

'it's the culture, stupid'

Understanding Cultural Dimensions
For Peace And Conflict Resolution

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Enemy or Mirror Image

Should the West see China as a threat or as an opportunity, a friend or an enemy? Are we heading for a third world war? Does the seemingly inexorable rise of China spell the doom of many values in which we have long believed? Might some form of communism prevail after all? Are China's motives sinister? Is it trying to subvert us? Is it plotting mischief? Given the very bad press China has been getting in Western media, one might certainly think so. But the word 'sinister' has an interesting derivation. Its original meaning has nothing to do with wily orientalism. It means simply left-handed. Most of us are right-handed, using our dominant left-brain hemispheres which are wired to the right side of our bodies. But a few of us are left-handed, with that side of the body wired to the right-brain hemisphere. Such people are the opposite to us. They negate the way we are and given the archaic meaning of the word sinister, this once seems to have frightened us and aroused suspicion.

This is the opening paragraph of the book [Has China Devised a Superior Path to Wealth Creation? The Role of Secular Values](#) (2022). This book is completely based on the 7-Dimension (7-D) model of national culture developed by Fons Trompenaars, one of the authors of the book. It points at the fact that in terms of that model, Chinese culture is at the opposite end of almost all dimensions, compared to Western culture.

This is by no means a new finding. The differences can be found on the [Trompenaars Hampden-Turner \(THT\) website](#); publicly available. It is therefore worrying that no one, not even most scholars familiar with the model, have ever attempted to look at all the criticism towards China from a cross-cultural perspective. Acknowledging that many of the conflicts have a deeper cultural nature below the political surface, can depoliticize those issues and clear the stage for peaceful discussion and conflict resolution.

Hence the title **'it's the culture, stupid'**, a wink to the well-known political campaign slogan 'it's the economy, stupid' from former US President Bill Clinton's successful 1992 U.S. presidential election.

This paper will at first introduce the cultural dimensions of the 7-Dimension (7-D) model of national culture. Subsequently three dimensions will be selected to set up a model to explain the most salient differences between Western and Chinese culture and the consequences of those differences.

The model will include a proper definition for 'Western culture'. The West is not a single nation and not having a working definition of 'the West' has always been a serious flaw in the arguments of both pro- and anti-Western narratives.



Dimensions of Culture

How do you measure the cultures of different nations? Trompenaars has posed a series of dilemmas to tens of thousands of managers world-wide who have attended his company's seminars to see on which side of those dilemmas they come down. The purpose of using dilemmas was to oblige the respondent to give priority to one of two propositions. The word di-lemma means 'two propositions' in seeming conflict.

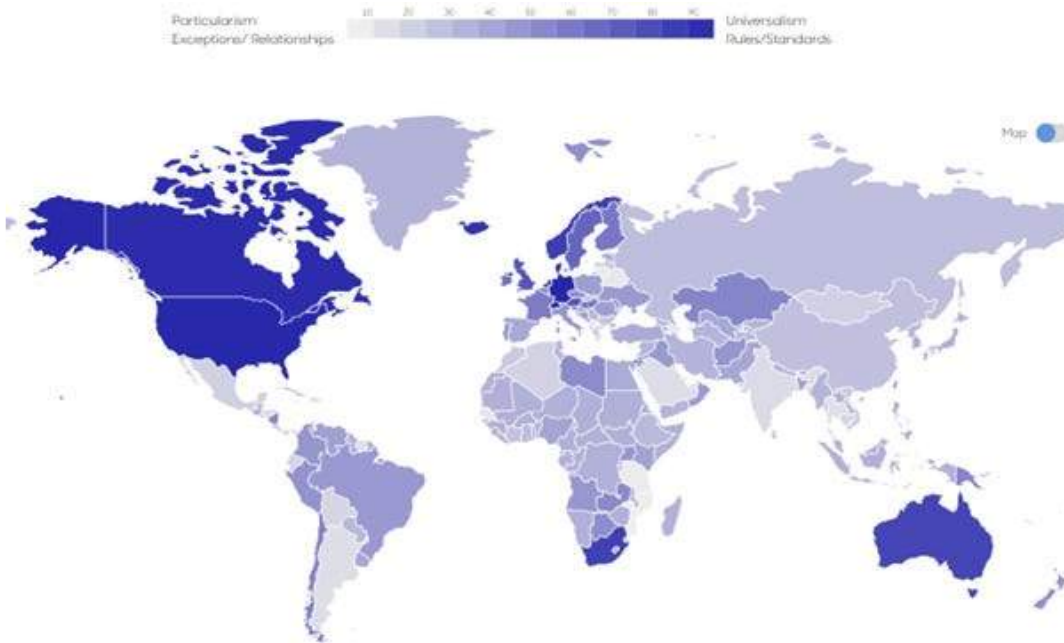
These dilemmas are very unwelcome and nearly all managers tell us that they feel torn, but it turns out to be a good way to identify cultural biases, so that most Westerners prefer freedom to community, despite the fact that it needs a community to guarantee freedom and unless it does this, freedom will be seriously curtailed. The explanations of the different dimensions regularly have 'we' as the subject; referring to THT consultants.

Universalist - Particularist

Our first dimension measures whether we are more oriented to **Universal laws** or **Particular** and **exceptional** circumstances. We tell each respondent that s/he is a passenger in a car driven by a best friend who is breaking the speed limit when striking and injuring a pedestrian. The friend is taken to court where the respondent is the sole witness. Were the respondent not to disclose that the friend was speeding, s/he would likely to get off. What right or reason does the friend have to expect the respondent's help? This dilemma pits the value of a universal law requiring truthful witness in a court of law against friendship and exceptional obligation to a particular friend. Which side of this dilemma do you choose? Is it Truth or Love?

South Koreans have come up during these seminars to thank the consultants for proving that Americans are corrupt. 'They won't even help their best friends!' Americans come up too and thank them for proving South Koreans are corrupt. 'They even lie under oath!' Yet the truth is that lurking within us are the values of the foreign culture. Let us suppose that we substitute for 'friend' the love of your life, the woman to whom you had proposed marriage moments before? Are you going to drop her in it? What we choose to do depends on circumstances and different nations have encountered different circumstances historically.

Below world map shows which nations are more universalist (darker blue) and those who have a more particularist culture.



Picture credit : [THT Consulting](#)

Individualist - Communitarian

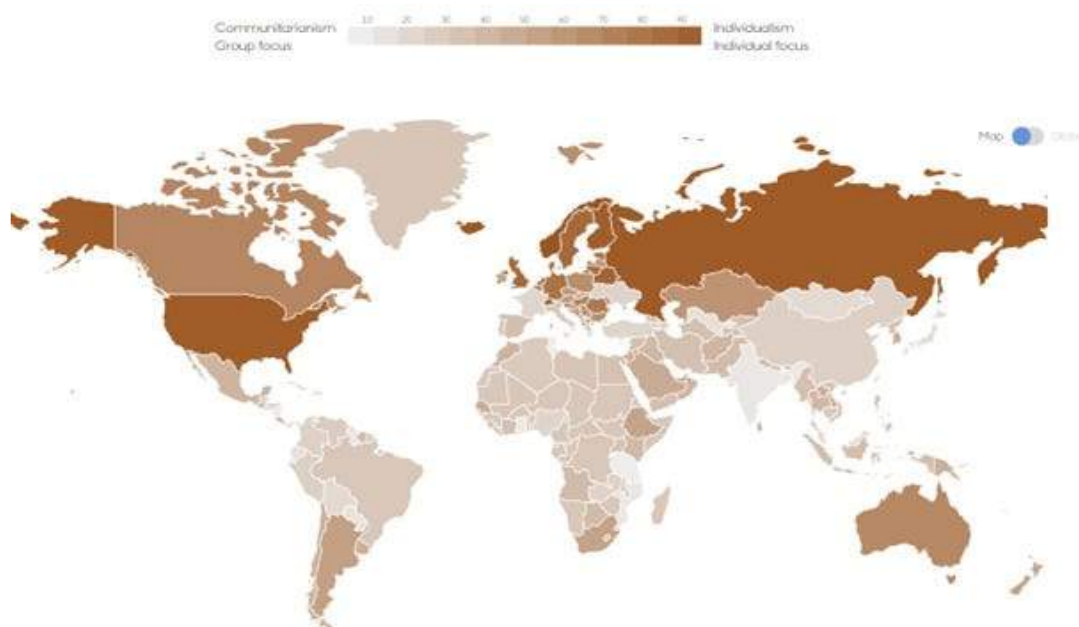
Our second dimension has to do with why do what they do in the first place. Is it to gain 'as much personal freedom as possible'? Or is it to 'continuously look after the needs of fellow beings?' This dilemma illustrates the dimension **Individualism vs Community**.

An interesting feature of these answers is the size of the minorities. While Americans back freedom two to one, some 32% of them work for the community. China actually breaks 50/50 on this issue, suggesting that its entrepreneurial individualism has always been there. Even so, all Asian nations except Japan are in the bottom half of the chart where concern for the community looms much larger.

Discrimination against the Chinese, present in many countries, may actually propel them into business as it did the British and American Quakers, Non-Conformists, Huguenots and Jews. If you get on with a useful trade you tend to be left alone and governments are less oppressive. In order to survive you need

something more than your outer appearance. You need to entertain, excel in sports, provide money, heal and help people, excel in scholarship etc.

That going out to work is form of freedom featured in global drama over the COVID 19. Should we lock down and save the **Community** or venture forth in **Individual** defiance? What happens when deaths spike and consumers choose to stay at home?



Picture credit : [THT Consulting](#)

Specific - diffuse

Our third dimension is **Specific vs Diffuse**. Does a culture prefer to analyse and break things down, or to relate, to connect and build things up? We asked respondents what was their conception of a corporation. Which of the following descriptions did they prefer? We have put words denoting specificity and diffusion respectively, in italics. Is a corporation a set of things or is it a web of relations?

'A company performs a variety of *functions* or *tasks*. People are hired to do these *things* with the help of *machines* and *equipment*. They are *paid* for tasks performed.'

'A company is a group of people *working together*. They have *social relations* with each other and that *organisation*. Their effective functions rely on those relations.'

Here are the results we got.

Preference for **specific** description over **diffuse** description

	USA	NETH	UK	CAN	AUSTRA	FIN	SWE	TURK	BEL	GER	FRA	DEN	MAL	HK	SIN	S-KOR	JAP	INDON	CHINA
%	91	86	83	72	69	65	64	62	58	54	51	50	40	39	38	27	25	23	17

These results put North America, the UK and Australia at the Specific end, Scandinavia and Europe at the centre and East Asia at the Diffuse end. The difference between the USA, 91%, and China, 17% is huge and may help explain the current enmity. No East Asian country prefers the specific description and those nations eschewing it less, are ex-British colonies, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

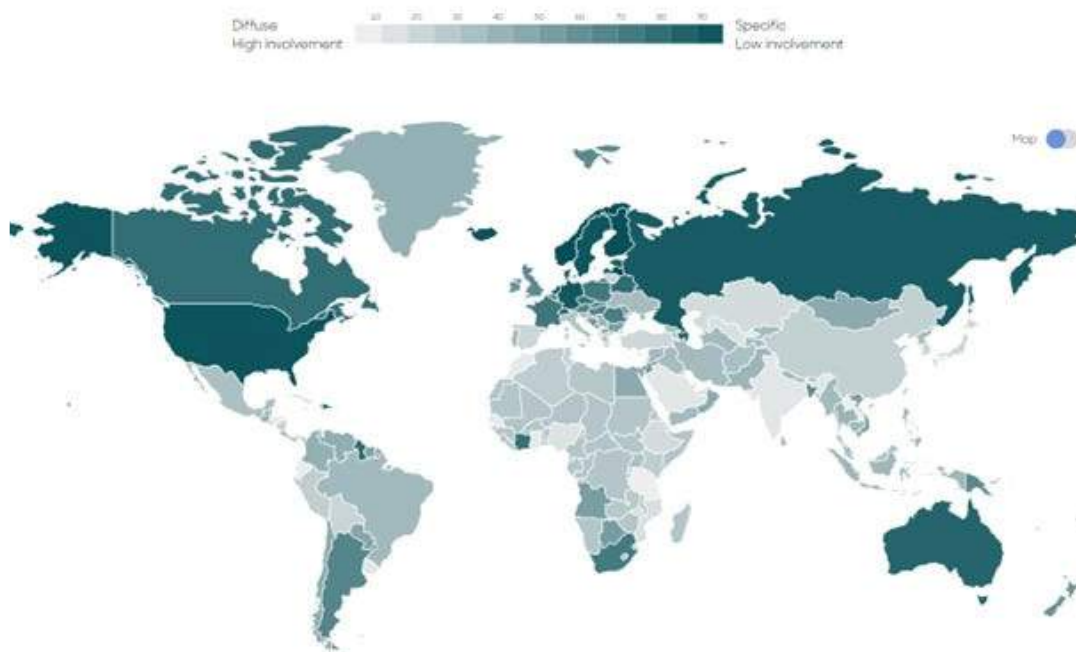
An important symptom of very high specificity is the belief that profitability tells us all we need to know about a company. Everything a company does can be distilled by the Bottom Line, a single statistic that says it all. We asked respondents whether 'the only goal for company is profit.' Here is what we got.

The only goal is profit

	USA	AUSTRA	CAN	UK	NZ	ITA	NETH	GER	FIN	HK	SIN	FRA	INDON	CHINA	JAP
%	40	35	34	33	32	28	26	24	22	19	18	16	14	9	8

There is now no nation in the world that upholds this dictum by a majority. But the USA, the UK and the ex-dominions still give it sizeable support. The desire to boil everything down to a single figure is still irresistible for large minorities of managers, financiers among these. Five of the six most dismissive of profit-as-a-sole-indicator are East Asian. Five of the most profit-oriented are English-speaking.





Picture credit : [THT Consulting](#)

Achieved status – Ascribed status

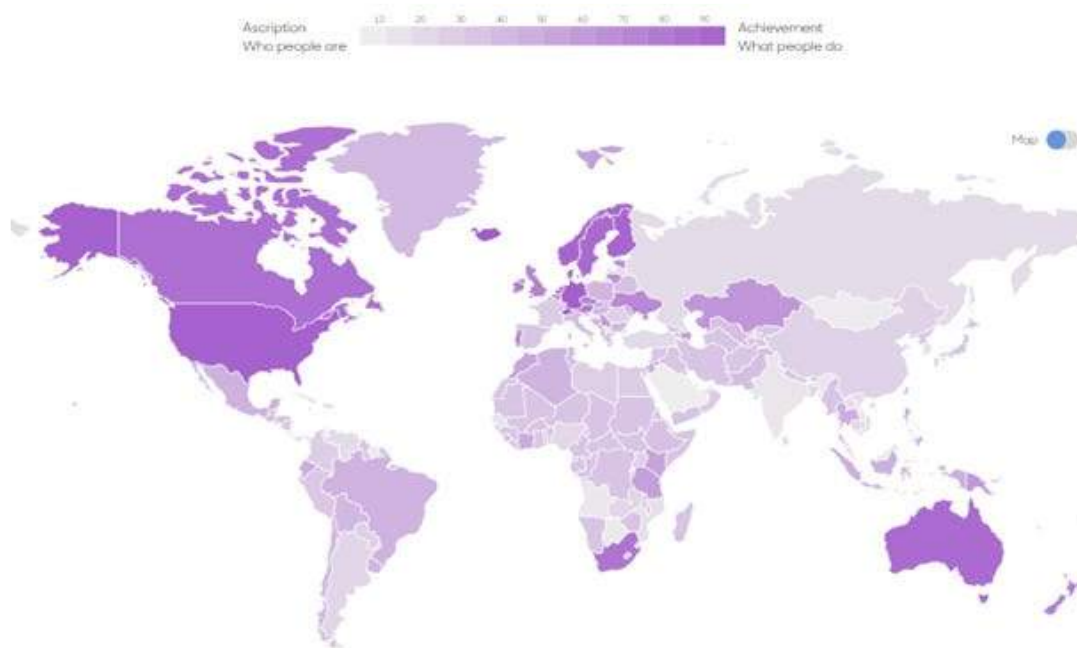
Our fourth dimension is about how a culture accords status. Does it do so on the basis of what someone has **achieved** or does it **ascribe** status to people on other grounds, their appearance, their class, their family, their potential, their gentility, their vocation, their ethnicity or their humanity. We suggested to respondents that they should act as really suits them, even if they did not get things done. We expected those oriented to achievement to *reject* this statement and they did.

The surprise is how weak global support for achievement really is. The highest score is among Americans but that is only 59% and only three nations score above 50% and nearly all save one below that. Achievement seems to be tied closely to public acclaim, succeeding in well-known, widely acclaimed contests and/ or earning a lot of money so that people notice you. The latter kind of achievement depends on markets bestowing wealth on those that attract customers. But there are many talents which markets do not reward. Those who take on the toughest challenges, solve problems few comprehend, help and sustain other people, show compassion, fight injustice and sustain our environment do not 'achieve' in the conventional sense. Indeed, they may have little to show for lifetime struggles on behalf of the environment, social justice,

prison reform, female equality, human rights and so on. Nevertheless there are reasons for being grateful to them a bestowing admiration upon them.

Moreover there is a question of equality. If we give status to others, regardless of their track-record thus far, then they are *more likely to achieve in the future*. We give them the confidence to 'have a go'. They are important to us *before* they set out to achieve. Should we not educate this way?

Deng Xiaoping was much praised in the West when he announced 'it is glorious to be rich'. China had at last understood what the West was about, even if the admission was belated. People are enriched when their friends and colleagues seek to engage them and ascribe status to this opportunity. What matters is not a dirty great pile of loot but joining yourself to others and fusing your fortunes to theirs. China envisages a sharing economy. It is not as if Americans do not *know* this. At the climax of the film 'It's a Wonderful Life' the hero is reminded 'no man is a failure who has friends.' It is rather that we not care sufficiently.



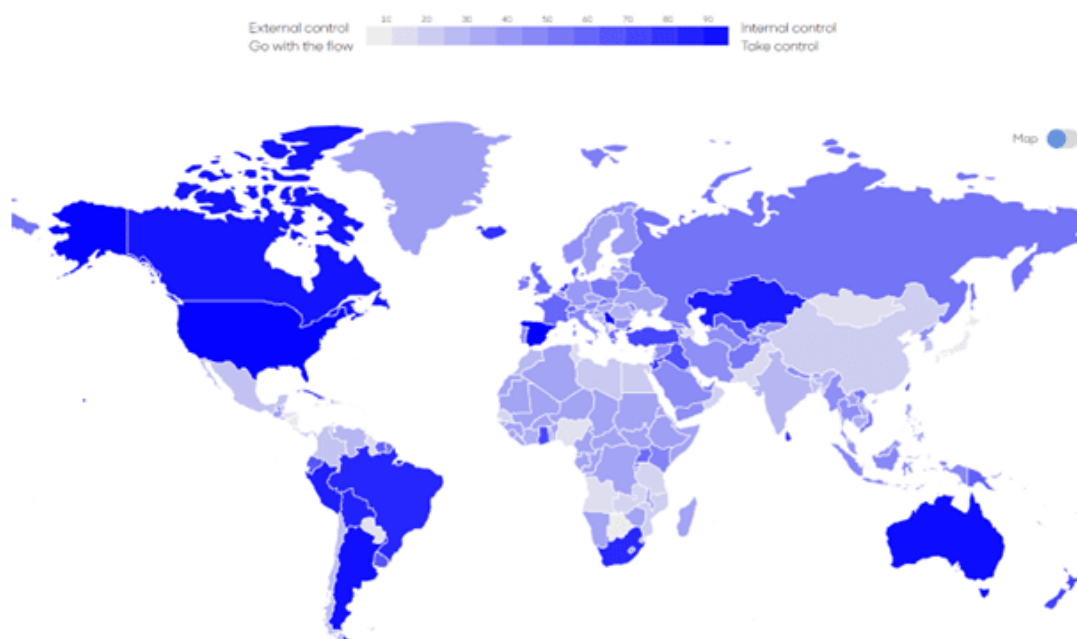
Picture credit : [THT Consulting](#)

Internal control – External control

Our fifth dimension has to do with being **inner-directed** by one's own convictions vs. **outer-directed** by the social and physical environment around

us. Those who pioneered capitalism take pride in having shaped the whole system and being authorities on its proper operations. The self-made man created himself through sheer will power and is largely responsible for his own greatness. Like Frank Sinatra sang, 'I do it my way.' If you thank God at all, it is for my 'unconquerable soul'. You are 'bloody but unbowed' in the face of misfortune.

The problem with inner-directedness is that our present climate crisis owes much to it. Our take-make-waste culture is largely the consequence of exploiting our planet with no thought for its ecology, of believing that whatever we want we should get, whatever the cost to our habitat and to other people. The belief that there are no logics of importance except our own limitless desires has led us to chronically under-estimate the wonders of evolution and we impose upon nature the thinking of the factory. We measured inner vs. outer-direction by a series of statements like 'What happens to me is my own doing,' 'There is no such thing as luck.' What we found is described below.



Picture credit : [THT Consulting](#)

That we are or should be, in control of our own destinies is a powerful appeal in English-speaking nations, five of which top the internal control (take control) end of the dimension and the seventh of which is the UK itself. It was key to Britain's decision to leave the EU and beat its own path into the future. The idea is that you forge your future through an indomitable determination and 'rule

the waves'. Being slaves is for Africans, not the British. Spain has a long tradition of being *macho* by which men thrust their will on the opposite sex. Whether it's possible to be independent in a global system rather than inter-dependent is an open question. Once again, we see that East Asia is much more outer-directed. Among the bottom nine, five are in East Asia and China in near the bottom. It responds to externalities, like COVID 19, more readily.

Nations that did not invent capitalism but are now catching up, are much more likely to see themselves as tossed on turbulent seas amid world forces to which they must adapt. Senior Japanese managers call themselves 'white watermen', shooting the rapids while trying to avoid rocks. Luck and good or ill fortune play a major part in Chinese narratives, witness the pandemic which started there.

Another problem with inner-direction is that assertive people are tempted to talk more than listen, heedless of the Japanese proverb that we have two ears but only one mouth, so that we may hear more and sound-off less. One problem with our talking so much is that East Asian's learn from us much more readily and quickly than we learn from them. We accuse them of copying but this is a response to our readiness and eagerness to lecture and to express ourselves.

East Asia has been designated a Listening Culture compared to the West's Talking Culture. When you are trying to catch up, outer-directed listening is a necessity and will lead to learning faster. Dr. Fauci was asked by Republican lawmakers whether China was stealing American ideas on vaccines. He said he doubted this, since in a week or so the results would be published anyway!

Sequential - Synchronic

Our sixth dimension has to do with how a culture thinks of time. Since time cannot be seen or touched except through various instruments, it is very much a matter of cultural interpretation. The cultures of nations tend to see time as **sequential** in the manner of a passing train, 'time and tide waits for no man' or as **synchronic** as in 'synchronize your watches' or 'seize the time.' The difference is most clearly seen in US vs. Japanese manufacturing. The Americans specialized in doing things fast, in Time and Motion studies and in Scientific Management. The trick was for workers to keep up with the speed of the conveyor belt or machine, even where this shrank the job to twisting a bolt twice



as it moved past you. Speed by itself can lead to gross job simplification and people as mere hand-maids to the machinery that will soon replace them.

In contrast the Japanese invented Just-in-time. This takes a number of sequences and *joins them up* so that they work in harmony. The Japanese still study Taylorism assiduously but *synchronize his sequences just in time*, to create an 'ever faster dance'. Those managers who can harmonize one sequence with another are enabled to think long-term while those who think only in terms of sequences want to 'make a quick buck'.



Picture credit : [THT Consulting](#)

Long term self-control – short term self-indulgence

We asked managers about the length of their time horizons and although the East had greater long-term thinking than most Western countries, the differences were relatively small. A more successful set of distinctions was found by [Geert Hofstede](#), who created a long-term vs. short-term scale and found that this correlated highly with short-term Self-indulgence and long-term Self-control. Here are his findings.

Short-term (West)

Long-term (East)

	UK	KE	USA	GRE	AUSTRALIA	SWI	NETH	S-KOR	ROC	HK	CHINA
%	75	75	71	69	68	67	56	25	13	4	0

Self-indulgent (West)

Self-controlled (East)

	AUSTRALIA	UK	USA	CAN	NETH	HK	FIN	NOR	GRE	ROC	S-KOR	CHINA
%	71	69	68	68	67	61	57	55	40	34	29	24

Note in the first table that between the Netherlands and South Korea there is a ‘cliff edge’ with the first scoring 56% and latter 25%, some 31 percentage points lower. Four East Asian countries are *substantially* longer term. It very much looks as if part of this is due to the Self-control needed to wait and the Self-indulgence needed to enjoy oneself right now. China’s long term inclination is displayed in its willingness to invest in renewable technologies and electrical vehicles, its leading world role in building infrastructure between itself and the rest of the world and making health part of that infrastructure. The savings rates in East Asia are also substantially higher, while many Western countries are deeply in debt.

China borrows also, some would say excessively, but it does this to build industry long-term, not to indulge consumers. We may note that *the long-term includes the short-term and after an interval this pays off every day*. But short-term gains, especially financial speculation, makes long-term industry-building impossible.

You can lay 1,000 exciting bets with the money needed for patient investing. *Almost everything worthwhile takes time and patience*. It is widely acknowledged that neither Wall Street nor the City has much appetite for building up industries. The likes of Rolls Royce and ICI could not get started in Britain today. The penchant is for *extracting* money from industry not putting it in.

We are now in a position to summarise all six dimensions, or seven dimensions if we include Hofstede’s Self-indulgence - Self-control dimension, using our positive-negative differences.



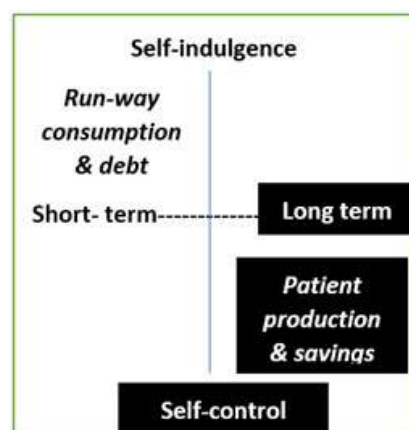
Combining Dimensions

Thus far we have considered our dimensions one by one, but real life is not that simple. In actual practice two or more dimensions combine to express more complex moral positions.

Take for example the last two dimensions we considered, **Short-term vs. Long-term** and **Self-Indulgence vs. Self-control**.

If we cross these dimensions, we get two quite different phenomena. The West seems fixated on consuming and indulging short-term, so that we have **Run-away consumption and debt**. For many years we have been trying to boost demand by slashing interest rates which have been near zero since the 2008 Recession. Western politicians seem reluctant to extract money out of the economy via taxes. International balance of payments show that the US and the UK import far more than they export and for years the high level of American consumption kept the world going.

In contrast China shows a pattern of **Patient production & savings**, brought about by a combination of **Long-term** orientations and **Self-control**. The Chinese rely heavily on manufacturing for export markets and expanding their world market-shares. Chinese people traditionally save and exercise self-control. China invests in plants and equipment less in credit cards.

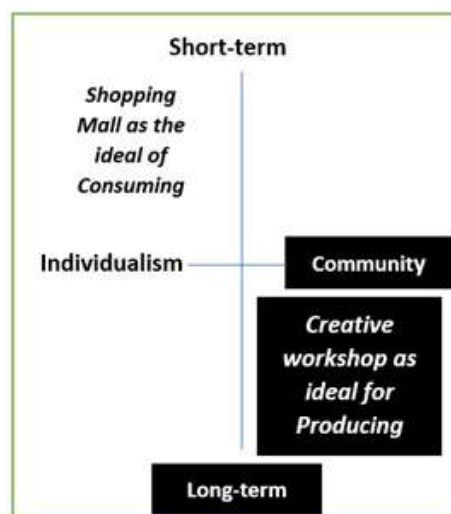


General Motors is a good example of what ails the US. For many years its profits come less and less from the cars it makes and more and more from customers

going into debt to afford a car initially and paying interest on that debt. In contrast China produces and exports and has a huge balance-of-payments surplus. It occupies the bottom right quadrant of the cross-axes above.

Many economists do not see this division of labour between America and China as a disadvantage. Exports and imports will balance each other in the end. China needs America to buy its goods. But to have one country descend ever further into debt and borrowing, self-indulgence and desperate urgency for funds, amounts to a decline of national character. It reduces us from creators and producers to alimentary canals and in-taking mechanisms. We become anxious, timid, needy and enslaved to our creditors.

Another cross-dimensional exercise is the **Short-term - Long-term** dimension with the **Individualism - Community** dimension to get two more quadrants.



When we consume as individuals this is all too often short-term, as in an impulse purchase. When we produce as a community this is almost invariably longer-term. We do not know whether what we produce will satisfy buyers and must await the outcome. Our satisfaction is contingent on *having first satisfied others*. The **Shopping Mall is the ideal of the Consuming Society** while the **Creative Workshop is the ideal for Producing Society**.

But note that the Creative workshop *includes* the Shopping Mall while the Shopping Mall *excludes* the Creative Workshop and has no time for its prolonged efforts, its need for persistence and its gradual mastery of its product.

One major difference between West and East is that the West believes that a Free Market should steer the economy and that the choices of consumers register 'dollar ballots' for what is needed and what is not. It is not for governments to say what we should be buying but for market places to serve citizens. In the past we have seen the state attempt to decree what people should buy, only for such systems to fail miserably.



The sheer complexity of detail is enough to overwhelm even the most astute government officials. Thousands of tractors rust in the fields because some functionary omitted to order a number 3 lug-head bolt.

What has not been tried until China did it, is governments working *with* market forces to choose the best that world markets throw up and which governments wish to use, like renewable energy.



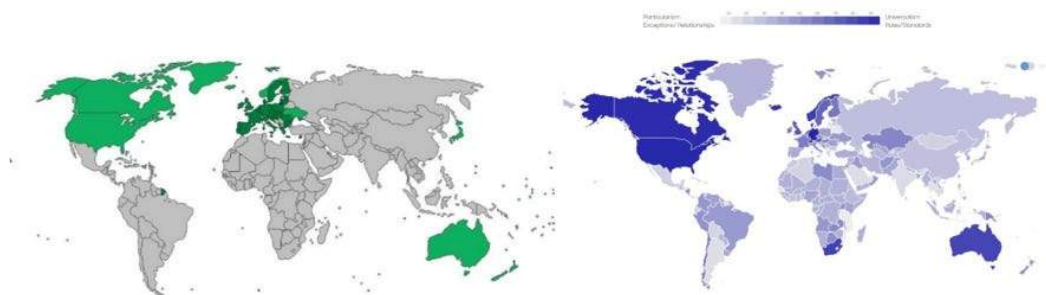
West vs. the Rest

While there are numerous analyses comparing the 'West' vs. others, the weak point here is the 'West' narrowly being defined as a political or 'ideological' entity. The 7-D model of national culture allows us however to formulate such a definition. A common trait of the cultural profiles of the Western nations is that they are on the Universalist, Individualist, Specific, Achieved status and Sequential; some, like the English-speaking nations and the Northwest European nations are strongly so on all these dimensions.

Western	Non-Western
High universalist	High <u>particularist</u>
High individualist	High communitarian
High specific	High diffuse
High achieved status	High ascribed status
Sequential	Synchronic

An interesting and actual example to corroborate the value of this definition is about which nations are participating in the sanctions against Russia after the Ukraine invasion.

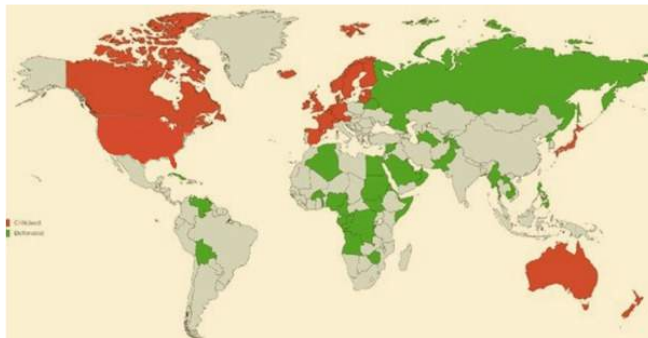
When we compare a world map with nations that participate in the sanctions (green) and the other nations which are not participating (grey) with the mapping of the cultural dimension Universalist – Particularist, we can immediately see the striking similarity.



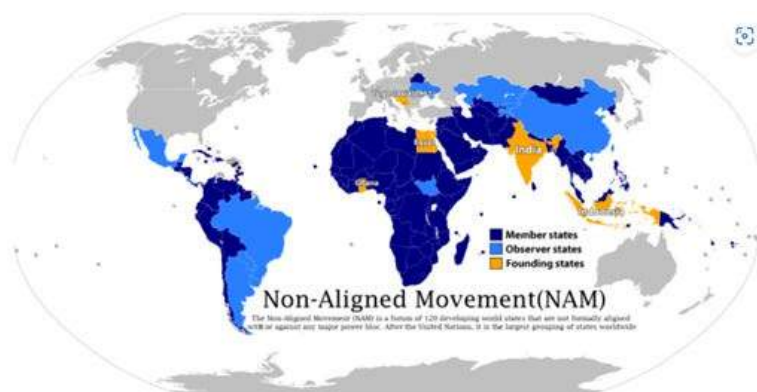
The strongly Universalist nations participate in the sanctions. South Africa seems to be a conspicuous exception in this comparison though. However, it is possible that the depiction of South Africa being a Universalist nation is caused by the fact that the respondents in that nation have (still) been overwhelmingly white South Africans.

More about this example here [‘Is participating in the sanctions against Russia a cultural matter?’](#)

A same comparison with Universalist – Particularist map can be made with below map indicating nations that criticised China for its policies in Xinjiang during a UN vote (red) and those that defended China for the same (green). Other nations in grey abstained. A salient detail is that many of the defending nations are Muslim states.



Also noteworthy is the similarity with the map of Non-Aligned Nations.



With the exception of Russia, all Particularist nations are members or observers of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Western nations like to criticise emerging non-Western nations of harming the 'rule-based world'. We can now recognise that expression as linked to a high Universalist inclination. The Western nations, among which all former colonising countries, are used to draw up rules and enforce the worldwide. Non-Western nations, however, [are less and less willing to comply](#), as this concept of a rule-based world does not comply with their cultural profile, which is high Particularist, Communitarian and Diffuse; the generic non-Western culture.

When we plot groups of nations like BRICS or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), we can also see that they all fall into the non-Western cultural region.

In fact, most conflicts in today's world have root in these two generic cultural profiles creating divergent interpretations about basic people's societal values and rights. And this cultural divergence is by far ignored in conflict debate and resolution.

While the West is condemning China for its lack of democracy or its record of human rights through Universalist inclination, the 7-D model can be used to understand for example the [Chinese version of democracy](#) or [multiple interpretations of human rights](#). More generally, the 7-D model can help us set up an academic model of a multi-polar world.



Chess vs. Weiqi (Go)

An [article in Asia Times](#) of 3/11/2023 (Louise Low, *Face-off on the grand chessboard*) offers a highly interesting perspective to the ongoing tech-war between the West and China, that is also applicable to all Western accusations against China. Low projects the war as a game of chess, but one in which the two players, the West and China, are playing different games. While the West is playing chess, Low contends that China is playing *Weiqi*, better known by its Japanese name Go. The difference is best explained by quoting two entire paragraphs from Low.

*In their book [A Thousand Plateaus](#) (1980), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari offer a succinct explication of the difference between the two games. They note that in chess the conflict is institutionalized and regulated with a front and a rear battle line, whereas in weiqi there are no battle lines. It is a question of arraying oneself in an open space, they note, of holding space, of maintaining the possibility of springing up at any point. Chess is played in a **structured space**, with each piece assigned a specific role in the hierarchy with a clear differentiation between the pawns and the elite pieces such as knights, bishops, kings and queens, each moving in its designated way.*

*In contrast, weiqi is played in a **fluid space** where the pieces are identical, and their roles are ambiguous. It is the strategic context that matters. The strategic orchestration of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. There are as many moves in weiqi as atoms in the observable universe, offering infinite flexibility and manoeuvring room to an astute player. The ambiguousness and fluidity of their roles augment the potential importance of every piece on the board, bewildering those who do not understand the weiqi game. China plays weiqi by radically expanding its playing field and its global political-economic space. The expansion of BRICS and BRI are notable examples of this strategy.*

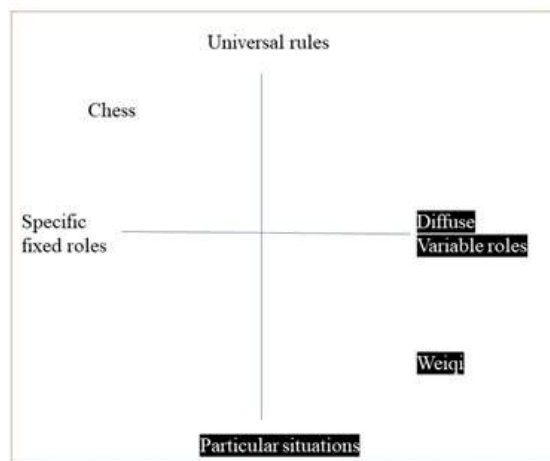
This analysis is already brilliant. However, we can try to rephrase it using the 7-D model. The institutionalized and regulated nature of *chess* indicates that it has roots in a Universalist culture. *Weiqi* is played in a fluid space and the roles of the pieces are only determined in a concrete situation; typical phenomena of a Particularist culture.





Picture credit : Elena Popova, Randy Fath (Unsplash)

Chess is played in a structured space, with each piece having its typical hierarchical role. This points at a Specific culture. In *weiqi*, each piece can take on any role on the basis of its relation to others in a concrete position; typical for a Diffuse culture.



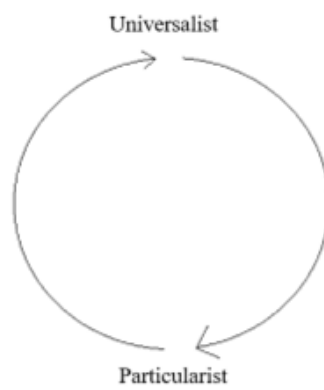
The US was playing chess during the war in Indo-China, while the Vietcong and neighbouring allies were playing *weiqi*. We know the outcome of that war.

Currently, Israel is playing chess, while Hamas and other Palestinian organizations are playing *weiqi*. Worldwide, the non-Western nations are playing a game of *weiqi* with the West, but the latter is interpreting this in terms of chess.

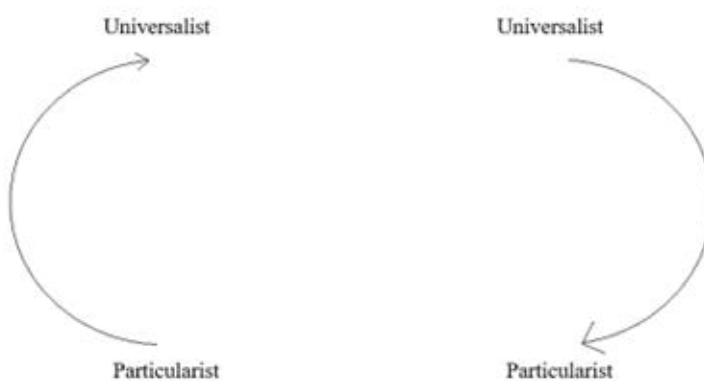
Cultural basis of extremism

The 7-D model also shows that many forms of extremism are culture-based. When the culture of a certain nation scores close to one of the ends of dimension, that culture is prone to lose sight of the other end. This is the basis of extremist thinking.

Dimensions are usually depicted as horizontal lines for convenience' sake. However, in reality they are circular in nature. Universalist people are aware of exceptions, just as Particularist people appreciate the value of rules. The difference is where you start.



Extremism on this dimension starts when highly Universalist or highly Particularist people start losing sight of the other end.



The idea of a rule-based world as something that we all should wish for is a good example of how a normal aspect of a culture can drift off and become extremism. It is normal that this concept has emerged in Western culture, led

by the world's most Universalist nations. It becomes problematic, if those nations, who are still in charge of most global organizations (like the UN or NATO), try to enforce it on more Particularist nations. Particularist people perceive such an elaborate set of rules as stifling. While they used to be willing to try, believing that the Western nations were a good example to follow, they are less and less so. It is in particular China that is showing that a high Particularist nation can become the world's second largest economy, while defying the Western rule-based thinking.

Extremism can also occur in non-Western nations, of course. A good example is China's Cultural Revolution. Mao Zedong and his followers envisioned a world in which people would place all community needs before their own personal needs. This extreme Communitarian world outlook almost wrecked the nation. It also had an aspect of extreme Diffuseness, seeing the ideal human being as a universal person, a farmer, worker and soldier in one. This broke down the entire educational system. Pol Pot and his allies in Cambodia were inspired by similar ideas.

Extremist Particularism may also be part of the problem behind China's decreasing ability to cope with COVID in 2022.

Unfortunately, while the Chinese and Cambodians recognised the problems and so were able to repair the damage, the West keeps stubbornly believing in the extreme (reified) idea of a rule-based world.



'It's the culture, stupid'

The essay's title *'It's the culture, stupid'* is a wink to the well-known political campaign slogan 'It's the economy, stupid' , coined by James Carville in 1992 as strategist in Bill Clinton's successful 1992 U.S. presidential election against incumbent George H. W. Bush.

Culture is the cradle for prosperity or survival as a nation, society or people's identity. The states of economy or political governance are continuously subject to change with ups and downs. But culture explains how different nations, civilizations and its people deal with these ups and downs, and therefore shaping its own and other's prosperity, survival or destruction.

Moreover different cultural traits are often the underlying root cause for misunderstandings and conflicts between nations.

