dimensions. Tables 2 and 3 may be used in combination to provide an overall view of how the different cultural clusters compare on the six culturally implicit leadership dimensions.<sup>26</sup>

## Cross-cultural Leadership Is Not Only About Differences

The global and cross-cultural leadership literature is almost exclusively focused on cultural differences and their implications for managers. There is a basic assumption that leaders operating in different countries will be facing drastically different challenges and requirements. GLOBE surveys show that while different countries do have diver-

**Table 2**  
**CLT Scores for Societal Clusters**

Societal Cluster	CLT Dimensions					
	Charismatic/ Value-Based	Team Oriented	Participative	Humane Oriented	Autonomous	Self-Protective
Eastern Europe	5.74	5.88	5.08	4.76	4.20	3.67
Latin America	5.99	5.96	5.42	4.85	3.51	3.62
Latin Europe	5.78	5.73	5.37	4.45	3.66	3.19
Confucian Asia	5.63	5.61	4.99	5.04	4.04	3.72
Nordic Europe	5.93	5.77	5.75	4.42	3.94	2.72
Anglo	6.05	5.74	5.73	5.08	3.82	3.08
Sub-Sahara Africa	5.79	5.70	5.31	5.16	3.63	3.55
Southern Asia	5.97	5.86	5.06	5.38	3.99	3.83
Germanic Europe	5.93	5.62	5.86	4.71	4.16	3.03
Middle East	5.35	5.47	4.97	4.80	3.68	3.79

NOTE: CLT leadership scores are absolute scores aggregated to the cluster level.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of Comparisons for CLT Leadership Dimensions**

Societal Cluster	CLT Leadership Dimensions					
	Charismatic/ Value-Based	Team-Oriented	Participative	Humane Oriented	Autonomous	Self-Protective
Eastern Europe	M	M	L	M	<b>H/H</b>	H
Latin America	H	<b>H</b>	M	M	<b>L</b>	M/H
Latin Europe	M/H	M	M	L	L	M
Confucian Asia	M	M/H	L	M/H	M	H
Nordic Europe	H	M	H	<b>L</b>	M	<b>L</b>
Anglo	<b>H</b>	M	H	H	M	L
Sub-Sahara Africa	M	M	M	H	L	M
Southern Asia	H	<b>M/H</b>	L	<b>H</b>	M	<b>H/H</b>
Germanic Europe	H	M/L	<b>H</b>	M	<b>H/H</b>	L
Middle East	<b>L</b>	L	L	M	M	<b>H/H</b>

NOTE: For letters separated by a "/", the first letter indicates rank with respect to the absolute score, second letter with respect to a response bias corrected score.

H = high rank; M = medium rank; L = low rank.

H or L (bold) indicates Highest or Lowest cluster score for a specific CLT dimension.



gent views on many aspects of leadership effectiveness, they also have convergent views on some other aspects. From the larger group of leader behaviors, we found 22 attributes that were universally deemed to be desirable. Being honest, decisive, motivational, and dynamic are examples of attributes that are believed to facilitate outstanding leadership in all GLOBE countries. Furthermore, we found eight leadership attributes that are universally undesirable. Leaders who are loners, irritable, egocentric, and ruthless are deemed ineffective in all GLOBE countries. Table 4 below shows a few examples of universally desirable, universally undesirable, and culturally contingent leadership attributes.

Identifying universally desirable and undesirable leadership attributes is a critical step in effective cross-cultural leadership. It shows managers that while there are differences among countries, there are also similarities. Such similarities give some degree of comfort and ease to leaders and can be used by them as a foundation to build on. Of course, there may still be differences in how leaders enact such attributes. For example, behaviors that embody dynamic leadership in China may be different from those that denote the same attribute in the U.S. Current research currently

under way by GLOBE team members is focused on this issue.

### Understanding Culturally Contingent Leadership

In this section, we will focus on those attributes of leadership that were found to be culturally contingent. These are attributes that may work effectively in one culture but cause harm in others. To provide an action oriented analysis, we explore differences in effective leadership attributes among the four countries in our hypothetical scenario and discuss specific implications of these differences for our hypothetical American manager. Admittedly, we are being ethnocentric using the American manager as the focal person who finds himself/herself managing in a foreign culture. Obviously, expatriate managers are found from virtually all industrialized nations; however, there are over 200,000 U.S. expatriates worldwide.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, expatriates from non-American and non-Western countries should be able to identify with cultural differences between their culture and that of the comparison countries. GLOBE cultural data for the five comparison countries can be found in Table 1 and the Appendix. Please note the United States, Brazil, and France are part of the Anglo, Latin American, and Latin European, clusters, respectively. Egypt, and China part of the Middle East, and Confucian Asia clusters respectively.

Each section below begins with a summary of how each culture cluster fares with respect to the CLT profile. We then show how the countries of interest in this paper compare on specific leadership attributes that are culturally contingent. Next, we examine in detail what these differences mean and what they imply for the hypothetical American executive.

### Brazil

Brazil is part of GLOBE's Latin American cluster. Viewing Tables 2 and 3, it is apparent that the CLT leadership dimensions contributing the most to outstanding leadership in this country cluster include Charismatic/Value-Based and Team Oriented leadership, followed by the Participative and Humane Oriented CLT dimensions. Autonomous and Self-Protective leadership are viewed

**Table 4**  
**Cultural Views of Leadership Effectiveness**

The following is a partial list of leadership attributes with the corresponding primary leadership dimension in parentheses.
<b>Universal Facilitators of Leadership Effectiveness</b>
● Being trustworthy, just, and honest (integrity)
● Having foresight and planning ahead (charismatic-visionary)
● Being positive, dynamic, encouraging, motivating, and building confidence (charismatic-inspirational)
● Being communicative, informed, a coordinator, and team integrator (team builder)
<b>Universal Impediments to Leadership Effectiveness</b>
● Being a loner and asocial (self-protective)
● Being non-cooperative and irritable (malevolent)
● Being dictatorial (autocratic)
<b>Culturally Contingent Endorsement of Leader Attributes</b>
● Being individualistic (autonomous)
● Being status conscious (status conscious)
● Being a risk taker (charismatic III: self-sacrificial)

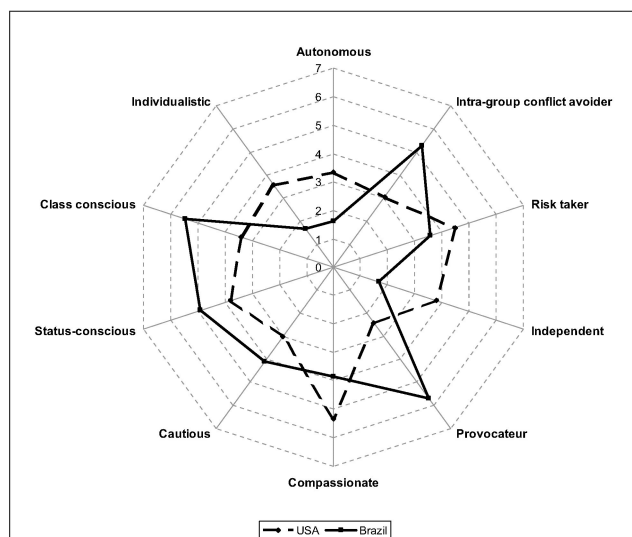
as slightly negative. Table 3 shows that the Latin America cluster receives the highest rank for the Team Oriented dimension, among the highest ranks for Charismatic/Value-Based leadership, and ranks lowest with respect to the Autonomous CLT leadership dimension. It occupies the middle ranks for the remaining CLT dimensions.

Figure 1 below contrasts the U.S. and Brazil on the culturally contingent leadership items. Perhaps due to their high in-group collectivism, Brazilian managers intensely dislike the leaders who are individualistic, autonomous, and independent. A Brazilian sales manager working in the petrochemical industry recently reflected this suggesting, "We do not prefer leaders who take self-governing decisions and act alone without engaging the group. That's part of who we are." While American managers also frown upon these attributes, they do not regard them as negatively as do the Brazilians. An American manager needs to be more cognizant to make sure that his/her actions and decisions are not interpreted as individualistic. He/she needs to ensure that the group or unit feels involved in decision making and that others' views and reactions are taken into consideration.

On the other hand, Brazilian managers expect their leaders to be class- and status-conscious. They want leaders to be aware of status boundaries and to respect them. A manager in a large com-

pany in Brazil noted that blue and white-collar workers from the same company rarely socialize together within and outside of work. They expect leaders to treat people according to their social and organizational levels. Perhaps due to their high power distance culture, Brazilians believe that people in positions of authority deserve to be treated with respect and deference. They prefer a formal relationship between the leader and followers. The same petrochemical sales manager told how Brazilian subordinates tend to stay outside of the perceived boundaries of their leaders and respect their own decision-making limitations. He added, "It's clear who has the most power in the work environment in Brazil, but in America this is not always the case." Americans tend to frown on status and class consciousness. Respect, to an American manager, does not necessarily mean deference but mutual respect and open dialogue. Americans tend to see formality as an obstacle to open debate. But what seems an open debate to an American manager may be viewed as aggressive and unacceptable behavior on the part of the subordinates by a Brazilian manager. So, while Brazilians do not like individualistic leaders, a typical American manager should be cautious using an open style of decision making. While it may be a good idea in an American organization to directly contact anyone with the right information regardless of their level, such behavior may be seen as a sign of disrespect to those in formal positions in a Brazilian organization.

Another important difference is that American managers prefer a less cautious approach and a greater degree of risk taking. In contrast, Brazilian managers prefer a somewhat more cautious and risk averse approach. This is consistent with the finding that U.S. culture is more tolerant of uncertainty than is Brazilian culture. Also, perhaps due to stronger assertiveness and performance orientation in American culture, U.S. managers seem to favor a speedier decision making process and a higher level of action orientation. Brazilians on the other hand, may be more sensitive to group harmony and risk avoidance. A Brazilian account manager leading a four-company consortium working on a \$200 million U.S. contract with the



**Figure 1**  
**USA vs. Brazil**

Federal Department of Roads in Brazil realized this when a conflict occurred among the consortium players. He noted,

*Since our contract was a long-term relationship, we could not focus only on the particular moment. I had to find a way to motivate and to build a trusting environment. The only way to do so was to promote several meetings with all the consortium members trying to find a way to put all the members back together. By doing this, I assumed this was the best action to produce results, no matter how difficult it was or how much time it required.*

Still another difference relates to the strong in-group collectivism dimension of the Brazilian culture. They expect their leaders to avoid conflict within the group to protect its harmony, but at the same time they like their leaders to induce conflict with those outside the group. A particularly successful executive working in Brazil told how Brazilians take pride in membership in small groups, especially families. In business, he said that people who are members of the same group expect special treatment (such as price discounts, exclusivity of contracts, etc.). In fact, without these group affiliations, attracting and conducting business can be difficult. American managers seem to dislike both these attributes, perhaps due to their stronger performance orientation culture. Avoiding internal conflict, simply to maintain group harmony, even at the expense of results, is not a positive attribute to Americans. The typical American view of harmony is reflected in the following quote from the popular book *Execution* by Bossidy and Charan:<sup>28</sup>

*Indeed, harmony—sought out by many leaders who wish to offend no one—can be the enemy of truth. It can squelch critical thinking and drive decision making underground. When harmony prevails, here's how things often get settled: after the key players leave the session, they quietly veto decisions they didn't like but didn't debate on the spot. A good motto to observe is: "Truth over harmony."*

Last, but not least, an important and counter intuitive finding is that American respondents have a much stronger desire for compassion in their leaders. They want their leaders to be empathetic and merciful. The Brazilian respondents, on the other hand, are quite neutral about this attribute. While this seems to go against the conventional stereotypes of Americans and Brazilians,

it seems to be rooted in the fact that Brazil is reported to be a less humane culture than is the U.S. Confirming this finding, one manager stated that this reflects the expectation that people should solve their own problems, relying on help from their family or groups.

### **When in Brazil . . .**

Here are a few specific ideas on what our hypothetical American manager needs to do when he starts working with his Brazilian team:

Very early on, he needs to spend time meeting with the key executives in the organization, even those who may not be directly relevant to his project. This is an important step because of high power distance and in-group collectivism in that culture. Being a foreigner and a newcomer, it is crucial to show respect to those in positions of power and to start the process of building personal ties and moving into their in-groups. Further, this step helps make sure that the other stakeholders do not view the manager's team as being insular, something that is likely to happen in high in-group cultures.

While it is important to work with the individual members of the team, it is also critical to spend as much time as possible with the team as a whole, both in formal work related occasions and in informal settings. The families of the team members should also be invited to get together on many occasions. They are an important part of the relationships among team members. The high in-group culture facilitates the group working closely together, and the Brazilians' dislike for independent and individualistic leaders means that the leader is expected to treat the team and their close families as an extended family, spending much time together.

In developing a business strategy for the team's product, it is important to keep in mind Brazil's low scores on performance orientation and future orientation and its high score on power distance. The process of strategy development needs to allow for input from the employees, but the manager needs to be patient and to make an effort to encourage and facilitate the employees' participation. The Brazilian employees will not be as forthcoming with their ideas and input as typical

American employees are. At the same time, the manager will need to make the final decision and communicate it. Brazilian employees are not used to strong participation in decision making, but they also do not like leaders who simply dictate things to them. The strategy should not be seen as too risky or ambitious and should not have a long time horizon. Instead, it should consist of explicit short term milestones. It should also focus on delivering short term results to enhance employee understanding and support.

Due to the country's low score on institutional collectivism, employees will not be moved much by grand corporate strategies and visions. Instead, they would be more motivated by their individual and team interests, so the reward system should be based on both individual and team performance, although the team component should have the greater emphasis. The manager should also not be surprised if there are not many clear rules or processes and if the ones in existence are not followed very seriously. These are attributes of a society like Brazil with low levels of rules orientation. Instead, the manager needs to make it very clear early on which rules and procedures are expected to be followed and why.

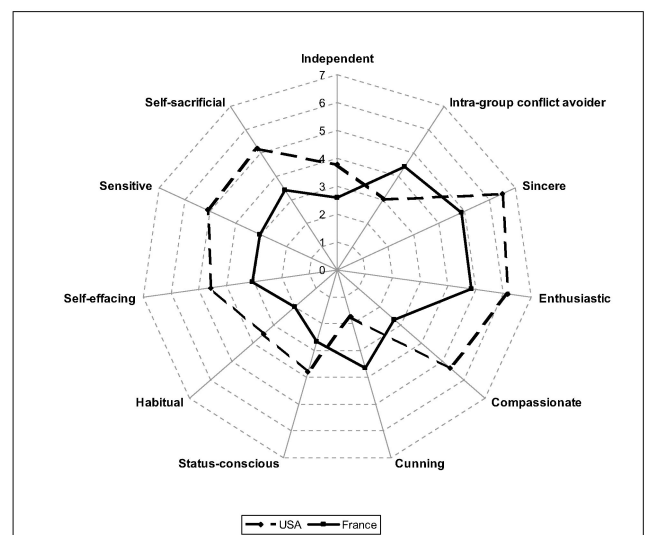
## France

France is part of the Latin Europe GLOBE country cluster. The most desirable CLT dimensions in this cluster are Charismatic/Value-Based and Team Oriented leadership. Participative leadership is viewed positively but is not as important as the first two dimensions. Humane Oriented leadership is viewed as slightly positive, whereas Autonomous leadership is viewed as slightly negative and Self-Protective is viewed negatively. Table 3 shows that the Latin Europe cluster is Medium/High for Charismatic/Value-Based leadership. It is in the middle rank for the remaining CLT leadership dimensions except the Humane Oriented and Autonomous dimensions where it ranks among the lowest scoring clusters.

Figure 2 below shows the contrast between French and American leadership on culturally contingent leadership attributes. The French culture is similar to the U.S. on one cultural dimension, in that they both practice moderate levels of

uncertainty avoidance. Although both cultures utilize predictable laws and procedures in business and society, characteristic of uncertainty avoidance cultures, France is much better known for its strong labor unions and bureaucratic formality. There are, however, significant differences between the French and American respondents on other cultural dimensions and leadership attributes. Both groups seem to like sincere and enthusiastic leaders who impart positive energy to their group, although American managers have much stronger preferences for these attributes. This may be a reflection of the finding that French culture is not as performance oriented as U.S. culture.

Besides their dislike for avoidance of conflict within the group (as discussed earlier) American managers have a clear dislike for cunning and deceitful leaders. The French, on the other hand, are neutral about both attributes. While Americans see these attributes as dysfunctional, the French see them as a part of the job that goes with the position of leadership. Compared to the U.S., in-group collectivism is more noted in French societies in the form of "favoritism" given to people from similar education, family, social, and even regional backgrounds. This is shown in the general tension that is perceived to exist between labor and management, as well as employees and clients.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 2**  
**USA vs. France**



American managers seem to have a strong preference for compassionate and sensitive leaders who show empathy towards others. In contrast, French managers seem to have a distinctly negative view towards both these attributes. The CEO of an international audit firm expressed this in a quality audit of a French hotel stating, "The staff had an inability to apologize and empathize. I think that could be construed as typically European, and especially French."<sup>30</sup> These same behaviors would be expected from their leaders. Such a large contrast can perhaps be explained by the fact that the French culture is much less humane oriented and much more power oriented. To French managers, people in positions of leadership should not be expected to be sensitive or empathetic, or to worry about another's status because such attributes would weaken a leader's resolve and impede decision making. Leaders should make decisions without being distracted by other considerations. Indeed, a very successful corporate executive in France noted that a leader should be able to handle change that affects the environment, but at the same time not change his or her characteristics, traits, and skills that put the leader in that position. In other words, they should allow no distractions.

In contrast to Americans, French respondents have a negative view of leaders who are self-sacrificial and self-effacing. They do not like leaders who are modest about their role and forgo their own self-interest. The French executive added, "A leader must be clear about his role and vision. If a leader puts himself in a compromising situation, then doubt will arise in the followers' minds about the leader and that would affect their views of the roles the followers play in the broader picture." To them, the leader has an important role to play and important decisions to make, and s/he should not minimize that. They also do not like leaders who are habitual and tend to routinize everything because that diminishes the importance of their role. They do still prefer their leaders to work with and rely on others to get things done and do not like independent leaders. A French CEO known for his corporate turnaround finesse explained that leaders should not have too much independence from their followers because otherwise this would

denote lack of character from the followers. He adds that a leader should guide without having too much power over the followers' thought processes, to ensure diverse thinking critical to conserve several solutions to the leader.

To sum up, a typical American executive taking on a leadership role in a French organization will face a more bureaucratic and formal work environment with higher levels of aggressiveness and lower levels of personal compassion and sensitivity than s/he is used to.

### **When in France . . .**

The American manager in our scenario will face a very different experience with his or her French team. These managers will experience much more formal and impersonal relationships among the team members. The concept of visionary and charismatic leadership that is popular among American managers may not be as desirable to the French. They do not expect their leaders to play heroic acts and, due to their high power distance, have a more bureaucratic view of leaders. So, the American manager, in contrast to his experience in Brazil, needs to tone down the personal side of relationships and be much more business oriented. The manager also has to be more careful and selective in contacting other executives and stakeholders. Their preference for maintaining high power distance may curb their enthusiasm about meeting with someone if they feel it is a waste of time and of no clear value to them. It is perhaps best for our American manager to make an offer to them and leave it to them to decide. Their low humane orientation culture may mean that they are not particularly interested in being supportive of others, even in the same organization, especially if they are from separate in-groups.

Due to lower levels of future orientation and performance orientation, grand corporate strategies and visions may be of limited value to a French team. Any strong competitive language may be seen as typical American bravado. The manager needs to develop a process for making strategic decisions about the project and get the team members involved, but he needs to keep in mind that French employees may be best motivated by transactional forms of leadership where



they see clear individual benefit in implementing the team's plans. The strategy and action plans need to be simple and well planned. So, the content and process of strategy development for the French team may have many similarities with the Brazilian team, even though they are different on many other dimensions.

## Egypt

Egypt is part of the Middle East cluster. There are a number of striking differences in comparison to other clusters. While both Charismatic/Value-Based and Team Oriented leadership are viewed as positive, they have the lowest scores and ranks relative to those for all other clusters. Participative leadership is viewed positively, but again scores low compared with other clusters' absolute score and ranks. Humane Oriented leadership is perceived positively, but only about equally to other cluster scores. The Self-Protective CLT dimension is viewed as an almost neutral factor; however, it has the second-highest score and rank of all clusters.

Figure 3 below shows a contrast of leadership styles in the U.S. and Egypt. The Egyptian culture is distinct by its emphasis on in-group and institutional collectivism, power distance, humane orientation, and male domination. In terms of leadership, American managers dislike autocratic leaders who want to make all the decisions them-

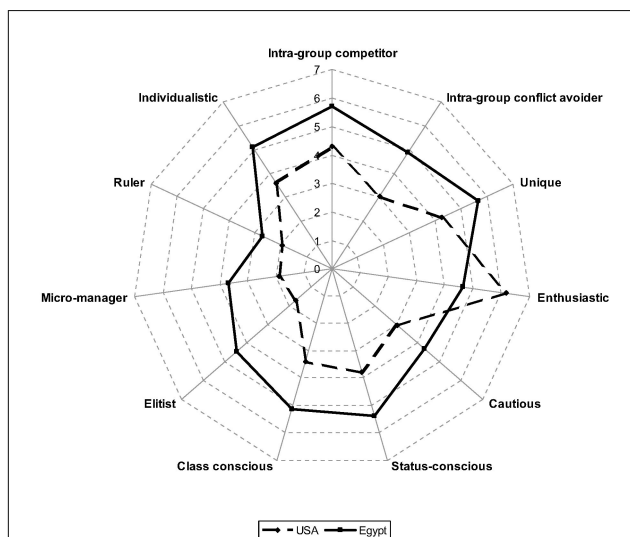
selves and micromanage their employees. They do not want their leaders to suppress others' ideas, even if they disagree with them. Egyptian managers have a more temperate view of such executives, perhaps due to their strong power distance culture.

A very important difference is the image of leaders in the Egyptian vs. the American mind. Egyptian managers seem to have an elitist, transcendent view of their leaders. They view them as a distinct group and a breed apart. They want their leaders to be unique, superior, status- and class-conscious, individualistic, and better than the others in their group. They show strong reverence and deference toward their leaders. Americans, on the other hand, have a more benign and simplistic view toward their leaders. They do not see them as a breed apart or superhuman. They regard them as successful people but not extraordinary ones.

The country of Egypt has been ruled by dictators dating as far back as the time of the Pharaohs. Leaders were expected to lead by portraying a self-assured image. To maintain power, Egyptian leaders need to continuously be involved in making decisions. In the Arabic culture that is very much influenced by Islam, men do not wish to appear weak.

Despite such high level of respect for leaders, Egyptian employees, perhaps due to their very strong in-group collectivism, prefer their leaders to respect group harmony, avoid group conflict, and take caution in decision making. It is rare to see leaders, especially political leaders, come out publicly and criticize a popular belief. They tend to avoid a conflict when it is not necessary, and they often use this collectivism to build their influence and popularity.

The importance of kinship as the family is the most significant unit of Egyptian society. An individual's social identity is closely linked to his or her status in the network of kin relations. Kinship is essential to the culture. Describing the tendency toward generosity and caring in their society, an Egyptian manager told of how early Islamic authorities imposed a tax on personal property proportionate to one's wealth and distributed the revenues to the needy. This type of government



**Figure 3**  
**USA vs. Egypt**

behavior left a certain culture of doing business in Egypt that has a strong emphasis on harmony with the environment, the industry, and the competition.

### **When in Egypt . . .**

Our hypothetical American manager will find that his experience in Egypt will have both similarities and differences with his time in France and Brazil. First, what the manager may regard as a normal informal leadership style in the U.S. may be seen as weak and unworthy of a leader. This manager (typically a male) is expected to act and be seen as distinct from the others on the team and present an image of omnipotence. In the minds of his Egyptian team members, he needs to be seen as deserving of his leadership role and status. Addressing his role as a leader, a project manager from Egypt noted that being a leader brought with it great responsibility. He was in charge of disciplining anyone that did not follow the team rules. He noted, "In order to keep the team spirit up and focused on our goals, we can't afford to have individuals deviating from what we have set out to do." This is almost the opposite of his experience in France.

The American manager will also find that due to very strong in-group collectivism, various groups inside and outside the organization tend to show in-group/out-group phenomena in decision making; i.e., strong participation by in-group members, little participation by out-group members; strong communication with in-group members, and little communication with out-group members. The extent to which Egyptians take pride in belonging to certain groups is immensely important. Families have endured through difficult times, requiring many of the members to stay together and work together. Family businesses tend to be passed from father to son without too many exceptions. Maintenance of the in-group is paramount in any decision. Leaders build their legitimacy not necessarily by accomplishing high performance but rather by forging loyalty to the group and group values. Furthermore, as a result of reliance on personal relationships, decision making criteria and processes regarding any aspect of the organization tend to be informal and unclear.

Given such cultural underpinnings, the American manager needs to do even more than he did in Brazil to build and maintain group harmony. Many informal and formal meetings are needed, but there are three important differences compared with the experience in Brazil. First, to Egyptians, the team leader is more than just an executive; he is a paternal figure who will be rather autocratic but benign. He cares about them and their families. The relationship between the boss and employees is much more emotional and personal in Egypt. The Egyptian project manager described how he helped one of his employees who had experienced some personal difficulties. Explaining that the employee's behaviour was unacceptable, the manager added, "At the same time, I tried to understand if there were any personal issues that forced him to behave the way he did. I felt an obligation to try to help him." Secondly, due to very high humane orientation in Egypt, if the family of an employee has a problem, colleagues and the boss will quickly get involved to help. Taking care of friends in need is a major element of the culture and there is very little demarcation between colleagues and friends. Third, it is easier and more acceptable for the boss in Brazil to get to know the family members and spend time with them during social occasions. It is not, however, a good idea for him to try to do the same with Egyptian families. The contact should only be with and through the employee. Egyptian families tend to be more private and inaccessible to outsiders, possibly due to the intense in-group culture. People tend to stay close to their roots and develop a very strong sense of belonging. In short, even though the American manager will spend time building personal ties and maintaining in-group relationships both in Egypt and Brazil, the nature of his behaviour will need to be somewhat different.

Like Brazil, the manager needs to pay his respects and call on the key executives in the Egyptian organization and start the process of building personal relationships. Unlike the French executives, the Egyptian executives will in all likelihood enjoy this approach and respond positively.

In developing a business strategy for the team, several cultural attributes need to be taken into

consideration. The team will enjoy providing input but they expect decisions to be made by the leader. Family related activities are always celebrated and employees are often excused from work to be able to properly plan such occasions. However, leaders also tend to use the friendly environment to maintain their control and build loyalty within their workforce. Egyptian employees expect their leaders to develop and communicate heroic and grand strategies. Due to their high institutional collectivism and performance orientation, it is helpful to design and communicate ambitious strategies and put them into the broader context of the corporation. Employees will resonate to ideas that would help the corporation and the unit achieve prominence in their competitive arenas. They also like strong rhetoric and get excited by the desire to be part of the winning team. In terms of the reward system, individual performance-based financial rewards, while helpful, are not the best motivators. The system should be seen to be humane to all; it should have a strong group based component, and it should consist of a variety of benefits that are not typically offered in the U.S. Such benefits should be focused on the families of employees. For example, tuition assistance to employees' children, paid family vacation, free or subsidized toys or home appliances could be very well received. As with other Middle East countries, although it is important for the individual to be successful, it is the family or group success that is more dominant.

## China

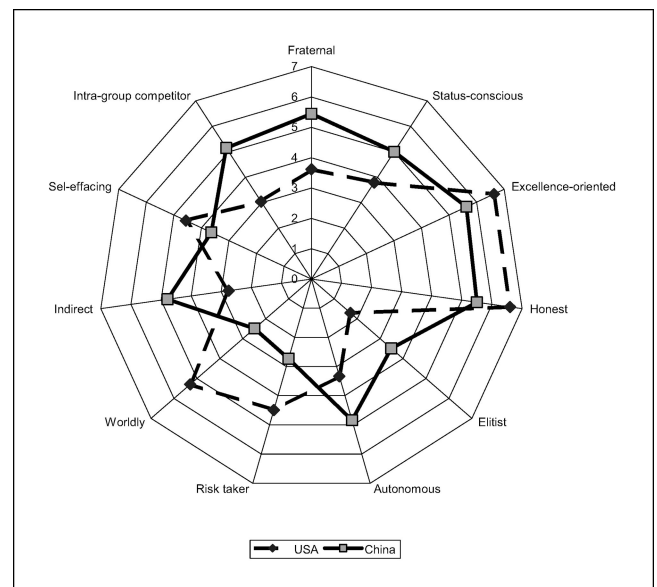
China is part of the Confucian Asia cluster. The two CLT dimensions contributing to outstanding leadership are Charismatic/Value-Based and Team Oriented leadership, even though these scores are not particularly high. Humane Oriented leadership is viewed favorably, but it is not as important as the first two CLT dimensions. Although Participative leadership is also viewed positively, it is about equal to the lowest-scoring clusters. Autonomous leadership is viewed neutrally, and Self-Protective leadership is seen as a slight impediment to effective leadership. Table 4 shows that compared to other GLOBE countries, the Confucian Asia cluster is ranked relatively

low with respect to Participative and relatively high with respect to Self-Protective leadership dimensions.

As shown in the Appendix, the US and Chinese cultures are similar in terms of their performance orientation, humane orientation, and power distance. The Chinese culture seems to be less future oriented, less assertive, more collectivist, both small group and socially, and more rules oriented.

Figure 4 below shows the comparison of culturally contingent leadership attributes between American and Chinese managers. Both American and Chinese managers like excellence oriented leaders who strive for performance improvement in themselves and their subordinates. This is probably driven by the fact that both cultures share a strong performance orientation, as shown in the Appendix. They also both like leaders who are honest. However, the figure shows that the US scores on both these attributes are higher than the Chinese scores.

Chinese managers seem to like leaders who are fraternal and friendly with their subordinates and who have an indirect approach to communication, using metaphors and parables to communicate their point. American managers have a neutral view of fraternal leadership and a negative view of indirect leadership. The difference can



**Figure 4**  
**USA vs. China**

probably be explained by the fact that the U.S. culture is much more assertive and less in-group oriented than that in China (see appendix). In a less assertive culture like China, people tend to use nuances and a context rich language to communicate. They prefer indirect communication to avoid the possibility of hurting someone. Furthermore, in a highly group oriented culture like China, group harmony is critical and the leader's role is to strengthen group ties. As a result, leaders are expected to be supportive of their subordinates and act as good friends for them. They are expected to build emotional ties with their groups and their relationships with their subordinates go far beyond what is the norm in a country like the U.S. The leader is seen as a paternal figure who should take care of his subordinates and their families.

American managers are not excited about leaders who are status conscious and are negative towards leaders who are elitist. In contrast, Chinese managers like the former type of leadership and are neutral towards the latter. This is reflective of the importance of hierarchy in the Chinese culture. Confucianism's 'Three Bonds'—emperor rules the minister, father rules the son, and husband rules the wife—serve as the foundation of the Chinese society:

*Chinese business structure can be directly linked to the history of patriarchy: the owner or manager plays the father's role, and the subordinates or employees play the son.<sup>31</sup>*

Within such a hierarchical structure, the leader tends to be authoritative and expects respect and obedience and tends to make autonomous decisions. That is why Chinese managers do not admire leaders who are self-effacing, because such leaders do not emanate confidence. A group of American managers was recently in China to discuss a possible joint venture with a Chinese company. American managers expected to spend a few days working with their Chinese counterparts to brainstorm ideas and develop action plans. After a few frustrating days, they were told that they needed to find a Chinese agent to help them implement the deal. In conversations with the Chinese agent, they learned that the Chinese counterpart's expectation from the meetings was

very different. They learned that the Chinese company wanted to use the meetings to help build personal ties among the Chinese and American managers and was upset that the Americans were asking aggressive questions and were focused solely on business rather than personal matters. They also learned that the top Chinese executive had no interest in sharing decision making with any one. Instead, he wanted to use private lunches and dinners with the head of the American delegation to make serious decisions and reach agreements.

Chinese managers are very negative towards worldly leaders who have a global outlook. In contrast, Americans admire such leaders. This could be explained by the fact that the two cultures are very different in terms of in group collectivism. The Chinese culture is very high on this dimension, which means it is less interested in anything outside of their in-group. Perhaps they view the world as out-group compared to China and view it as less important.

### **When in China. . .**

The Chinese culture is distinct by its high performance orientation, high institutional orientation, and high in-group collectivism. Building personal ties and relationships is reflected in the Chinese concept of "guan xi" whose loose English translation is networking. It is a manifestation of the fact that one's value and importance is embedded in his/her ties and relationships. As a result:

*In China, the primary qualities expected in a leader or executive is someone who is good at establishing and nurturing personal relationships, who practices benevolence towards his or her subordinates, who is dignified and aloof but sympathetic, and puts the interests of his or her employees above his or her own.<sup>32</sup>*

Much of Chinese life and culture is based on Confucian ideas which emphasize the importance of relationships and community. Even the word "self" has a negative connotation.<sup>33</sup> Our hypothetical American manager needs to be careful about how his behavior and manners are perceived by the Chinese. Being polite, considerate, and moral are desirable attributes. At the same time, the American manager can get the Chinese employees excited by engaging their high performance



culture. Developing an exciting vision is very effective. The relative high score on future orientation can also help the new manager get the employees motivated. But perhaps the most critical key success factor is how the manager goes about building personal ties and relationships with a wide network of individuals and groups. His "guan xi" will be the ultimate test of his success. In building guan xi with his employees, he needs to show high respect to the employees' families, keep them in mind when designing work schedules and reward systems, and make sure that employees see him and the organization as a strong supporter of their own guan xi. Perhaps a big challenge to the American executive is how to make sure his natural American assertiveness does not turn his Chinese employees and counterparts off and does not impede his efforts at building strong relationships.

### **Embarking on a Cross-cultural Leadership Journey**

**T**he existing literature on cross-cultural management is more useful at the conceptual level than at the behavioral level. Much of the advice offered to executives tends to be context-free and general such as "understand and respect the other culture." But the problems facing a typical global executive are context-specific; for example, how to understand and respect the Brazilian culture. In behavioral terms, understanding the Brazilian culture may be quite different from understanding and respecting the Egyptian culture because they are very different cultures.

In this paper, we have presented the cultural profiles of four countries based on a rigorous and scientific research project. We have also provided very specific ideas on the managerial implications of the different cultural profiles along with action oriented advice on how an American manager can "put himself in the other culture's shoes" and be adaptable. Besides the culture specific ideas presented earlier, we propose a two-step process for any executive who is embarking on a new assignment in a new country. Regardless of the host country, these two steps help build a positive pathway towards cultural understanding and adaptability.

First, the executive needs to share information

about his own as well as the host country's culture. Most of the advice that executives receive is about how they can adapt and adjust to other cultures. We propose a somewhat different approach. When people from different cultures come into contact, they usually have unstated and sometimes false or exaggerated stereotypes about the other side. While it is important that the executive learn about the host culture, it is not sufficient. Executives need to tell the host employees about their own cultures. For example, if these executives are in Egypt, then they should show the employees how the American and Egyptian cultures and leadership attributes compare. They should show both similarities and differences. In this paper, we showed that there is a set of leadership attributes that are universally desirable and universally undesirable. Similarities represent a fertile ground to build mutual understanding. The informed executive can then use the session to discuss their implications. What does integrity mean to a French manager? Or to a Brazilian manager? The executive can also compare the findings about his or her own culture with their perceptions of American culture to dispel any misunderstandings. This exercise in mapping and surfacing cultural attributes can go a long way to build mutual understanding and trust between the players. For example, our findings show that American culture is reported to be more moderate on many cultural dimensions than it is stereotypically believed to be. One of the unique features of GLOBE is that we have taken several steps to ensure that the reports by country managers are not confounded by such things as methodological problems and represent the true broader culture of their societies.

Second, the global manager needs to think about how to bridge the gap between the two cultures. Much of the advice executives receive seems to suggest, explicitly or implicitly, that the executive needs to become more like them. We do not necessarily subscribe to this viewpoint. While it is important to understand the other culture, it does not necessarily mean that one should automatically apply their approach. For example, leaders are seen as benign autocrats in Egypt. If an American manager does not like this approach,



then he should educate the employees on his approach to leadership; why it is not dictatorial, and why he prefers it. Managers need to make sure the employees understand that their approach is not a sign of weakness, but a more effective style for the manager and for the team's and organization's success. It's a judgment call to say it's a "more effective" style than what the team is used to, but it is one that they should employ with the team. The global manager needs to tell the employees what managerial functions they are willing to change and what team functions they would like the employees to change so that the team can work from, and succeed on, common ground incorporating both cultures. The manager then needs to seek their help on both approaches; i.e., each culture making changes to accommodate and strengthen the other. Both approaches can take place at the same time and with respect to both cultures, as long as the manager gets the employees involved in the process. In other words, instead of a solitary learning journey for the executive, managers can create a collective learning journey that can be enriching, educational, and productive for both sides.

### Attributes of Global Leaders

**T**he essence of global leadership is the ability to influence people who are not like the leader and come from different cultural backgrounds. To succeed, global leaders need to have a global mindset, tolerate high levels of ambiguity, and show cultural adaptability and flexibility. This paper provides some examples of these attributes. In contrast to a domestic manager, the hypothetical manager discussed in this paper needs a global mindset because s/he needs to understand a variety of cultural and leadership paradigms, and legal, political and economic systems, as well as different competitive frameworks.<sup>34</sup> We used GLOBE findings to provide a scientifically based comparison of cultural and leadership paradigms in the five countries. We showed that countries can be different on some cultural dimensions and similar on others. Brazil and Egypt are both high on in-group collectivism, but different on performance orientation. France and the U.S. are both moderate on uncertainty avoidance but differ on power distance. China and the

U.S. are both high on performance orientation but very different on in-group collectivism. Furthermore, there are similarities and differences in the countries' leadership profiles. While a leadership attribute like irritability is universally undesirable, another attribute like compassion is culturally contingent, i.e., it is much more desirable in the U.S. than in France.

Tolerance of ambiguity is another important attribute of a global leader. Every new country that s/he has to work in represents a new paradigm and new ways of doing things. This is typically an uncomfortable position for many people to be in because it requires learning new ideas quickly and letting go of what has already been learned. Of course, in the four scenarios, we showed that there are things in common across cultures and there are portable aspects of cultural learning. But we also showed that there are differences as well. Figuring out which one is which and what to do represents potentially stressful ambiguity to an expatriate manager.

Cultural adaptability refers to a manager's ability to understand other cultures and behave in a way that helps achieve goals and build strong and positive relations with local citizens. In the country scenarios, we showed that while in France the manager should not emphasize grand and ambitious corporate strategies, he can do this in China. Cultural adaptability refers to the mental and psychological ability to move from one situation and country to another. It means the ability to do a good job of developing personal relationships while in Egypt and then doing it very differently in France. The dexterity to adjust one's behavior is a critical requirement. Not everyone can do this; to many people it may bring into question one's own identity. In some ways it is reminiscent of acting but the difference is that the global manager, unlike the actor, lives and works among real people and not other actors, so his task is more complicated.

### Developing Global Leaders

**A**s mentioned earlier in this paper, a large majority of *Fortune* 500 corporations report a shortage of global leaders. Devising programs that would develop a global mindset in leaders has been called "the biggest challenge that looms in the new millennium for human resource manag-

ers.”<sup>35</sup> There are a variety of ways that companies can enhance their pool of global leaders. To start with, they can make a large volume of information on cross-cultural and global issues and country specific reports available to their managers. We have already referred to several books on this topic. In addition to the special issue of the *Human Resource Management Journal* mentioned earlier, there are special issues of other journals.<sup>36</sup> There are also a variety of software packages such as a multimedia package called “Bridging Cultures,” a self-training program for those who will be living and working in other cultures. In addition, several services like CultureGrams ([www.culturegram.com](http://www.culturegram.com)) provide useful information about many countries. There are also a few Internet sites providing useful information to managers<sup>37</sup> such as [www.contactcga.com](http://www.contactcga.com) belonging to the Center for Global assignments, the CIA World Fact Book at [www.odci.gov/cia/publications/facxtbook/](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/facxtbook/), and Global Dynamics Inc.’s [www.globaldynamics.com/expatria.htm](http://www.globaldynamics.com/expatria.htm).

Formal education and training can also be

helpful in developing global leaders. A recent survey showed that a large majority of firms were planning to increase funding for programs that would help globalize their leaders.<sup>38</sup> But despite its prevalence among multinational corporations, there is general consensus among experts that it is not a highly effective source of developing global leaders.<sup>39</sup> It is generally best used as a component of a comprehensive and integrated development program. Work experience and international assignment is by far the most effective source for developing global leadership capabilities.<sup>40</sup> Some experts view long term international assignments as the “single most powerful experience in shaping the perspective and capabilities of effective global leaders.”<sup>41</sup> Increasingly, companies like GE, Citigroup, Shell, Siemens, and Nokia are using international assignments of high potential employees as the means to develop their managers’ global leadership mindset and competencies.

## Appendix

### Country Scores on Cultural Practices

<i>Performance Orientation</i>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.49</b>	<b>France 4.11</b>	<b>Egypt 4.27</b>	<b>China 4.45</b>	<b>Brazil 4.04</b>
	Canada 4.49	Israel 4.08	Kuwait 3.95	Hong Kong 4.80	Bolivia 3.61
	England 4.08	Italy 3.58	Morocco 3.99	Japan 4.22	Argentina 3.65
	Ireland 4.36	Portugal 3.60	Qatar 3.45	Singapore 4.90	Colombia 3.94
	New Zealand 4.72	Spain 4.01	Turkey 3.83	South Korea 4.55	Costa Rica 4.12
	South Africa (W) 4.11	Swiss (French) 4.25		Taiwan 4.56	Ecuador 4.20
	Australia 4.36				El Salvador 3.72
					Guatemala 3.81
					Mexico 4.10
					Venezuela 3.32
<i>Future Orientation</i>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.15</b>	<b>France 3.48</b>	<b>Egypt 3.86</b>	<b>China 3.75</b>	<b>Brazil 3.81</b>
	Canada 4.44	Israel 3.85	Kuwait 3.26	Hong Kong 4.03	Bolivia 3.61
	England 4.28	Italy 3.25	Morocco 3.26	Japan 4.29	Argentina 3.08
	Ireland 3.98	Portugal 3.71	Qatar 3.78	Singapore 5.07	Colombia 3.27
	New Zealand 3.47	Spain 3.51	Turkey 3.74	South Korea 3.97	Costa Rica 3.60
	South Africa (W) 4.13	Swiss (French) 4.27		Taiwan 3.96	Ecuador 3.74
	Australia 4.09				El Salvador 3.80
					Guatemala 3.24

**Appendix (continued)**

					Mexico 3.87
					Venezuela 3.35
<b>Assertiveness Orientation</b>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.55</b>	<b>France 4.13</b>	<b>Egypt 3.91</b>	<b>China 3.76</b>	<b>Brazil 4.20</b>
	Canada 4.05	Israel 4.23	Kuwait 3.63	Hong Kong 4.67	Bolivia 3.79
	England 4.15	Italy 4.07	Morocco 4.52	Japan 3.59	Argentina 4.22
	Ireland 3.92	Portugal 3.65	Qatar 4.11	Singapore 4.17	Colombia 4.20
	New Zealand 3.42	Spain 4.42	Turkey 4.53	South Korea 4.40	Costa Rica 3.75
	South Africa (W) 4.60	Swiss (French) 3.47		Taiwan 3.92	Ecuador 4.09
	Australia 4.28				El Salvador 4.62
					Guatemala 3.89
					Mexico 4.45
					Venezuela 4.33
<b>Societal Collectivism</b>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.20</b>	<b>France 3.93</b>	<b>Egypt 4.50</b>	<b>China 4.77</b>	<b>Brazil 3.83</b>
	Canada 4.38	Israel 4.46	Kuwait 4.49	Hong Kong 4.13	Bolivia 4.04
	England 4.27	Italy 3.68	Morocco 3.87	Japan 5.19	Argentina 3.66
	Ireland 4.63	Portugal 3.92	Qatar 4.50	Singapore 4.90	Colombia 3.81
	New Zealand 4.81	Spain 3.85	Turkey 4.03	South Korea 5.20	Costa Rica 3.93
	South Africa (W) 4.62	Swiss (French) 4.22		Taiwan 4.59	Ecuador 3.90
	Australia 4.29				El Salvador 3.71
					Guatemala 3.70
					Mexico 4.06
					Venezuela 3.96
<b>In-Group Collectivism</b>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.25</b>	<b>France 4.37</b>	<b>Egypt 5.64</b>	<b>China 5.80</b>	<b>Brazil 5.18</b>
	Canada 4.26	Israel 4.70	Kuwait 5.80	Hong Kong 5.32	Bolivia 5.47
	England 4.08	Italy 4.94	Morocco 5.87	Japan 4.63	Argentina 5.51
	Ireland 5.14	Portugal 5.51	Qatar 4.71	Singapore 5.64	Colombia 5.73
	New Zealand 3.67	Spain 5.45	Turkey 5.88	South Korea 5.54	Costa Rica 5.32
	South Africa (W) 4.50	Swiss (French) 3.85		Taiwan 5.59	Ecuador 5.81
	Australia 4.17				El Salvador 5.35
					Guatemala 5.63
					Mexico 5.71
					Venezuela 5.53
<b>Humane Orientation</b>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.17</b>	<b>France 3.40</b>	<b>Egypt 4.73</b>	<b>China 4.36</b>	<b>Brazil 3.66</b>
	Canada 4.49	Israel 4.10	Kuwait 4.52	Hong Kong 3.90	Bolivia 4.05
	England 3.72	Italy 3.63	Morocco 4.19	Japan 4.30	Argentina 3.99
	Ireland 4.96	Portugal 3.91	Qatar 4.42	Singapore 3.49	Colombia 3.72
	New Zealand 4.32	Spain 3.32	Turkey 3.94	South Korea 3.81	Costa Rica 4.39

**Appendix (continued)**

	South Africa (W) 3.49	Swiss (French) 3.93		Taiwan 4.11	Ecuador 4.65
	Australia 4.28				El Salvador 3.71
					Guatemala 3.89
					Mexico 3.98
					Venezuela 4.25
<b>Power Distance</b>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.88</b>	<b>France 5.28</b>	<b>Egypt 4.92</b>	<b>China 5.04</b>	<b>Brazil 5.33</b>
	Canada 4.82	Israel 4.73	Kuwait 5.12	Hong Kong 4.96	Bolivia 4.51
	England 5.15	Italy 5.43	Morocco 5.80	Japan 5.11	Argentina 5.64
	Ireland 5.15	Portugal 5.44	Qatar 4.73	Singapore 4.99	Colombia 5.56
	New Zealand 4.89	Spain 5.52	Turkey 5.57	South Korea 5.61	Costa Rica 4.74
	South Africa (W) 5.16	Swiss (French) 4.86		Taiwan 5.18	Ecuador 5.60
	Australia 4.74				El Salvador 5.68
					Guatemala 5.60
					Mexico 5.22
					Venezuela 5.40
<b>Gender Egalitarianism</b>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 3.34</b>	<b>France 3.64</b>	<b>Egypt 2.81</b>	<b>China 3.05</b>	<b>Brazil 3.31</b>
	Canada 3.70	Israel 3.19	Kuwait 2.58	Hong Kong 3.47	Bolivia 3.55
	England 3.67	Italy 3.24	Morocco 2.84	Japan 3.19	Argentina 3.49
	Ireland 3.21	Portugal 3.66	Qatar 3.63	Singapore 3.70	Colombia 3.67
	New Zealand 3.22	Spain 3.01	Turkey 2.89	South Korea 2.50	Costa Rica 3.56
	South Africa (W) 3.27	Swiss (French) 3.42		Taiwan 3.18	Ecuador 3.07
	Australia 3.40				El Salvador 3.16
					Guatemala 3.02
					Mexico 3.64
					Venezuela 3.62
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance</b>	Anglo Cultures	Latin Europe	Middle East Cultures	Confucian Asia	Latin America
	<b>USA 4.15</b>	<b>France 4.43</b>	<b>Egypt 4.06</b>	<b>China 4.94</b>	<b>Brazil 3.60</b>
	Canada 4.58	Israel 4.01	Kuwait 4.21	Hong Kong 4.32	Bolivia 3.35
	England 4.65	Italy 3.79	Morocco 3.65	Japan 4.07	Argentina 3.65
	Ireland 4.30	Portugal 3.91	Qatar 3.99	Singapore 5.31	Colombia 3.57
	New Zealand 4.75	Spain 3.97	Turkey 3.63	South Korea 3.55	Costa Rica 3.82
	South Africa (W) 4.09	Swiss (French) 4.98		Taiwan 4.34	Ecuador 3.68
	Australia 4.39				El Salvador 3.62
					Guatemala 3.30
					Mexico 4.18
					Venezuela 3.44

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