

Book Review

# Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies

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House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., & Gupta, V.  
(eds.). (2004).

day by exploring questions of interest. What would you like to know or compare in the interface of culture, leadership, and organization? Link it—and you probably not only can read about it, but most likely you also can see it charted for you. The encyclopedic findings are fascinating in their own right, but what is even more important is that they yield wave upon wave of consilient reading.

Link of GLOBE as a meal—an 808 page full course dinner (including the 48 pages of index), a work cooked over a decade (1993-2003), testing 27 hypotheses that linked culture to outcomes. It has been served to your table by 170 interviewers, from a questionnaire of 735 items, that queried 17,300 middle managers of 3 target industries, divided into 10 regions, and scattered among 62 countries throughout the world.

So relax and enjoy the meal. The chefs are professors: Robert House, Paul Hanges, Mansour Javidan, Peter Dorfman, and Vipin Gupta (respectively from University of Pennsylvania, University of Maryland, University of Calgary, New México State University, and Grand Valley State University). The cuisine is research: a filling foray into global leadership.

This is leadership as you have never tasted before—leadership simmered in a 62-flavor culture sauce and topped off with organizational dessert from three industries of very contrasting flavours (finance, food process, and telecommunications).



From region after region, the data poured in. Americans, for example, tend to be enamored of the notion of leadership, placing a premium on leaders. For most Americans, the term leadership evokes a positive

response—leadership is a desirable characteristic and highly praised. Americans, Arabs, Asians, British, Eastern Europeans, French, Germans, Latin Americans, and Russians tend to romanticize the concept of leadership and consider leadership in both political and organizational arenas to be important. Leaders in these cultures are commemorated with statues, names of major avenues or boulevards, or names of buildings.

But such commemorations are absent in Australia, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the German regions of Switzerland. Some studies show that practically, when Europeans say “leader,” the conditioned reflex is “Hitler.” Even the French call leadership an unintended and undesirable consequence of democracy, a “perverse effect,” as they say. Many people of German-speaking Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia are skeptical about leaders and the concept of leadership for fear leaders will accumulate and abuse power. In Holland, consensus and egalitarian values are highly esteemed. Other nations downplay the importance of leadership. Japan’s CEOs of successful corporations credit subordinates for organizational accomplishments while de-emphasizing their own role as contributors to organizational success. And although Anglo societies are known for their visionary leadership that emphasizes team-building and allows for individual autonomy, the commonly effective form of leadership in Middle Eastern societies (Jordan and Saudi Arabia) is the autocratic style, which is based on authoritarian leadership and disallows

ships; that is, hiring relatives is often the norm rather than the exception. And the relative-hire practice is a system used in many large-scale enterprises in these countries as well. Large Indian firms currently practice many of these behaviors, such as obedience to elders based on deference to the wisdom of experience. Five of the largest business organizations in India—Reliance, Birla, Goenka, Kirloskar, and Tata—remain family-managed. In

research and theory, surely GLOBE will stand as a major beachhead in the global liberation of leaders and organizations from that hegemony.

is 1993-2003 worldwide survey dips back into anthropologist Robert Redfield's definition of culture: is the "shared understandings made manifest in act and artifact." From that point of departure, the GLOBE research project examines culture as practices and values.

are acts or "the way things are done in this culture," and are the judgments about "the way things should be done," the artifacts of human spiritual, moral and mental construct. Specifically, GLOBE is about CLTs—"culturally endorsed implicit theories of leadership"—a rather awkward match between acronym and designation. Be that as it may, CLT is the acronym of choice used throughout the book.

GLOBE is intended to be rigorous. Its stated audience is the academic community, yet it carries a yearning to feed the hungry strugglers in the global management jungle. GLOBE is not an easy read, but it is not an impossible read. As I have said, if you persist, you definitely will find it to be a most profitable read.

ics added] implicit theory of leadership of the societies studied.” us, they report finding a . . .

“high and significant within-society agreement with respect to questions concerning the effectiveness of leader attributes and behaviour. Further, aggregated leadership scores were significantly different among the societies studied. us, each society studied was found to have a unique profile with respect to the culturally endorsed [not individually endorsed] implicit theory of leadership.” (pp. 16–17)

## Value-Belief Theory

the same holds true for the theoretical foundations in value-belief theory. According to Hofstede’s and Triandis’s value-belief theories, the values and beliefs held by members of cultures influence not only the degree to which behaviors are enacted, but also the degree to which they are viewed as legitimate, acceptable, and effective. And this reality applies to the behavior of groups and institutions within cultures as well as to individuals. the GLOBE theoretical base is a theory of whereas the preceding cultural work of Hofstede, Triandis, and McClelland are all value-belief theories that focus on motivations as primary. House and Javidan are clear here also: “Whereas McClelland’s theory is an individual theory of both nonconscious and conscious motivation, the GLOBE theory is a theory of motivation resulting from cultural forces.” (17)

us, the central proposition of the GLOBE CLT—  
—is that “the attributes and entities that differentiate a specified culture are predictive of organizational practices and leader attributes and behaviours that are most frequently enacted and most effective in that culture” (p. 17)

From an academic standpoint, which is the orientation of the authors of , what has been assembled by the GLOBE study is put forward as “a very adequate data-set to replicate Hofstede’s (1980) landmark study and extend that study to test hypotheses relevant to relationships among societal-level variables, organizational practices, and leader attributes and behavior” with “sufficient data to replicate middle-management perceptions and unobtrusive measures” (p. xxv.). As I mentioned earlier, in order to accomplish that, University of Pennsylvania’s Robert House led a team that eventually included 170 other social scientists and management scholars called CCIs, or country co-investigators. the CCIs interviewed some 17,300 managers from 951 organizations in 62 societies, representing all the major regions of the world—10 clusters of countries by their count: Latin America, Anglo, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe,

Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Confucian Asia, and Southern Asia.

You can readily see their approximation to Samuel Huntington's 1996 typology in

Huntington identified eight worldview-related or religion-based civilizations: Western, Latin American, Islamic, African, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, and Japanese. (And perhaps only seven, with African being only a "possibly" according to Huntington; but not nine, as mistakenly listed by Triandis in the Forward (p. xviii.), who includes Buddhist, which Huntington, for his reasons, excludes.)

Previous research such as Hofstede's monumental 1980 study identified four dimensions of cultural variation: power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. GLOBE expands these to nine dimensions: future orientation, gender equality, assertiveness, humane orientation, in-group collectivism, institutional collectivism, performance orientation, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance.

In 1994, Schwartz, following Kluckhohn (1951) and Rokeach (1973), extended his individual-level taxonomy of human values to the society level to identify dimensions that differentiate cultures. His seven ecological dimensions are Embeddedness (previously labelled Conservatism), Intellectual Autonomy, Affective Autonomy, Hierarchy, Egalitarianism, 197 duby 122



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oriented and participative person, mobilizing us to principled and collaborative action—and if possible, one who is also humanely oriented, that is, a person who is supportive and generous, perhaps even modest.

But we also know something else. From the global-conversation perspective—How do we best live life on this planet?—the GLOBE Research Program gives a rather certain negative conclusion. We are also hearing that there is something in the human heart, something in the human psyche that recoils from that person in a place of leadership— that person over others—who seems only or especially to somehow be primarily or significantly looking out for self.

The GLOBE results, then, are unique in their broad geographical coverage. They support the CLT thesis that the societal system and the cultural worldview have the most significant and strongest effects on all the organizational culture dimensions measured. Influences from industry mildly impact some of the measured aspects of organizational cultures across all societies.

Among the 10 culture clusters, the CLT profiles vary as a function of the 9 cultural dimensions and the dominant societal system of the various culture clusters. The report from the 10 cultural regions in briefest summary:

The Latin American leader (of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela) practices C/V-B and TO leadership and is not adverse to some elements of SP. Although independent action is not endorsed, P and HO behaviors are seen favorably, but not as highly as in other clusters.

Somewhat similarly, a leader from France, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and French-speaking Switzerland of the European cluster endorses C/V-B and TO leadership. A action is not endorsed and HO behaviors do not play a particularly important role. And, although P leadership is viewed favorably, “the Latin Europe cluster would not be noted for it.” In other words, high scores on “should be,” low scores on “as is.”

The Anglo-American cluster includes Australia, English-speaking Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, White sample South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The reported outstanding leader includes high C/V-B elements with high levels of P leadership carried out in a HO manner. TO is valued, but not ranked among the highest global CLT dimension. SP is viewed negatively.

In the (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden) the effective leader is seen as the person whose style includes C/V-B and TO leadership. However, in contrast to most other cluster profiles around the world, the Nordic cluster is particularly noted for high P leadership and low HO and SP attributes.

A leader exemplar for the (Albania, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia) would be one who is somewhat C/V-B, TO, and HO, but is his or her own person, does not particularly believe in the effectiveness of P leadership, and is not reluctant to engage in SP behaviors if necessary.

includes China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. An example of effective leadership for this cluster includes C/V-B, and perhaps TO, leadership. SP actions are viewed less negatively than in other cultures, especially when coupled with motivations arising out of group protection and face saving. The Confucian Asia cluster is among the highest scores in the world, along with South Asia and the Middle, in SP. P leadership is not expected.

. India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand form the cultures of this cluster. GLOBE identifies an effective leader in South Asia as a person who exhibits C/V-B, TO, and HO leadership attributes. That same leader is relatively high on SP behaviours and is not noted for high levels of P leadership. Having lived in Southeast Asia (Thailand), and now living in India, I have not found at all convincing the GLOBE arguments that link India and Iran to the Southeast nations of Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The GLOBE charts do, however, allow for breakout comparisons.

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other clusters' scores, "almost all Middle East CLT scores rank at the low end of the leadership comparisons." Several explanations are tendered, but the GLOBE conclusion is that "it is likely that the pervasive influence of the Islamic religion is a key to understanding the Arab world, and presumably in the Arab world" (pp. 694-697). Even with the lower CLT scores, the universal ideas about and aspirations for an effective leader come through. Respondents in the Middle East look to a person who exhibits C/V-B and TO leadership, as well as P and HO leadership, "but not nearly to the extent indicated for other clusters."

So, while the full extent of culture's influence is still unknown and although the way leadership is culturally contingent remains relatively unmapped, "given the current trend toward globalization of economies and an ever increasing number of multinational firms," the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness research program certainly sheds some light on marketplace-behavior effectiveness in our global multi-cultural world.

In the afterglow of *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, three thoughts hover in my head. First, *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* obligates us. I chuckled at the first sentence of the Preface: "The idea for GLOBE came to me in the summer of 1991." Does this mean that, in time, we are going to look back to House's summer inspiration as a Kuhnian moment, a time of new integration in a section of the social sciences, a veritable paradigm shift? Perhaps. It seems as though the research team might think so. At any rate, *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* is a serious and wide-ranging work and we are all in its debt.

Guided by the Culturally Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (CLT), GLOBE lays out a ten-year project based on an integrated, cross-level theory of the relationship between cultural values and practices, leadership, and organizational and societal effectiveness. As one who has tracked the field of cross-cultural leadership for over a third of a century, I find myself in relieved agreement and with an invigorated interest in their new level of theorizing. A new level of integration and documentation has been achieved with the convergence of the CLT (which expanded implicit leadership theory to the cultural level) the strategic contingency theory, McClelland's achievement theory of human motivation, and Hofstede's culture theory.

Overall, GLOBE extends the current knowledge-base by a more comprehensive conceptualization of cultural dimensions, even introducing new dimensions. The conceptualization and measurement of culture in Redfieldian terms of practices and values will no doubt prove to be a rich vein for further research. At the organizational level, of course, there are the nine new dimensions of organizational culture. For all that, we are all indebted to GLOBE.

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University. He has also taught economics at Delhi University. In

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