BEHAVIOURS IN ORGANIZATION: CHINESE WORLD VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS OF CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

A Study of Hong Kong Chinese Working in Canada

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education
Graduate Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology
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ABSTRACT

This study inquired into the lived experience of the Hong Kong Chinese in Canada and captured snapshots of their perceptions of cross-cultural differences in organizational behaviour. To provide a base for study, I examined literature on organizational behaviour from the cross-cultural and the Chinese dimensions. To conceptualise how people perceive the world, I reviewed literature on the personal-construct theory and the schema theory.

The study used a qualitative mode of enquiry, with the researcher as an instrument to collect data through the in-depth interview and the repertory-grid methods. The participants, 8 men and 2 women, were either degree-holders or professionals with work experience in the service sectors in both Hong Kong and Canada. The study extracted their world views, which shape their interpretation of reality, from their narratives and work experience in both cultures. I identified 7 meta-narratives shaping the unique world view that differentiate them from Canadians at work: these meta-narratives dealt with: existence, achievement, work, conflict, power, relationship and communication. I also identified 4 major dimensions in modus operandi between these two cultures: planning, cooperation, leadership and controlling.

I adopted the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to analyse and thematise the data collected through interviews. I also explored through the repertory-grid method the participants’
constructs of the role-holders in organizations between these two cultures. The grid data were computed by the Focus programme. These two sets of results were compared and triangulated to increase the study's academic rigour.

The evidence shows that the Chinese perceived significant differences between themselves and Canadians in many dimensions of organizational behaviour. These differences obviously reflected these 2 cultures' underlying meta-narratives—the Chinese perceived Canadians as self-rather than organization-oriented, over-optimistic and carefree, uncommitted, assertive, equalitarian, too frank and straightforward, competitive in dealing with conflicts and intolerant to inequality. Clearly, their cultural perspective creates difficulty for Chinese working in Canada and Canadians or Western management specialists and educators attempting to work in Chinese societies.

The study concludes with implications for practice for people who work across the cultural line with Chinese, with recommendations on ways to enhance cultural understanding, and with directions for further research.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The study of cross-cultural differences has intrigued me for years. My background and experience in bridging the gaps between the Oriental and the Occidental cultures in different work environments have sparked this academic interest. Experience tells us that working effectively across cultural lines requires an understanding of the world view and outlook of the people in the other culture: in psychological terms, this is an understanding of the personal construct or mental map. Without such an understanding, only superficial communication can be achieved and the cultural gap cannot be bridged.

Both my cross-cultural working experience and the literature (Adler. 1991; Hesselgrave. 1978). make clear that cultural diversity cannot lead to cultural synergy unless the different groups can understand each other’s perceptions and the way their world view is being shaped. Therefore, a meaningful problem for investigation is the Chinese world view and the way the Chinese perceive cross-cultural differences in organizations. Looking at it from a macro perspective, the study looks into organizational behaviour in the West from the perspective of the Oriental. The investigation will also explore world views underpinning the major values and beliefs of the Chinese that distinguish them from Canadians. This exploration encompasses a review of the literature and an inquiry into the participants’ lived experience. The inquiry will ask how the Chinese perceive themselves as being different from Canadians in the workplace in terms of the behaviour of individuals, groups and the organization as a whole. It will capture snapshots of differences in terms of narratives and world views as they perceive them.

This study is formulated with a number of underlying assumptions that require clarification through a comprehensive literature review before the investigation itself begins:

(a) Cultural differences between Canadian and Chinese do exist. Broadly speaking, there are cultural differences between the Occidental and the Oriental world. Before investigating cross-cultural differences, what exactly does the term “culture” mean? Perhaps the starting point for the literature review is to examine how culture is defined and what studies have been done on cross-cultural differences between the East and the West. What theoretical framework and model will help
to explain the cross-cultural differences? Does earlier research support the assumption that cross-cultural differences between Hong Kong and Canada exist?

(b) As Chinese have a long history—5000 years, their particular civilization has been deeply ingrained in them, resulting in a mind-set different from that of the Occidental Canadian. On the same grounds, the Chinese are socialized in a different way from the Canadians. In consequence, they hold specific values and attitudes, perceptions, and world views. The unique values and perceptions they hold mark their cultural identity and at the same time create barriers to cross-cultural understanding. A deeper level of question should be asked in this literature review. What particular values and world view held by the Chinese influence their perception of reality? What are the psychological and behavioural characteristics of the Chinese? The literature review should examine what has been written to explain the specific cultural characteristics of the Chinese and avoid reinventing the wheel.

(c) Epistemologically, knowledge rests within subjective experience. The appreciation of world phenomena is dependent on the ability to understand the way in which human beings shape the world from inside themselves. Hence, a useful approach to understanding cultural differences stems from exploring the researchees' experience from their own perspective and frame of mind. The core problem of managing across the cultural line lies not in the behavioural differences between the two cultures but in the mental map upon which these behaviours are interpreted. This literature search will therefore look into the theories that explain the formation of world views and personal constructs. It will answer the question: How do these theories help to understand how human beings perceive and interpret the world around them?

The review in subsequent chapters lays the ground work for the research, which seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What do the Chinese in Canada perceive as the major differences in world view about people and behaviour at work between them and Canadians?

2. From the participants' lived experience, how do the modus operandi differ between organizations which are staffed by Chinese and by Canadians?

3. In what ways do the participants perceive the major cross-cultural differences in the characteristics of the role-holders in organizations?
4. How can people from these two cultures achieve better understanding of the cross-cultural differences in organizational behaviour?

In the following discussion, I use the words Easterners and Orientals interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, they refer to Asians whose culture is influenced by Confucianism and whose written language is composed of monosyllabic characters in ideographic form. The words Westerners or Occidentals refer to Caucasians outside Asia whose culture is influenced by the Judaeo-Christian philosophy and whose language is composed of words formed by alphabets. Many researchers used these terms loosely in their works cited in this study. However, this ambiguity was accepted because these terms can be defined from a variety of perspectives, such as culture, location, language, race and the like. In this study, Chinese refers to Hong Kong Chinese, as distinct from Chinese in mainland China, Taiwan and other countries. The Chinese in Hong Kong may differ from Chinese in other places, but they do share some similarities: Their written language is the same and they are influenced by the Confucian philosophy. Canadians refers to English-speaking Westerners who are in Canada, as distinct from people holding Canadian citizenship.

I. Background

A Human Resources Manager's Puzzle

Working as a human resources manager in culturally diversified organizations in Hong Kong, I was challenged by the extent to which cross-cultural misunderstanding often leads to organizational conflict and management ineffectiveness. Westerners with a different world view of management are often perplexed by the behaviour of their Chinese counterparts and employees. The meanings behind the behaviours are often subtle and on occasion obscure. As a result, the Chinese ways of behaving sometimes appear to Westerners as enigmatic and devious. This puzzling and sometimes difficult behaviour in organizations requires clarification for the non-Chinese by those who can bridge Occidental and Oriental world views. Western managers often ask for literature and research that provide insight into the Chinese world view and Chinese organizational behaviour. They wish to understand Chinese mental mapping and how the Chinese perceive the Western way of management when it is applied to Oriental culture. Unfortunately, literature in English about this area is extremely limited. Further, little if any qualitative research has been done to explore this
phenomenon. Current research bears little relevance to understanding how the Chinese perceive and interpret social reality at work. Suggestions as to how Western management approaches can be modified to work in Chinese culture tend to be superficial and far from convincing or meaningfully applicable.

A Management Educator's Puzzle

This cross-cultural issue further troubled me when I took up teaching managerial human skills and organization development subjects for Chinese executives pursuing MBA education. Having been brought up in the Chinese culture and later educated in the West, I found Western management theories, human skills at work and learning approaches acquired in the UK and the United States were often incompatible with the Chinese culture. Take, for example, "managing conflict". Tang and Kirkbride (1986) reported that Orientals and Westerners showed obvious differences in conflict management styles. I also observed (Pun, 1990) that the learning orientations and styles of Hong Kong Chinese managers differ from those of their Western counterparts. In addition, other studies and business experience (Chu, 1991) revealed that thinking, negotiating and asserting differ between people of the Oriental and of the Occidental cultures. Hence, as a management educator and a consultant educated in the West, I was challenged to modify the program content and instructional methodologies to suit the Oriental learner-managers with a different cultural background from where the theories are developed. I believe that transplanting management practices to a different culture without adequate refinement will lead to rejection, because contemporary Western-based management theories are value-laden. In addition, learning is not just a simple taking in of information and development of skills: it is a socio-cultural process. Transferring Western management practices and teaching methods to the Chinese culture will not be possible without understanding how the Chinese perceive social reality in work settings and how they interpret behaviour in organizations.

An Immigrant's Puzzle

Since migrating to Canada, I have become aware of the large Asian population, in particular the Chinese, in this country. My perception of their presence in large numbers is verified by the statistics from a report prepared by the federal Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (1994). In 1992 alone, 220,000 new immigrants entered Canada and two-thirds of them came from Asia and
Africa. More than half of them settled in Ontario and more than two-thirds of those in Toronto. There are more than 300,000 Chinese in Ontario. Every year, about 4000 wealthy immigrants take their families to settle in Canada and each immigrant invests at least $250,000 (Canadian). Half of this group comes from Hong Kong and one-fifth of them from Taiwan. However, these immigrants may not be welcomed. Ming Pao, a reputable Chinese newspaper published in Canada (Canadian's attitude towards new immigrants. 1993) disclosed that the Ministry of Immigration's five-volume report revealed the local Canadians' declining tolerance towards new immigrants and their feeling threatened by the possible loss of job opportunities to the new immigrants.

In another report (Henders & Pitts. 1993), statistics from the end of 1992 show that more than 50,000 visa holders of different classes (from Investors to Self-employed) from Hong Kong landed Canada in the previous five years. The capital transferred to Canada exceeded $18.1 billion and an average of $500,000 each. Just in 1992, the immigrants from Hong Kong brought with them $5.3 billion; each visa holder brought with them more than $450,000. The economic activities and impact on the workforce of these new immigrants from Hong Kong cannot be underestimated.

However, when the Chinese and local Canadians work together, they do not really understand each other well enough to create cultural synergy (Morgan & Harris. 1981) out of the cultural diversity. Instead, apprehension about each other in competition for jobs, school places, housing and other social services causes tension and conflict. Figures and statistics do not fully represent the social reality: only knowing how the Chinese and Canadians perceive each other will. It is therefore important to understand how the Chinese perceive working with Canadians. It is not objective facts that shape their attitude, but rather perceptions of their counterparts that guide their behaviour and action.

My previous experience has, for many years, stimulated my interest in capturing the Chinese world view and perceptions that influence their interpretation of behaviour in organizations. Having come to Canada and developed my contacts with Chinese working in Canadian organizations, I notice their awareness and sensitivity towards cultural differences in organizational behaviour. I am also aware that how they see the world affects their perception and interpretation of their counterparts' behaviour. My intention to carry out in-depth research to advance knowledge in this subject was confirmed after I landed Canada as an immigrant.
II. Importance of the Study

A. Canada as a multicultural society

Canada is a multicultural society with a large number of immigrants coming every year. The country is in a continual process of learning to live and work with people from countries that differ culturally. After my immigration to Canada, I noticed that tensions and misunderstandings in the workplace are continuously building with the increased number of Chinese immigrants. The public statements by the Deputy Mayor of Markham, Mrs. Carole Bell, that the Chinese's staying together brought about social conflicts and caused the backbone of local leaders in her city to move out, caused a big stir in the Chinese community (Chinese demand apology for Bell's 'racist' remarks, 1995). Tension between the Chinese and the local Canadians is rapidly developing. Carole Bell's incident is only the tip of an iceberg of racism.

B. The Globalization Trend for Business

The post-World War II years saw a major expansion of world trade (Daniels, Ogram & Radebaugh, 1982). The volume of international trade has increased dramatically since the 1980s. The post-war decades have seen dramatic changes in the international arena. This exploding international business is reflected in the rise of industrialized powers, such as Japan, in the Far East. Asia's newly industrialized countries (NICs), Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, are now recognized economic powers (Hodgetts & Luthans, 1991). The United Nations has rated China as the third economic power. Hong Kong has become the focal point for the East meeting the West and the centre for multinational corporations' regional headquarters in Far Eastern markets. It has also been able to produce manufactured goods at competitive rates and sell them worldwide. Despite limited natural resources, business in Hong Kong has been able to transcend national borders and effectively sell its goods and services in every corner of the globe. It has become the role model of development for the special economic zones in China. Its business practices have also been exported to Canada as the number of new Hong Kong Chinese immigrants in the entrepreneur and professional categories has increased. This prolific growth has created a great necessity for understanding the Oriental culture and the global market if Canada wishes to be successful in
extending business to this region and in utilizing this pool of human resources that has generated economic miracles in the Far East. For all practical purposes, all business today is global. Business people, firms, industries, and whole societies that clearly understand the new rules of doing business in a world economy will prosper; those that do not will perish.

C. Barriers to knowing the Chinese—Canada's Unique Position

Canada is not unaware of the need to expand its international business and take a share in the Far East market. However, Diana Lary, First Secretary of Culture, Canadian Embassy in Beijing (Lary, 1985) points out that there may be less practical understanding of Asia and the Pacific in Canada now than there was in the past. Researchers have identified the following barriers.

**Barrier I: Diminishing Presence of Canadians in the East**

There are very few Canadian missionaries left in the field and Canada's military presence, never more than a fraction of that of other Western countries, now stops at the entrance to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. With the advent of jet travel, business people from Canada have become commuters rather than permanent residents of the countries in which they trade. News about Asia is received through wire services and visitors. (Lary, 1985, p.3)

Canada's understanding of the Asian market has been greatly reduced. At a superficial level, the only "understanding" needed to operate is a specific statistical and technical understanding, such as population size and current exchange rates. Such information, though important, is inadequate.

**Barrier II: Language and Local Market Conditions**

Canadian business people have not recognised the practical value of knowing the local language and understanding the local market conditions. Lary (1985) argues that to sell goods, one has to know the market; to know the market one has to know the society; and to know the society one has to know the language. However, any Westerner who speaks an Asian language has often experienced being treated like a freak. The absence of support for learning a foreign language is reinforced by anglophonic complacency and the resentment against learning a new language after childhood. Adult learners have to overcome the barriers of making mistakes, making a fool of oneself and constantly being corrected by others. Canadians are further disadvantaged because
French must be Anglophones' second language. Learning their first foreign language is for many Canadians actually learning a third language. They are therefore likely to be restricted in developing cross-cultural understanding towards Asian culture. Hence, the use of cultural brokers (Pun, 1989) and research studies to understand the Chinese frame of mind are important in bridging this cross-cultural gap. Similarly to Lary, Chu (1991) also suggests that the great difference between Western and Asian languages is one obvious barrier to understanding. She further asserts that language is not only how we express our thoughts, but also how we create our thoughts. The underlying cause of misunderstanding is not language itself but how we think: Asians and Westerners think as differently as they speak.

*Barrier III: Protective Mechanism*

*a. Discourage Knowing*

Lary (1985) sees difference as equivalent to a threat. She puts forth the argument that:

... images of menace from the East go back deep into the historical consciousness of Eastern and Central Europe. Kaiser Wilhem's Yellow Peril was a 19th Century reincarnation of the terror produced by the 13th century Golden Horde. Though the historical reality behind the fear of the Yellow Peril was a European one, the fear of an overwhelming flood of humanity from Asia across the Atlantic lay behind the exclusionist measures aimed against Asian migrants in the 20th Century. It still lingers on, in the numbers game, the mesmeric fascination with the size of China's population, which has been boosted by the fact that China's population has officially passed one billion. In the case of Japan, the sense of threat has much closer, more precise historical referents, the Second World War. There is a persistent strain of comment which insists that Japan's virulent militarism has been transformed into 'samurai capitalism', a ruthless pursuit of market. (p.12)

In this view Japanese businessmen are a thinly-disguised civilian army waging economic war on the world. This matches Canadians' current sentiment towards Asian new immigrants (described earlier) of declining tolerance and feelings of threat. This paradigm and sentiment will naturally discourage cross-cultural research into the Orientals' thinking and into their behaviour in organizations.

*b. Short-Cutting Ignorance*

The short cut to ignorance of another cultural group is to assign common characteristics to them, to lump them together into a series of images. In the case of Canadians' view of Asians, these
images are further reinforced by sales commercials and tourist promotions depicting China as the land of jade and incense. Japan as the land of cosmetics and *zen*. Hong Kong as a refugee-inhibited island with sampans and rickshaws. Korea as the country for ginseng and martial arts.... For Canadians. Asia gives rise to the image of a man's world, where ladies always walk in the men’s shadow: values totally incompatible with the Canadian culture. Images arising out of the mystic East give Canadians short-cut, ignorant answers. Alternatively, the shift of mind. “Metanoia” (Senge, 1990), is essential for continually expanding the mind’s capacity to create its future. “Metanoia” for the Greeks meant a fundamental shift or change, or more literally transcendence (”meta” means above or beyond, as in “metaphysics”) of mind (noia,” from the root “nous” of mind) (p.13). Like Senge, the International Institute for Innovation concluded in its report to the Prosperity Secretariat that the ability to shift thinking and behaviour is essential for Canada to attain and maintain a competitive edge in this turbulent time (Banff Centre for Management, 1992). Canadians need to break away from the old images and shift their paradigm towards the Oriental world and its market potential whether they like it or not. Cross-cultural research into the Oriental world and its mind-set will help bring about this shift.

c. Parochialism

Parochialism, ignorance of culture and languages other than one’s native ones, a sense of technological superiority, and neglecting the importance of knowing the East reduce interest in academic, cross-cultural studies. It ultimately hinders the ability to compete economically. Douglas MacArthur who commanded American forces in the Pacific during World War II and the Korean War, said with the assurance that marked all his utterances, "Europe is a dying system. It is worked out and run down. The land touching the Pacific will determine the course of history for the next ten thousand years" (MacArthur, 1964). This may have been an exaggerated statement at the time, but the economic development of the Far East in the past few years can hardly be ignored. Similarly, former US President George Bush, who addressed the City Corporation in Hong Kong on 15 November, 1993, stated that the 21st century may well be the "China Century". He said that according to the World Bank, by the year 2000 half of the annual growth in the world's economy will come from East Asia, of which China is a major part (Bush, 1993). Obviously, the West is losing dominance—although not necessarily losing out entirely, unless not to be on top means to be
nowhere. If MacArthur was right, and if all the people who now speak of the "Asian-Pacific" era in history are right, then we have to learn to be able to adapt ourselves to this new era. to put in the efforts to develop a practical understanding of the new world we are dealing with (Lary. 1985).

d. Lack of Research Studies

Adler (1983) warned that the academic community has reinforced management's tendency toward American parochialism: that is, viewing the world solely through American eyes and perspectives. She pointed out that:

The vast majority of management schools are in the US; the majority of management professors and researchers are American trained; and the majority of management research focuses on US companies. Of more than 11,000 articles published in 24 management journals between 1971 and 1980, approximately 80 percent were studies of the US conducted by Americans. Fewer than 5 percent of the articles describing the behaviour of people in organizations included the concept of culture. Fewer than 1 percent focused on people from two or more cultures working together, a crucial area for international business. (1986. p.13)

In addition, the publishing of cross-cultural management articles increased only slightly during the 1980s (Godkin, Braye & Caunch, 1989). J. Shaw (1990) reported reviews of cross-cultural management research suggesting that, although researchers have found differences in attitudes, values and styles among managers from different countries, most of this research has done little to explain precisely how cultural differences affect individuals' behaviour within organizations and their relationships with one another (Adler, 1983; Adler, Doktor, & Redding, 1986; Bhagat & McQuaid. 1982; Negandhi. 1974; Roberts & Boyacigiller, 1984). Negandhi's (1974) review concluded that that there are too many conclusions and not enough conceptualizations.

This study attempts to respond to this continuing trend of development in the Oriental world and to establish itself on the leading edge of cross-cultural research, which has for so long been ignored.

III. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into four parts. Following the introduction. Part One contains a literature review drawing on research studies, scholarly papers, general literature, and academic opinion from the perspectives of Management, Organizational Behaviour, Psychology, and Cross-
cultural studies. Part Two explains the philosophy underpinning the study’s approaches and strategy. Part Three presents the study’s results and discussions on these findings. Part Four contains a summary, implications for practice and conclusions.
PART I - LITERATURE REVIEW

Part One is divided into three major chapters: The first discusses international and cross-cultural dimensions of organizational behaviour; the second examines the psychological and organizational behaviour dimensions of the Chinese; the third looks into theories relating to how humans perceive and interpret the world.
Chapter 2
Organizational Behaviour
International and Cross-Cultural Dimensions

I. An Overview of Organizational Behaviour and Culture

A. Organizational Behaviour

Organizational behaviour, an embracing term, describes what people do in an organization and how that behaviour affects the organization’s performance (Robbins, 1991). It represents the human dimension of management versus the technical and conceptual dimensions (Katz, 1974). Arnold and Feldman (1986) hold the view that organizational behaviour concerns two basic issues. The first issue is how organizations influence the thoughts, feelings, and actions of their members. The organizations of which we are members influence the way we see the world, the way we feel about our jobs and ourselves as people, and the way we behave in the course of performing our duties and obligations as organization members. Research in organizational behaviour as a field of research, therefore, tries to understand the various ways in which organizations influence their members in order to become healthier and more productive. On the other hand, organizational behaviour research is also concerned with understanding the ways in which individual organization members’ behaviour and performance influence the performance and effectiveness of the organization as a whole. Simultaneously, how organizations coordinate and integrate their members’ activities determines whether they succeed in accomplishing their goals and objectives.

Reviews of works by different authors (Huczynski, 1991; Kolb, Rubin & Osland, 1991; Newstorm, 1989; Luthans, 1992; Robbins, 1991; Vecchio, 1991) show that researchers approach the study of organizational behaviour through different frameworks. The common frameworks include the cognitive (Tolman, 1948), behaviouristic (Skinner, 1971), social learning (Bandura, 1977) and contingency (Robbins, 1991). Not only organizational behaviour itself but also the approach to studying this phenomenon varies from one cultural group to the other. Cooper and Cox (1989) point out that cultural differences influence the social sciences’ choice of approach to understanding behaviour in organizations. In the British social science tradition, researchers are more inclined to take the cognitive approach to understanding behaviour in organizations. (I am in one way or the other influenced by this tradition.) The North Americans are more influenced by the
behaviouristic approach. Despite the divergence of approaches to explaining what causes the behaviour of people in an organization, researchers increasingly agree as to the major subject areas of organizational behaviour. These include core topics such as motivation, leader behaviour, power, interpersonal communication, group structure, learning, attitude development, perception, change processes, conflict, job design and work stress (Garcia & Keleman, 1989). Integrating different approaches, organizational behaviour can be viewed from three perspectives: namely, the individual-level phenomena such as perception and motivation; the interpersonal and work group processes such as conflict and leadership; and the organizational and environmental dynamics such as cultural influences and communication (Vecchio, 1991).

Contemporary theories of organizational behaviour (e.g., Arnold & Feldman, 1986; Davis & Newstorm, 1989) conceptualize the organization as a system of interdependent parts that interact with one another and that also must interact with the broader world within which the organization exists. Within the organization, they argue, people employ technology in performing the tasks that they are responsible for, while the structure of the organization serves as a basis for coordinating all their different parts. The systems view emphasizes the inter-dependence of each of these elements within the organization. As a system, the organization requires input from the environment, which can take the form of people, raw materials, money, ideas and so on. The organization performs transformation processes on its inputs and creates outputs in the most effective manner for consumption by the environment. The systems view of organizations thus emphasizes the inter-dependence of the broader environment and the elements within the transformation processes.

I concur with writers who hold that the broader environment includes the culture in which the organization exists. In this context, broader environment refers to the "culture" which distinguishes one ethnic community or nation from the other: not to the narrow interpretation of this word generally known as corporate or organizational culture. With this broad perspective, organizations can be seen as existing within an environment with their cultural and ethnic uniqueness. Organizational systems, transformation processes and their elements cannot exist independently from people's expectations which are influenced by cultural values and assumptions. The study of organizational behaviour, therefore, cannot be independent from its culture. With the globalization of business and the creation of multi-national firms, managing cross-cultural
differences has become an issue which cannot be ignored. Employees in North America and in other parts of the world share similarities in thinking and behaviour; however, there are important differences. Cultural difference necessitates varying approaches to managing and teaching management abroad. The role of culture, long ignored, is now being closely examined by management theorists.

Whether management theories are culture-bound or culture-free has been frequent debated; the debates often centre on the universal validity or non-validity of Western management theories. These debates have resulted in a growing number of social scientists conducting cross-cultural research to compare behaviour between cultures. Just as American businesses have ignored the international context except in recent years, so has the field of organizational behaviour (Luthans, 1992). This section does not examine in depth the scope and the differences of approaches to understanding organizational behaviour. It only argues that organizational behaviour cannot be understood without reference to the cultural dimension and the cultural environment. This section merely lays the foundation for later discussion of organizational behaviour among the Chinese.

B. Culture

My earlier arguments suggest a question: If culture plays such an important part in organizational behaviour, what then is culture? Definitions of culture are too numerous to fully examine, as they differ according to the author’s discipline. For instance, anthropologists may look at culture differently from management scientists, although they may have certain views in common.

Adler, Doktor and Redding (1989) review some notable definitions commonly used and discussed in the management literature. Tylor (1871) looks at culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society" (p.1). Linton (1945) describes culture as "the configuration of learned behaviour and the results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by members of a particular society" (p.32). Barnouw (1963) states it as "a way of life of a group of people, the configuration of all of the more or less stereotyped patterns of learned behaviour, which are handed down from one generation to the next through the means of language and imitation"(p.4).

Spradley (1979) suggests one of the contemporary definitions of culture as "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behaviour (p.5)". Spradley’s
view emphasizes both content and meaning and is most applicable to organizational behaviour (Luthans, 1992). Culture is to a human collectivity what personality is to an individual. Personality can be viewed as the interactive aggregate of personal characteristics that influence the individual's response to the environment (Guilford, 1959). Culture could, therefore, be seen as the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment. Culture determines the identity of a human group in the same way as personality determines the identity of an individual (Hofstede, 1984). After surveying and categorizing more than 100 of these definitions, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) offer the following definition, considered the most comprehensive (Luthans, 1992), and most generally accepted by scholars studying the field of culture.

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts: the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values: culture systems may, on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (p.181)

The above definition offers concepts that coincide with my own thinking. I concur with the notion that culture consists of patterns of behaviour and values of particular human groups. The cultural system is a product of action and conditioning elements. Hence, this review looks into values, perception of behaviour, and culture as conditioning elements. Hofstede (1981, 1984) terms culture as collective programming and defines it as:

The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another,... the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment (1984, p.21).... and Culture is not a characteristic of the individual; it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience. When we speak of the culture of a group, a tribe, a geographical region, a national minority, or a nation, culture refers to the collective mental programming that these people have in common: the programming that is different from that of other groups, tribes, regions, minorities, or nations. (1981, p.63)

All the above definitions point to the fact that culture is learned, shared, transgenerational, symbolic, patterned and adaptive. The one offered by Hofstede (1981, 1984) implies a clear and
important distinction between (a) the action itself as played out in the social system (b) the shared ideas that shape and influence social action. Theorists appear to increasingly agree that culture is the latter (Child, 1981, p.324; Keesing, 1974; Kroeber & Parson, 1958, pp.582-583; Parson, 1973, p.36). The collective mental programs may be termed "cognitive maps". Because cognitive maps vary across cultures, their effects upon behaviour and human aspects of management can vary and at times even become severely dysfunctional. Although the number of analytic dimensions needed to describe and classify cultural similarities and differences is unknown, recognizing the existence of each culture's unique set of cognitive maps and their potential impact upon managerial action, however measured, is extremely important (Adler, Doktor & Redding, 1986). This study explores how the Chinese describe and classify cultural differences of organizational behaviour in the West.

II. Theoretical framework to understand cross-cultural differences

Kroeber's and Kluckhon's (1952) definition of culture points out that the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. Hence, one starting point for many researchers to understand cross-cultural differences is to explore the values held by a particular cultural group and compare them with those of the other groups. Although values may not have a direct impact on behaviour, they strongly influence attitude. Understanding the value system of a particular cultural group provides insight into the people's general disposition towards objects, concepts and situations. Accordingly, it helps understand and possibly predict their organizational behaviour patterns.

Values represent a basic conviction that "a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence " (Rokeach, 1973, p.5). They contain a judgemental element in that they carry an individual's ideas of what is good, right or desirable. Individuals express culture and its normative qualities through the values that they hold about life and the world around them. These values in turn affect their attitudes about the form of behaviour considered appropriate and effective in any given situation (Adler, 1991). Values are important to the study of organization behaviour because they lay the foundation for an understanding of attitudes and motivation. Values also influence our perceptions. Individuals enter an organization or a new country with preconceived notions of what
"ought" and "ought not" to be. Of course, these notions are not value-free; on the contrary, they contain interpretations of right and wrong. They imply that certain behaviours or outcomes are preferable to others. As a result, values shape people's behaviour in organization.

A. Kluckhohn's Framework on Cross-Cultural Differences and its Implications

Kluckhohn's work (Kluckhohn & Strodtebeck, 1961) is one of the most widely referenced studies for analysing value variation among different cultural groups. He has identified six basic value orientations that distinguish one culture from another: the orientations to nature, time, activity, people, relationship and space. Figure 1 summarises his position and the possible variations of each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Variations</th>
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<td>Nature of People</td>
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<td>Evil</td>
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<td>Activity Orientation</td>
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<td>Relational Modality</td>
<td>Individualistic *</td>
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<td>Hierarchical</td>
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<td>Conception of Space</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
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* denotes the American Value Orientations

Figure 1: Value Orientation based on Kluckhohn's dimensions modified from Robbins (1991)

These six orientations answer the questions: Who am I? How do I see the world? How do I relate to other people? What do I do? How do I use space and time? Let us now appraise the meaning and implication of this framework.

a. Relationship to Nature

People's relationship to nature accounts for one of the major cross-cultural differences. Some groups of people, like Americans, believe that nature and the physical world should be controlled to serve people. Though the American tries to dominate nature, people in other cultures may be subjugated to their environment or be in harmony with it. Unlike Americans, who try to control
nature through technological advancements, other cultural groups such as many Middle Eastern
countries may choose to see life as pre-determined by “God” and themselves as subjugated to this
divine will. In between these two polarized views, people in the Far Eastern countries assume a
moderate orientation and seek to find harmony with nature and work around it.

b. Time Perspective

Most Westerners think of time as a valuable commodity to be spent or invested: "Time is
money". Western ideas of time stem from Judeo-Christian philosophy, according to which time has
a beginning, an end, and a purpose to achieve in the interim. Time orientation is an important
dimension in accounting for cross-cultural difference. Cultures may differ by focusing on the past,
present or the future. Americans focus on the present and the near future; they take time and history
as linear and moving. In some cultures, such as the Indian, time is a very different sort of thing: To
them, history is cyclical: it moves continually, but in circles. These circles move slowly. Life is
bound to the wheel of existence: one existence follows upon another: time is to be endured.

c. Nature of People

The extent to which people view human beings as naturally good differs from one culture
to another. Cultures tend to believe people are good, evil or mixed. Russians take a rather evil view
of human nature; the developing countries tend to see themselves as honest: and North Americans
are in between these two extremes (Robbins. 1991).

d. Activity Orientation

Doing is the dominant activity for Americans and the implicit assumption that "getting things
done" is worth while is seldom questioned (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). It is reflected in the
language: Americans greet each other with "How are you doing?": the usual response is also in
action mode, "I'm doing fine -how are you coming along?" Hence, "keeping busy" is a dominant
value and "Idle hands are the devil's workshop". The "doing" orientation stresses achievement and
treasures accomplishment. In contrast, the "being" orientation focuses on living for the moment and
seeking immediate gratification of desires. If workers in being-oriented cultures do not enjoy their
current project or colleagues, they choose to quit because they will not work strictly for future
rewards. The Mexican culture reflects this orientation. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961) further
suggest that "Controlling" is another activity orientation, in which people restrain their desires by detaching themselves from objects. The French represent a controlling orientation: their emphasis is on rationality and logic.

e. Relational Modality

North Americans' stress on the individual as a concrete point of reference starts at a very early age. The American child is encouraged to be autonomous, independent, self-reliant and never bow to the wishes of authority. This "individualistic" orientation, which emphasizes individuality, differs from the "group" orientation, which focuses more on collective harmony, unity and loyalty. A group orientation chooses to share chores and rewards, sometimes at the expense of one's own. Individualistic culture is therefore characterized by greater geographic mobility, less permanency in group membership and weaker group conformity. Some societies, such as British and French, rely on hierarchical relationships. Groups in these countries are hierarchically ranked (Robbins, 1991).

f. Concept of Space

The final orientation refers to the ownership of space. Some cultures prefer keeping things private and others choose to be open and conduct business in public. An example of the latter, the Japanese, prefer few private offices, minimum partition and few separating desks. Just imagine how uncomfortable one might be when moved from the one cultural working environment to the other. In Canada, the person who lines up at the "electronic teller machine" will keep a distance from the one who is using it. The ownership of space of the individual using the machine is respected. In contrast, a Chinese will commonly stand right at the back of the one operating the machine. Westerners will feel offended, while the Chinese find it strange to keep such a space for lining up.

Kluckhohn's work (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961) has made a definite contribution to understanding cultural differences through variations in value orientation. It also has provided a framework for research, and at least four studies of the value orientation of Chinese made use of either Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) original questionnaire or a revised version (Chang, 1959; Y.N. Lin, 1978; Liu 1966; Yang & Chang, 1975). These studies help us to locate where the Chinese stand. All found that Chinese students' dominant orientation on the relational modality was individualism rather than collaterality (peer orientation) or linearity (collectivism); and that on the time modality their orientation was to future rather than past or present perspectives. These
orientation patterns are at variance with the common image of traditional Chinese as people who typically had a collectivistic and hierarchial (linear) emphasis in human relationships and a past emphasis in time perspective (Cheng, 1946; F.L.K. Hsu, 1948; 1971; King & Bond, 1985; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Y.H.L. Lin, 1939; Tseng & F.L.K. Hsu, 1969-71). On the time modality, Chinese students now tend to have value orientation patterns fairly similar to those of American students reported in studies by Green (1979) and Nordie (1968). Yang and Chang (1975) reported various contradicting or inconsistent results in research on other modalities.

**B. Other Research Using Value As a Framework to Examine Cross-Cultural Differences**

There are many other theoretical frameworks trying to explain cross-cultural differences. They are not broad models like those we have earlier examined but specific comparisons locating where the Chinese stand in the value dimensions. One of the most popular studies used the "Way to Live Survey" (Morris 1956) to measure value preferences. The results give insights into the preference of Chinese concerning their most preferred way of life (Rodd, 1959; Singh, Huang, & Thompson, 1962; K.S. Yang, 1972) and their differences from other cultural groups. The findings by Singh et al. (1962) are worth mentioning. Among the Americans, Chinese, and Indians, they found that the Chinese students most preferred to act and enjoy life through group participation, preserve the best that man has attained, show sympathetic concern for others and constantly master changing conditions; they least favoured experiencing festivity and solicitude in alternation, waiting in quiet receptivity, meditating on the inner life and cultivating independence of persons and things.

K.S. Yang (1972) collected further preference-rating data from Chinese university students in Taiwan, using the Chinese version of Morris's questionnaire (Morris, 1956). He later compared his findings with those on Indians and Americans. The findings provide insight into the preferences of the Chinese for their best way of life, which may have implications for understanding what motivates and influences Chinese behaviour. These studies offer some food for thought when we try to understand the world view of the Chinese as compared to other cultural groups. However, the samples for these studies were mainly students: they bear little direct relevance to values in organizations. The validity of these findings for understanding organizational behaviour is therefore
questionable.

Another group of studies related to the cross-cultural differences in values is based upon Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey's (1951) Value Studies Scale. Gordon's (1960) Survey of Interpersonal Values, and Rokeach's (1967) Value Survey. Using the Value Studies Scale, Rodd (1959), Singh et al. (1962), Li (1970) and Yang (1972) offer arguments and data about the values preference of the Chinese as compared to other cultural groups. The values preference covers political, religious, economics, social, aesthetic, religious and theoretical aspects. Adopting Gordon's Survey of Interpersonal Values, Tarwater (1966) looked into Chinese versus American cultural differences in interpersonal values. His comparison showed that the Chinese place higher in valuing conformity and benevolence and lower on the scales of (interpersonal) support, (social) recognition, and leadership. Benevolence is the closest Western equivalent to "Jen" (human-centredness), one of the most central traditional Chinese virtues (King and Bond, 1985) and a predominant element in formulating the Chinese world view (Pun, 1991). Again, the samples for these studies are university students: generalising the findings to explain or predict behaviour in organizations should only be done with caution.

Making use of the Rokeach Value Survey, Appleton (1970, 1979), Grichting (1971), and Ng et al. (1982) attempted to identify which of the following terminal values are preferred by the Chinese: family security, a world at peace, inner harmony, a comfortable life, true friendship, social recognition, faith, religion and a happy afterlife. L.W. Wang (1981), using a modified version of the Rokeach Value Survey (Form E), found that in ranking terminal values, the Chinese most value filially dutiful, patriotic, benevolent, honest, and responsible. They least value being cheerful, imaginative, capable, intellectual and clean. All the above studies point out the Chinese tendency to emphasize collective welfare and social concern and to de-emphasize sensuous enjoyment and personal feelings. The findings are interesting, but the samples are based on high school students, not working professionals or adult workers. Hence, the relevance to the current study is again limited.

Bond's (1987) Chinese Values Survey (in 22 countries around the world) demonstrated that a specific set of values, which Bond labelled Confucian Work Dynamism, are prevalent in Chinese societies. The set includes values such as ordering relationships, thrift, persistence, having a sense
of shame, reciprocation, personal steadiness, giving face and respect for tradition. Bond has also argued that Western and Eastern cultures are distinguished by individualistic as against collectivistic and human-centred as opposed to tasked-centred values respectively.

Taking into consideration all the studies discussed above, the Value Orientation study by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) appears to offer a broader framework than others for understanding cross-cultural aspects of organizational behaviour and to have greater implications for practitioners who have to work across cultural lines. The greatest drawback of this study is that it collected data from only five communities in a particular location. The Chinese community was not one of the five under study but the model developed has many implications for studying Chinese value orientations.

The other studies offer insights into Chinese concepts and the preferences, though they suffer from being narrow in perspective. They offer too many conclusions rather than conceptual frameworks for understanding cross-cultural differences. They are good references but not necessarily useful for gaining a total perspective of cross-cultural differences. The investigators targeted verifying a set of variables identified from their own perspectives rather than from the frame of mind of those being researched. They collected data through questionnaires: they quantified the results and ranked them in order of preference. The validity of some questionnaires is doubtful, as they were written in a foreign language to be answered by Chinese respondents who might perceive the concept in a totally different way than that intended by the question. In addition, distortion of meanings in the translated questionnaires, which were Western-based and value-laden, cannot be avoided.

To conclude, despite the weaknesses mentioned above, a variety of studies have shown that values are important to the study of organizational behaviour. They form the foundation for understanding attitudes and motivations as well as influencing our perception. Values influence attitudes and behaviour. In any culture, values have developed over time and are continuously reinforced. They may have far-reaching effects on people at work, being are relatively stable and enduring (Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). For at least two decades, Professor S.G. Redding of the Department of Management Studies, University of Hong Kong has been interested in the organizational behaviour of the Chinese; in a series of publications on Chinese management, he has
pointed out many unique features of Chinese business (Redding, 1980a, 1980b, 1984; Redding & Martyn-Johns, 1979; Redding & Ng, 1982; Redding & Wong, 1986). Redding argues that organizational behaviours are influenced, if not determined, by the wider set of Chinese cultural values. Quantitative studies along these lines can occasionally be found. However, there are have been no qualitative studies for the Chinese to reflect and report on their perception of value differences from the West.

C. Hofstede's Framework of Cross-Cultural Differences and its Implication

Although the studies examined above offer analysis of cross-cultural differences, they have either included very few countries or analysed different companies in different countries. In quantitative studies to measure cross-cultural differences, validity is very vulnerable when the sample is small and the selection of the sample is not pure. The problem of sampling and purity of data is partly overcome by the large-scale cross-cultural research done by Geert Hofstede (1984). He surveyed 160,000 employees in 40 countries, all of whom worked for a single multinational corporation that he called “The Hermes Corporation”. (Actually, the corporation was IBM.) The database thus eliminated any differences attributable to varying practices and policies in different companies, so any variations found between countries could reliably be attributed to national culture. The research process involved the administration of a survey questionnaire in more than 20 languages. Hofstede claimed that back-translation checks and the statistical data show that the language problem was controlled to avoid distortion in the data-gathering process: a claim about which I have my doubts. Administering a questionnaire or interviewing the researchees in a foreign language is bound to cause distortions due to the problems in conveying the researcher's concepts accurately in a foreign language and culture. Nevertheless, Hofstede's work, recognized as a landmark study, is widely cited in research into cultural diversity.

The massive statistical data collected by Hofstede confirmed that culture has a major impact on employee work-related values and attitudes. Actually, this factor explained more of the differences than did age, sex, profession, or position in the organization (Hofstede, 1983). Hofstede's model maps out four major dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty
avoidance, masculinity-femininity and individualism-collectivism.

a. Power Distance

The first of the four dimensions in Hofstede’s (1984) model is power distance. Hofstede considered human inequality the basic issue in different cultures. Inequality exists in areas such as prestige, wealth, status, power and privileges. Inside organizations, inequality cannot be avoided and is formalised in hierarchial relationships between boss and subordinates. Power distance reveals cultural values that determine how comfortable organizational members are with how the system distributes power. Hofstede uses the power distance index to measure the extent to which different societies accept the unequal distribution of power. According to him, power is expressed in the form of titles, rank, status and authority. Large power-distance cultures give these symbols of power much weight. Where the power distance is large, organizations feature centralized decision-making at the top with little regard for consultation. They give little tolerance to people at the lower levels questioning the decisions made at the top of the hierarchy. In high power distance cultures, employees are frequently afraid to express disagreement and prefer to work for managers who take decisions and then tell them what to do. Concomitant to this phenomenon is respect for authority and hierarchical differences. Subordinates assume that superiors are entitled to exercise power either autocratically or (preferably) paternally, for there is considerable dependence of subordinates on their bosses.

At the other extreme, low power distance cultures feature egalitarian relationships, consultative decision making, flexible hierarchies and participative management. In countries with low power distance, people do not accept great differences in power and prefer to see it distributed evenly. Emphasis is on interdependency: Superior and subordinates consider each other as colleagues. Both value the idea that inequality in society should be minimised: those in power try to look less powerful than they are. Because a latent harmony can then exist, trust is possible. Employees also prefer a consultative style of decision making, resent attempts at arbitrary action by their bosses and are willing to openly challenge them.

Hofstede’s (1984) found that the Philippines (94 points) were highest on the power distance index whereas Austria (11 points) was the lowest. Hong Kong was on the high side of the index (7th
highest, 68 points) and Canada the low side (14th lowest, 39 points) among the 40 countries measured. This finding suggests cultural differences between Hong Kong and Canada on this particular dimension.

b. Uncertainty Avoidance

The second dimension Hofstede (1984) labelled uncertainty avoidance: the degree to which the culture seeks to handle uncertainty. He suggests that uncertainty about the future is a basic issue in human life. All organizations face environmental change and uncertainty and try to adapt to them. This is true in all countries, but Hofstede finds a considerable range across cultures in people’s attitude to unknown situations and their ability to tolerate uncertainty. Uncertainty is a feeling and a general uneasiness that something may happen.

Uncertainty, a key concept in contemporary organizational studies, is linked with the stability and predictability of an environment. Organizations cope with uncertainties through technology, rules and rituals; some actions are rational while other are non-rational. Hence, contemporary management theorists find it important to examine organizational behaviour from a rational as well as from a non-rational paradigm (Bolman & Deal, 1987; Ritti & Funkhouser, 1987). Hofstede (1984) argues that coping with the inevitable uncertainties in life is partly a non-rational process that different individuals, organizations and societies resolve in different ways. His findings revealed that the tolerance for uncertainty varies among different cultures. Using the indicators of rule orientation, employment satisfaction and stress, Hofstede formulated an uncertainty-avoidance index.

Cultures weak on uncertainty avoidance have a high tolerance for ambiguity. They more easily accept the uncertainty inherent in life and take each day as it comes, which means that less stress is experienced. They do not feel stressed at the prospect of facing uncertainty and what the future might bring. They need rules less and take a very pragmatic view about keeping or changing those rules that do exist. Organizations in these cultures are characterized by few formalized rules and regulations. The organizational structures and procedures are generally more flexible and there is less need for long-term planning and a secure, lifelong employment.

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, people feel threatened by uncertain situations, and
experience higher levels of anxiety and stress. They combat this by hard work, career stability and intolerance of deviance. Hence, organizations are likely to create more formal rules and procedures and tolerate fewer deviant ideas or behaviours. There is a search for ultimate values, such as absolute truth, and a great respect for age. Employees agree that rules should not be broken and look for certainty, such as staying with the firm until they retire. People from cultures high in uncertainty avoidance therefore manifest an increased level of anxiety, greater nervousness, more stress and aggressiveness in the face of ambiguity. In addition, organizations tend to provide lifetime employment in return for loyalty.

Hofstede (1984) found that Greece was highest on the uncertainty avoidance index (112 points), whereas Singapore was the lowest (8 points). Both Hong Kong (4th weakest, 29 points) and Canada (10th weakest, 48 points) were on the low side of the scale amongst the 40 countries. Hong Kong was slightly weaker in the uncertainty-avoidance than Canada. Surprisingly, both countries, together with the USA, Philippines, and India, are on the low side of the scale. It is no surprise that Japan is very high on the scale (92 points—4th from the top); it exhibits most of the attributes of uncertainty avoidance.

c. Individualism

The third dimension of cultural difference, individualism, reflects the relationship of people with the collectivity and the way people live together. This dimension corresponds with the attributes in a model of Gemeinschaft (low individualism) versus Gesellschaft (high individualism): Yamamori and Lawson (1975) describe the former as community orientation and the latter as association orientation. Although human beings are gregarious animals, unlike solitary species like tigers, some human societies differ in degree of gregariousness. One way they vary is the nature of the family: for instance, nuclear or extended. People in collective cultures are tied to value systems shared by the majority. Individuals are swallowed up in group life where the communal principle dominates social relationships (Yamamori & Lawson, 1975). Maintaining the group's well being is seen as the best guarantee for the individual (Ho, 1978).

Collectivism indicates a preference for greater emotional dependence by members on their organizations, collective functioning, and dependence on the organization for goal setting. In return,
the organization assumes a caring responsibility for its members’ welfare, security of employment and long-term development. A collectivist culture is characterised by a tighter social framework, where people are members of extended families or clans, which protect them in exchange for loyalty. The emphasis is on belonging, and the aim is to be a good member (whereas in the individualist culture the ideal is to be a good leader). The collective involvement with the work organization is a moral one, and there is a belief in group decisions. The value standards applied to members of your own group or organization can differ considerably from those applied to others.

In individualist cultures, identity is based on the individual. The emphasis is on individual initiative or achievement and everyone is supposed to take care of oneself, plus only one’s immediate family. Everybody has the right to a private life and opinion and may well have only a calculating involvement with a work organization. In individualistic culture, members show preferences for self-directed behaviour, independence, job-related freedom, initiative and challenge as well as non-conformity in collective functioning.

On the individualism index, the USA tops the list (91 points) and Venezuela is at the bottom (12 points). Canada is high on the list (4th highest, 80 points) and Hong Kong is at the lower end (9th lowest, 25 points). This aspect of cultural differences between these two countries is obvious.

d. Masculinity versus Femininity

The last dimension is masculinity versus femininity. The duality of roles, as prescribed by societies on the basis of sex, is transferred by socialization through different social institutions. Socialization is the process by which culture patterns are transferred from one generation to the other. Both men and women learn their place in society; once they have learned it, the majority of them want it that way (Hofstede, 1984). Chetwynd and Hartnett (1978) suggest that the sex-role system is at the core of a society’s cultural norms. People’s minds are programmed through socialization to see male as achievement oriented—assertive, autonomous, aggressive, dominant, ambitious and competitive. Another set of sex-trait stereotypes forms for female, such as affectionate, compassionate and understanding (Bem, 1975). Division of labour exists in any bureaucracy and is allocated according to the given sex stereotypes. Hence, jobs are considered male or female. The given perception, expectation and sex-trait stereotype affects the organizational
behaviour of members in any bureaucracy.

Highly masculine cultures place a high value on performance: money and material standards are important; ambition is the driving force. These traits are shared by both males and females in masculine societies, but not necessarily to the same degree. In essentially feminine cultures, both men and women place greater emphasis on the quality of life. They attach importance to relationship, nurturing and caring for people, even at the expense of efficiency. As may be expected, a major difference between cultures at the extremes of this dimension is in the expected relationship of men to women. In masculine cultures the sex roles are clearly differentiated. Men are strictly dominating and competitive: women should be caring, nurturing and have greater concern for the quality of life. In feminine cultures, roles are less sharply defined and more flexible: there is a belief in the equality of the sexes.

In a masculine culture, people place high value on having an opportunity for high earnings but place little importance on working with a cooperative group; in a feminine culture the reverse holds true. In addition, members of a feminine culture place importance on living in a pleasant environment, and put little value on the need to get recognition for a job well done. Other differences: Masculine cultures have high expectations (men who do not pursue a career will be considered failures); feminine cultures value people who do not seek careers. Conflict and confrontation are expected in masculine cultures, but feminine societies avoid them.

The masculinity index suggests that Japan is highest on the scale (95 points) and Sweden is the lowest (5 points). Canada is more or less in the middle of the scale (52 points and 21st from the top). Hong Kong is four positions above Canada (57 points and 17th from the top). In a way, both countries are more or less similar in this dimension; however, Hong Kong is slightly more prone to masculine culture than Canada. Figure 2, integrating the findings of the four dimensions for Canada and Hong Kong, enables comparison between these two cultures and of them with the extremes.

Hofstede (1984) also integrated these dimensions and compared them with other conceptual frameworks such as Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) to prove the reliability of his findings. By integrating these dimensions and examining the patterns identified, Hofstede suggests implications
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Relative Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>7th from top</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14th from bottom</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
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**Power Distance Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Relative Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>10th from bottom</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>4th from bottom</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
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</table>

**Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Relative Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4th from top</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>9th from bottom</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
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**Individualism Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Relative Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>17th from top</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>21st from top</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Marginally High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
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</tbody>
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**Masculinity Dimension**

Figure 2: Canada and Hong Kong in Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Scaling as Compared with Countries at the extremes.
for managing behaviour across cultures. Using individualism and power distance as the two dimensions, he formed a quadrant with the power distance index as its axis and the individualism index as its vertex. Countries are clustered and placed into one of the quadrants on the basis of their scores on the respective index: high power distance and high individualism; high power distance and low individualism; low power distance and high individualism or low power distance and low individualism. Similarly, he also formed two other sets of quadrants based on (a) power distance, uncertainty avoidance and (b) masculinity/uncertainty avoidance. Extracting from these data, I reach the following conclusions:

1. Canada is in the small power distance and high individualism quadrant, in which employees do not grant their boss much power.

2. Hong Kong falls onto the quadrant of large power distance and high collectivism. It contrasts greatly with Canada in that high collectivism reflects tight grouping and large power distance offers a lot of power to the boss. By virtue of the differences in these cultural dimensions, management style and organizational behaviour should contrast greatly in the two countries. Management theories and propositions that work in Canada would probably not be transferrable to Hong Kong and to people so mentally programmed.

3. Similarly, Hong Kong falls onto the large power distance and weak uncertainty avoidance quadrant. Hong Kong tends to think of its organizations as traditional families and the management style is parental.

4. Canada is in another quadrant in which power distance is small and uncertainty avoidance is weak. Hence, Canada tends to have less hierarchy and more interaction between people. Risk taking is expected and favoured. Village market characteristics of employee/employer relationships exist in Canada.

5. Only in the masculinity and uncertainty avoidance correlation do these two cultures fall into the same quadrant: that is, both of them are low in both the uncertainty avoidance and masculinity indexes. However, though similar, they are not identical. Canada is higher on the side of femininity, which indicates its dominant values are stronger relationships among people, concern for others, and interest in quality of work life. Hong Kong tends to favour efficiency and output.
Ronen and Shenkar (1985) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature and provided an integrative analysis of all available findings on cross-cultural studies over the previous 15 years. These studies examined variables in four categories: (a) the importance of work goals; (b) need deficiency, fulfilment, and job satisfaction; (c) managerial and organizational variables; and (d) work role and interpersonal orientation. They identified eight country clusters and concluded that most countries of the world can be placed in these clusters, except four countries which are outliers. The country clusters are: Anglo, Latin European, Latin American, Far Eastern, Arab, Near Eastern, Nordic and Germanic cultures. Countries which do not fit consistently into one of these clusters are Brazil, Japan, India and Israel. These countries appear in different clusters in different studies, so more research is necessary before they can be assigned to any specific cluster. Canada belongs to the Anglo cluster, which includes USA, New Zealand, Ireland, United Kingdom and Australia. Hong Kong belongs to the Far Eastern cluster, which includes Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, and South Vietnam. As one might guess, the general attitudes and work values of Canadian employees are most culturally similar to those of employees in other “Anglo” countries. When Canadian managers are dealing with employees from other clusters, such as the Far Easterners, they should recognize there will be differences. The theories and application techniques of organizational behaviour discussed in the North American literature will probably be more relevant in the Anglo countries. It remains to be seen from this study whether the Canadian version of organizational behaviour is directly applicable to Hong Kong Chinese.

In conclusion, Hofstede’s (1984) study has been seen as a landmark for cross-cultural studies and other research has been built around his findings. Whilst recognizing his contributions, I find his study has a few flaws. (He confirmed my impression when I met him in Hong Kong at a research seminar on cross-cultural differences at the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.) The major limitation of this research comes from data based on a single multinational organization: IBM is known for having a strong corporate culture and now, is trying hard to change it for organizational renewal, with great difficulty. The study was contaminated by the strong culture of IBM’s organization. In addition, although the countries covered number 40, China—with one of the world’s largest populations and a distinct culture—is not included.

Hofstede (1984) selected four dimensions for the study of culture. These four dimensions
are taken to represent the final word on dimensions of culture. But his questionnaire simply neglects that there are more dimensions of culture at which one should look. The major drawback in Hofstede’s selection of the dimensions for his study is that they come from his own personal mindset rather than that of the people being researched. Reading his work, I find that his selection of the cultural dimensions for study is grounded in his own research work, reference to the writing of other researchers and philosophers, and more importantly his own values. Would it not be more valid if the dimensions were generated by those being researched? No one can be value-free: this cannot be totally overlooked in an empirical study of this nature. I find the use of the concepts masculinity and femininity highly value-laden. The choice of these concepts is unfortunate: it gives Hofstede’s work a strong sexist connotation. It also defeats the integrity of his work, because of the particular values he holds. However, I am more concerned that cross-cultural differences are seen as something objective rather than anchored in the mind of the perceivers. In addition, I am skeptical of the validity of Hofstede’s measurement of cross-cultural differences. Would it be possible at all to use figures to correctly reflect cross-cultural differences? Are the variables in cultural differences so complex, interwoven and difficult to measure that they totally defeat the meaning of Hofstede’s work and the validity of his approach? The above arguments lead logically to the fundamental question of the limitations of positivistic and quantitative research in the social sciences, which I shall touch on when considering my research methodology.

III. Debates and Controversies in Cross-Cultural Studies

I would like to start considering some controversies and debates in cross-cultural studies on the basis of my own experience. Despite the growing trend toward international business and the need for managers to know cross-cultural differences in order to be effective across cultural lines, most companies resist investing in preparing their managers in advance. They only remedially take action when problems have led to an intolerable situation, like losing a big sales contract with an enterprise in a foreign culture or having a team problem with people from different cultures. Business schools are doing a woefully inadequate job of teaching managers either how to manage successfully overseas or how to manage workers from different cultures at home. In fact, most business schools never address the subject of culture and cross-cultural issues in their curriculum.
or classes, despite constant encouragement to do so from business-school accrediting associations (Steers, 1989). Even when some business schools have added this as a subject area, they have introduced it in a theoretical rather than an action-based fashion. This has made the managers capable of talking about managing across cultural lines rather than really effectively doing so. This lack of interest by academic institutions and the general lack of awareness of the problem in the business sector have not encouraged cross-cultural research and training.

My persistence in focusing on this area of study therefore stems mainly from problems I have encountered and from my feeling the need to improve the situation after years of working across cultural lines. My enthusiasm is sometimes defeated by people at higher decision-making levels, who tend to gloss over the problem of cross-cultural difference. This happened as much in debates when I formulated this research study and opened it to others for comments. Their reactions were similar to those of the business people and academics who have little concern for cross-cultural understanding through research. Cross-cultural understanding is hindered when people or groups of people hold the following myths about cross-cultural differences.

a. Myth I: The world is getting small and becoming more similar

Critics argue that the world is getting smaller and organizations are becoming more similar worldwide: Dissimilarities are disappearing; a global culture is forming and the world gradually creates one way of doing business. Hence, they argue, we should talk about cultural similarities rather than differences. Do their arguments stand? The question of cultural convergence versus divergence has puzzled the internal management field for years. To seek clarification, Child (1981) reviewed cross-cultural studies done by scholars holding these two divergent views. He concluded that most of the studies asserting convergence focused on macro-level issues, which include organizational structures and technology. The studies affirming divergence focused on micro-level issues, such as organizational behaviour. Hence, the arguments from both sides can be put into the perspectives: Organizations worldwide are becoming more similar at a macro level, while people's behaviour in these organizations is maintaining its cultural uniqueness at a micro-level.

b. Myth II: Cultural differences diminish when people work together

In line with the above trend of thought, critics have put forth another argument for ignoring cultural differences, suggesting that people from different cultures working in the same organization
will easily moderate or diminish their differences, because the organizational culture will act to moderate or to reduce them. Statements such as the following are not uncommon: "Whether you are an Indian, Chinese or British, we as members of the Securities and Futures Commission become the same when we work together to monitor the stock market in Hong Kong", and "In a multinational organization like IBM, all the staff, regardless of their nationality would be members of the IBM family and the organizational culture will make them the same when they work together." Do cultural differences diminish when people work together?

In a series of studies, Laurent (1983) found: (a) Cultural differences were more pronounced among foreign employees working within the same multinational organization than among employees working for organizations in their native lands; (b) employees maintained their cultural differences and even made them more pronounced—a finding contrary to his speculation that managers working for the same multinational corporation would not be more similar than their domestically employed colleagues; (c) there were significantly greater differences between managers from different countries working within the same multinational corporation than were between managers working in their native countries. (When people work for a multinational corporation, it appears that Italians become more Italian, Americans become more American and Germans become more German, and so on.) (d) Corporate culture did not reduce or eliminate national differences, rather it enhanced them. Adler (1991) argued that the pressure to conform to the organizational culture of a foreign-owned company brings out employees' resistance, causing them to cling more firmly to their own national identities. Perhaps ethnic culture is so deeply ingrained by the time people reach adulthood that no external force can erase it.

c. Myth III: One's culture is superior to others--Ethnocentrism

The notion of studying cross-cultural differences can sometimes be unpopular. This was made clear to me when I chose to study how Chinese perceive the cultural differences in the way they and Canadians behave in organizations. Some of the Chinese responded that I was exposing too much the real personality, feeling and perception of people of my own origin. At one extreme, this could be seen as betrayal or even a "traitor's" act—to uncover the inner part of their national characteristics to non-Chinese readers. People who hold that view also reflect a strong sense of insecurity about making themselves known to others. In addition, the issue of "face" comes into play
when some soft spots in Chinese national characteristics are exposed to Westerners who are not considered "in-group" members. It took considerable effort to explain to the participants the importance of increasing cross-cultural understanding and the right attitudes sufficiently for them to expose how they perceive their Canadian counterparts. At the same time, Canadians may not feel pleased to read about how the Chinese perceive them and how they appear in the eyes of others. Behind this sensitivity to cross-cultural research ethnocentrism can be found.

Ethnocentrism can be described as an exaggerated tendency to think the characteristics of one's cultural group superior to those of other groups (Drever, 1952). Being self-centred actually starts in early childhood in the form of egocentrism, a phase of childhood development before a child can take the viewpoint of others. Faucheux (1976) considers ethnocentrism as a phase in the development of a social science. In the history of anthropology, there was an ethnocentric phase which has largely been overcome. Other social science disciplines in which cross-cultural contacts play a lesser role than in anthropology are less developed in this aspect. As a discipline of social science, the study of organizational behaviour is less developed in cross-cultural studies.

Hofstede (1984) comments that ethnocentrism is already present in the instruments used for the collection of data in cross-cultural research. This is reflected in designing questionnaires in the USA, pretesting them on American students or managers, sometimes translating them, and administering them in other countries. In this case, as Hofstede warns, the questions are only about issues raised by the American designers of the instrument that proved relevant to their test population and for which American English has words. Ethnocentrism brings about tunnel vision and barriers to accepting cultural differences.

Americans have been singled out as suffering particularly from parochialism; that is, viewing the world solely through their own eyes and perspectives (Adler et al., 1986). People with a parochial perspective do not recognize that other people have different ways of living and working. Although this is not exclusive to Americans, their technological dominance makes them feel the world should revolve around them. Equally, the Chinese have this syndrome, considering that their 5000 years of culture makes them superior to the others. Each in its own way hinders the development of cross-cultural understanding. So far, egocentrism, ethnocentrism and parochialism have largely prevailed in the study of other cultures. One solution is to use instruments and designs
that will help eliminate such biases. Another is to use researchers who are bilingual and well-versed in the cultures to be compared. This is the approach I have taken to cut across the perceptual pitfalls inherent in cross-cultural studies in organizational behaviour.
Chapter 3

Psychology and Organizational Behaviour

Dimensions of the Chinese

In many aspects, Chinese learn, socialise, think, interact and behave in unique ways different from people in the occidental cultures. Such uniqueness leads to differences in organizational behaviour between the Chinese and the Westerners. These unique characteristics are now examined under four different sections in this chapter as follows: (I) the socialization and learning dimensions; (II) the thinking dimension; (III) the social dimension; and (IV) the organizational behaviour dimension. However, discussion of the characteristics and personality traits of a particular cultural group can often be regarded as stereotyping, categorizing and labelling. Public expression of cultural stereotypes is not socially acceptable and can be a sensitive issue in Canada but is simply not a taboo at all in the Chinese culture. For these reasons, research in Canada to identify characteristics of a particular cultural group may not be an approach totally accepted by other researchers.

On the other hand, stereotyping is a process in which human beings engage for daily decision-making. They need to make snap judgements about a person or a situation on the basis of limited information. Although one can naively argue that judgements should not be made until full information and complete data are available, in reality decisions can seldom be held off until full information is obtained. Stereotyping makes assimilating easier and decisions quicker. Holding stereotypes about groups enables one to sort a large number of people and situations into simple, conceptual categories and respond to them in a consistent, uniform manner. Without generalized categories, it would be impossible to look for recurring patterns of group behaviour. It would be difficult to interact with members of a group without wondering how long one has to wait before an impression can be formed.

Though stereotyping has functional advantages, one should be warned that subconsciously held stereotypes are difficult to modify or discard, even after more objective data or real information has been gathered. Most people, once they have formulated stereotypes, find relinquishing them difficult. Stereotypes are often taken as reality. Being stereotypic greatly hinders flexibility of mind. However, stereotyping is a necessary evil. Stereotyping acts as a tool, which can be harmful as well as helpful, depending on how it is used. Stereotypes can be helpful if they are properly utilized.
Adler (1991) holds a similar view that stereotypes can be helpful if they: are consciously held, and descriptive rather than evaluative; accurately describe the norm for the group to which the stereotype applies; apply as the first best guess only and can readily be modified on further information and contact. The descriptions of the Chinese in this chapter are to a certain extent generalizations: it is hard to avoid stereotypic effects. Adler's rule should be applied to this reading.

Statements about cultural differences are generalizations. They are based on the simplest case, such as "Members of culture A show more assertiveness than do members of culture B." The result is often derived from comparing the scores plotted in two bell curves. One can imagine that these two curves do not stand totally separate from each other but in part overlap. Of course, not every member of each of these two cultures differs from every member of the other in the dimension of assertiveness. But one can suggest that some members of culture A tend to be more assertive than members of culture B through comparing the mean scores and the overall distributions.

However, some "exceptions" in culture B, whose scores fall at the extreme end of the curve, may even be more assertive than the average members of culture A. These "out-of-the-norm" samples are more like members of the other group than those of their own. Obviously, one cannot generalize that everyone in culture A will be different from culture B. However, this "grey area" often allows critics to attack research on the grounds that "not every member of culture A is more assertive than culture B", thereby attempting to refute the usefulness and validity of cross-cultural research. Not only can cross-cultural conclusions be challenged for a particular case, but also some dimensions of cultural differences which are more subtle than others can more easily be challenged. The above serves as a caution and a set of guidelines for me in examining literature related to the following sections. Readers are requested to be equally cautious.

I. The Socialization and Learning Dimensions of the Chinese

As we discussed earlier, culture can be defined as the collective mental programming that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Such programming starts from early childhood and is reinforced throughout life. Researchers therefore trace the socialization process of the people in a particular culture from the childhood stage.
A. Socialization Characteristics of the Chinese

The socialization of the Chinese child offers some clues to the formation of the behavioural characteristics unique to people in this culture. The starting point for investigation begins from the family, the primary social unit for socialization. Fung (1966) explains that the Chinese family system is no doubt one of the most complex and well-organized in the world. To a large extent, Confucianism is the rational justification or theoretical expression of this social system. The family system is the social system of China. Redding (1984) points out that one form of organization that explains much of the success of East Asia is the Chinese family business, which is remarkably consistent in its organizational shape across the region. Such organizations are nearly always small, almost always dominated by one key individual, almost always owned by one cohesive, family-based group, and regularly specialize in one product or one kind of industry.

Family is the primary unit in which a child is brought up. The environment, climate and method of raising children have far-reaching effects upon the children, particularly in a family system as tightly-knit as that in the Chinese culture. Bond (1991) points out that the Chinese child is brought up to regard home as a refuge against the indifference, the rigours, and the arbitrariness of life outside. This attitude is induced through indulging the infant, restraining the toddler, disciplining the school child and encouraging students to value achievement. Thoughts and impulses which are aggressive and sexual are suppressed.

Many studies suggest that Chinese parents are lenient if not indulgent towards young children. Children are considered incapable of managing their own affairs, and hence not responsible for their wrongdoings or failures to meet expectations (Bunzel, 1950; Li, 1970; Wolf, 1970). Weaning and toilet training are moderate; a bedtime schedule is rarely enforced (Bunzel, 1950; Hsu, 1967; Muensterberger, 1951; Sollenberger, 1968; Wolfenstein, 1955; Wu, 1966). Chinese commonly believe that training at this young age cannot bring about much effect. They see children as passive dependents requiring care in the family. During the early years of their lives, the children can totally depend on the parents to meet their needs. From then on, the child must be taught to obey the parents and be prepared for the fulfilment of social, especially filial, obligations in adulthood (Ho, 1981). The above cultural studies in child rearing lead us to conclude that child-rearing practices of the Chinese and Americans are different. Their assumptions on how a child
should be socialized are also different.

Chinese children are in one way or the other mentally programmed through child-rearing practices to become dependent on the care and nurturing of others until the stage where they become mini-adults. Dependence is not an uncommon description of Chinese employees. The concomitant of dependency is paternalism. Redding (1984) asserts that paternalism is a special characteristic of the Chinese family business. In a family business, ownership overlaps with control. Even those that are public corporations legally are not really public corporations psychologically. Some larger family business corporations still display a father figure at the top who has real power over large areas of the organization's operation. The employees are expected to display loyalty and obedience, which will in turn be rewarded with care, protection and career stability. The evidence suggests that the behavioural patterns in organizations are often extensions of the scripts and roles played in the family. Employees' behaviour at work is strongly influenced by the socialization process in the family system.

B. Learning Characteristics of the Chinese

One learns in a culture what to do and what not to do. Socialization teaches the symbols and rituals on how to interpret the meaning of events within one's own framework. Learning is closely connected with socialization. Knowing how Chinese learn therefore gives an additional clues to how their mental framework, which influences the way they interpret the world, is being shaped. According to Bond (1991), schooling of the Chinese begins very early by Western standards. A typical Chinese kindergarten seems more like a primary school. Children sit neatly arrayed in rows, following a rote method of learning, receiving explicit instructions in numbers, letters, and characters. Disruptive behaviour is not tolerated. Given the importance of education for one's future in Chinese culture, the competition for available places, and the mass of educational material to be absorbed, hard work and seriousness in learning is emphasized.

Robinson (1986) observes that in Hong Kong childhood from a very early age is, in effect, a lengthy preparation for the academic hurdle race in which Hong Kong Chinese students perceive the stigma of being known to have failed as an undesirable consequence to be avoided at all cost! Mitchell (1969, p.5) comments that, in Hong Kong, "success" in education is "defined by passing recognised examinations". He has further observed the similarity between Hong Kong's educational
and economic competition, and the heavy premium on success. Early schooling possibly shapes the way of learning. For Chinese learning primarily means passing examinations. The civil examination existed for thousands of years in Chinese history and was the primary channel for changing one’s social class from a common citizen to one of the ruling class. Passing examinations became the chief goal for life. The same characteristics carry on in Hong Kong.

The Llewellyn Report (Llewellyn, 1982) points out that the central problem within the Hong Kong education system is the examination system, involving students cramming and teacher chalk-and-talk methods. The Report comments:

Discovery methods, team teaching and individualised instruction have little appeal to parents, students and teachers in a situation where the ends require more didactic means. Obtaining a credential to ensure a job offer and if possible, upward social mobility (rather than providing an interesting and intellectually broadening curriculum) is the almost universally agreed objective. (para. 53f)

The above observations are not confined to students only. The Report’s comments coincide with some of the findings on the learning characteristic of managers. I have observed (Pun, 1990) that Western managers differ from the Chinese in the way they learn. From my experience of training Chinese managers in Hong Kong and Macau, I found that Chinese managers were more prone to expect the teacher to lead and provide the learning. They did not prefer heuristic and discovery learning approaches. They often saw discussions as a waste of time and thought teachers do not fulfill their role without “feeding” students the learning content. They preferred a structured syllabus prescribed by the expert rather than by the learner, with the direction of learning being top-down rather than lateral. Learning decisions in Chinese culture are made by the superior rather than by those being affected by the decision. Students give a high degree of respect and feeling of indebtedness to teachers but less to the experience possessed by themselves and their peers. Chinese show preference for learning with concrete facts, procedures and precedents. They are less prone to look for critical analysis or to be open to questioning of ideas. My conclusion is that learning features of the Western managers and Chinese managers differ in the following dimensions: participation, self-direction, decision-making, respect towards authority, preferred learning design and learning climate.

Boisot (Boisot and Fiol, 1987), who conducted the China/EEC Management Programme in
Beijing, observed similar learning characteristics of Chinese managers. He classified learning into three dimensions, the Direction-Autonomy Dimension (DAD), the Individual-Group Dimension (IGD) and the Abstraction-Concreteness Dimension (ACD), thus forming a learning-cube model. He found that the Chinese fell into the vertex represented by bias towards directed rather than autonomous, individual rather than group, and abstract rather than concrete learning. Characteristically, the learner in this vertex works his or her way through a textbook exercise at home, submitting to the authority either of the text itself or of an absent teacher. Such learners have been fed on a diet of rote learning and over-predictable curriculum, making it difficult for them to work in unstructured and interdependent situations.

I have tried to trace the source of such learning characteristics (Pun, 1991). I found that the Chinese social system places the teacher in the wise man's role to deposit learning in the student. One of the factors in such a development may well be the language, because identifying and writing Chinese characters require strict discipline and direction from the teacher. To be literate, a Chinese must learn to master the written language. Chinese speaking different dialects share the same written characters. Thus, they can communicate with each other on paper even though they speak a different dialect. Citing from Vernon, Bond (1991, p.26) wrote: "Chinese, however, represents every different word by an ideograph, or pictorial character..., and there are some 3,500 of these characters to be learned in order to read an ordinary book or newspaper, and far more uncommon words."

DeFrancis (1989) corrected some misrepresentations and misunderstandings about non-Western writing systems, especially Chinese. He suggested that Chinese characters generally convey significant sound-based information. The stem of a Chinese character may suggest how the character should sound (see also Burnaby, in press). Learners of Chinese often find that stem only helps recognize the sound of a character on occasions. A character may sound differently even if the stem suggests how it may be read. The character also sounds different in different dialects. In addition, not all Chinese characters contain a stem. In a nutshell, each Chinese word is written as a single character, each character is monosyllabic and is composed of different strokes. (English is made up of polysyllabic words formed by letters in an alphabet.) Each Chinese character is an entity—a fixed form, a particular meaning, and a single sound. It is a representation of a concrete object or a
picture, to be appreciated holistically rather than in parts. Thus, recognising the sound of Chinese characters is comparatively more difficult than using the English language using alphabets. A well-known example of international exchange began with a quote from Halle (1969, p.18) to the effect that learning Chinese characters is like learning so many telephone numbers. This may be an overstatement but Bond (1991) suggested that “although there are rules which help, achievement of literacy in Chinese culture is a Herculean chore. First of all is the sheer amount of time to recognise and write the 214 radicals alone. English readers, for example, will remember how long they needed to master a mere 26 letters. Chinese pupils must therefore learn early about the rigours of repeated practice and lengthy sessions of homework” (p.27).

Hackman (1928) suggests that the constant use of such language develops a holistic rather than an analytical way of thinking (Wang 1986). Learning to identify the Chinese characters and recall their pronunciation relies relatively more on memory than in using the English language alphabets. To learn Chinese characters, one has to remember the sound of individual words, the 214 radicals and the composition of the strokes. This probably leads to the development of a key characteristic of Chinese learning: learning by rote. From childhood onwards, the Chinese are disciplined to memorize every character and to recite literary readings, prose, and poems. Parrot learning becomes a way to help memorization. To reinforce the learning, repeated practice is used. More time is therefore spent on memorizing than analysing. The mode of learning the language also influences the way the Chinese think. It will be appropriate at this point to examine the thinking dimensions of the Chinese.

II. Thinking Dimensions of the Chinese

Bond (1991) suggests that perceptual and cognitive psychologists generally assume that all people function in the same way. They tend not to focus on differences in the content of what various groups think. Nevertheless, Orientals’ remarkable academic achievements have spurred researchers with applied interests, especially educational psychologists, to examine cultural differences more closely. Early work began in the area of intelligence. However, comparative studies of intelligence, creativity, perceptual processes and cognitive abilities, which are of interest to the psychologists, have little relevance to the present study. Before totally excluding them from
further discussion here. I highlight a few findings which may have implications in understanding the behaviour of Chinese in the workplace.

Vernon (1982), an authority in the study of intelligence, suggests a unanimous finding that Orientals of all ages in any cultural setting score higher relative to Caucasians on spatial, numerical, or non-verbal intelligence tests, and less well on verbal abilities and achievements. The results of the Graduate Record Examination for American Universities appear to collaborate Vernon’s findings. The Chinese score higher than testees of other ethnic groups on the quantitative portion, but they attain comparatively lower scores in vocabulary, verbal comprehension and analogical thinking. The professional implications of this profile are obvious: accountancy and computer applications are much more suitable for Chinese than law or politics, for example.

Research to compare the degree of intelligence of people in different cultures may help see whether there are racial differences in the brain. However, research in that direction does not answer how people in different cultures think differently. Because all human beings are born with identical sensory apparatus and brains, will people necessarily think the same way? Is the difference caused by genetic or cultural differences? Bond (1991) asserts that available evidence suggests culture contributes to the difference. He argues that there are some distinctive features of the way Chinese think and that these cultural characteristics arise from the style of social training and the educational requirements that distinguish the Chinese from other groups. This argument coincides with my (Pun. 1991) and Wang’s (1986) earlier observations on the learning characteristics of the Chinese.

Language is represented by sets of symbols that carry special meaning to the person in a particular culture. These symbols are used to conceptualize the world and communicate with others. Symbols with fundamentally different designs exist in the Chinese and the Western world. To be literate, a Chinese has to learn some 3,500 pictorial characters. To write a word in Chinese requires attention to detail in shaping and balancing the whole character. In the course of learning to "draw" these 3,500 "concrete pictures" and remember all the strokes, the Chinese are simultaneously being shaped in their way of thinking.

As Stewart (1985) reported, Nakamura (1964) and Granet (1950) similarly asserted that this attention to concrete objects is a distinctive feature of the Chinese way of thinking. Concrete images and vision prevail over universal propositions and abstraction. There is a tendency to illustrate
profound ideas with visions and stories rather than formulas or definitions. The Chinese classics show that Chinese philosophers, including Confucius and Lao-tze, expressed their thoughts in the form of adages—short, powerful ways of describing particular principles through life experience. Northrop (1946) asserts modes of thought begin with sensory experience such as colours, sounds, flavours, pleasures, and pains. He further suggests that Oriental cultures insist on the immediate apprehension of the world. Intuition, perception, sensing and experiencing are the main features of the Chinese thinking and learning pattern. Gulick (1962, cited by Hesselgrave, 1978) found Westerners fundamentally theoretical and Easterners intuitive, tending to find knowledge from wider experience and vision. When a Western manager thinks about a problem, he or she normally uses abstract concepts or constructs—such as productivity, morale, or leadership style—and links them in a logical, sequential set of connections. The Chinese manager tends to resort instead to ideas that are more concrete (Redding 1980b). Wang (1986) designates the Chinese way of thinking as circular, in contrast to Western linear thinking. Circular thinking is thinking with correlational logic, a concept described by Chang (1962): “Chinese thought strives for unity between events or object and their signs or symbols. An event may be explained by pointing to another event which occurred at the same time, even though by Western logic, the two are not connected. The movement from event to event provides the displacement characteristics of Chinese thought and give rise to references to it as correlational logic” (p.215).

Fung (1966) attributed the cross-cultural differences in thinking between East and West to the different problems posed by their environments. He postulated that people of a maritime country, such as the Greeks who maintained their prosperity through commerce, were primarily merchants. He suggested that:

The ancient Chinese and Greek philosopher not only lived under different geographic conditions, but different economic ones as well. Since China is a continental country, the Chinese people have to make their living by agriculture... In the social and economic thinking of Chinese philosophers, there is a distinction between what they call “the root” and “the branch”. “The root” refers to agriculture and “the branch” to commerce. The reason for this is that agriculture is concerned with production, while commerce is merely concerned with exchange. One must have production before one can have exchange. In an agrarian country, agriculture is the major form of production, and therefore throughout Chinese history, social and economic theories and policies have all attempted “emphasize the root and slight the
branch." The people who deal with the "branch", that is, the merchants, were therefore looked down upon. (p.18)

Chinese did not value the contributions of the merchants as much as the people in maritime countries like Greece. Merchants made a different form of contribution not realised by the Chinese. Chinese considered production more important than exchange. However, merchants have first to deal with the abstract numbers used in their commercial accounts, and only later with concrete things that may be immediately apprehended through these numbers. Such numbers are what Northrop (1946) called concepts by postulation. Hence, Greek philosophers likewise took the concept by postulation as their starting point. They developed mathematics and mathematical reasoning. Their circumstances dictated both their epistemological and philosophical problems. However, the Chinese live in a continental country in which they deal with a totally different set of problems. Their land is their world. Two expressions in the Chinese language can both be translated as "the world". One is "all beneath the sky" and the other is "all within the four seas". To maritime people, such as the Greeks, it would be inconceivable that expressions such as these could be synonymous. But this is what happens in the Chinese language. Some researcher may disagree that the roots of Western culture being traced from the Greeks. For instance, "Bernal (1987) makes an elaborate case that northern Europeans from the 18th century on basically rewrote the history of cultural, intellectual, and linguistic relationships between the Greeks and their Asian and African neighbours of the second millennium BC. He argues that racism and positivism required Europeans to conceptualize the roots of their civilization in 'Aryan' Greece rather than in Egypt or the Near East" (Burnaby, in press, p.5).

According to Fung (1966), from the time of Confucius until the end of the 19th century no Chinese thinker had had the experience of venturing out upon the high seas. Confucius and Mencius lived not far from the sea, but in the Analects Confucius mentions the sea only once. There was little need for the Chinese to use sophisticated abstract formulas and mathematical theory to chart sea voyages. Thinking in abstract terms is therefore not a Chinese characteristic. The proposition that the development of abstract thinking is connected with whether people need abstract thinking for mathematical calculation for sea voyages and commerce remains to be verified. However, it appears from history that the Chinese were not much concerned with expanding themselves outside the
Great Wall and beyond the south China sea. Japan, Korea and Taiwan were their farthest limits. They seemed content to stay where they were. They appear to have another concern in life—how to live peacefully and manage their social relationship within their own land.

A. Redding’s Metaparadigms on the Chinese Way of Apprehending Reality and Their Implication

Redding’s work (1980a, 1980b) strongly illuminates the thinking or conceptualization process of the Chinese vis-à-vis that of Westerners. Redding and Martyn-Johns (1979) suggest that Chinese managers conceptualize managerially-related notions differently from Western managers. They use the term “metaparadigm” to describe the cognitive maps by which both an individual and the culture of which an individual is a member apprehend reality. It refers to models of reality, which are of a philosophical sort equated with a set of beliefs, a myth, an organising principle governing perception itself, a map, and something determining a large area of reality (Redding & Martyn-Johns, 1979). In function, these metaparadigms resemble categories of mind which can differ significantly between Chinese and Western managers. Redding’s approach for appreciating cross-cultural differences starts with how people explain an event to themselves. In other words, how is reality understood by the actor? If the manner of perceiving and understanding reality differs between the East and West, then the patterns of activity based on such understanding will, of necessity, also be different. Redding (1980b) then proposed to consider Chinese and Western forms of cognition under five metaparadigms. These are "causality, probability, time, self, and morality".

a. The Causation Metaparadigm

Drawing on Needham’s (1978) authoritative study of the development of science in China, Redding (1980b) concluded that the idea of causation of an event took one route in the West while in China it took another. Causation is the form of explanation of connections between events or phenomena and their causes. The Westerners, influenced by the Greek tradition, refined ideas of causation in such a way that one ended up with a mechanical explanation of the universe, just as Democritus did with his atoms. The Chinese way is to systematize the universe of things and events into structural patterns that condition all the mutual influences of its different parts (Needham,
When a Westemer thinks about a problem, he tends to use abstract concepts or constructs such as "performance", "motivation", "development" and "reward", linking them up in a logical and sequential set of connections. Redding (1980b) calls them the building blocks of explanation with a cause-and-effect relationship. Quite differently, the Chinese normally take up ideas that are more concrete and can be immediately apprehended. Northrop (1944) calls this "intuitive" as contrasted with "deductive" reasoning. The former involves observation and contemplation of what can be immediately apprehended. The latter detaches from immediate apprehension, because abstraction is required to develop Western scientific thinking. The intuitive mode is necessary for "total system" thinking and thinking holistically. Intuitive thinkers need the sensitivity to apprehend situational factors and the flexibility to make quick adjustments.

In conclusion, Westerners try to understand logical connections between abstract categories. They use absolutes and abstractions in their description of events and explain causality through linear and sequential deduction. The Chinese tend to be situational and contextual. They perceive the concrete and things that can be immediately apprehended. Greater importance is placed upon sensual perception and multi-causality.

b. The Probability Metaparadigm

The probability metaparadigm suggests that the Western mind, with its logical and sequential thought-process, lends itself to calculating and predicting the future. Extrapolation is based on logical cause-and-effect. In other words, to some degree the future can be calculated. The Chinese mind is more likely to take a fatalistic view of the future and as a result to be less prone to fine calculation. This proposition is based on the findings from the Decision Analysis Unit at Brunel University (Wright, 1977) that British participants were more realistic or "better calibrated" in subjectively estimating their probability of being right than Asian born groups who differed little among themselves. Redding (1980a, p.199) suggests that "a sense of not being entirely in control of events is part of the Chinese make-up, although obviously we are looking at something which is a matter of degree, rather than an absolute difference".

The empirical data may not be as powerfully illustrative as my observation on widespread fatalistic belief amongst the Chinese in Hong Kong and Canada. Feng Shui (geomancy) believes
success or luck depends on the physical orientation of houses, the arrangement of rooms, the positioning of family graves and so on. There is a general belief amongst Chinese in occult information to decide on the date for opening a business or the timing of burial or the date for marriage, in burning incense to appease the supernatural spirits, in worshipping divine objects, in changing one's name to alter fate, etc. Such practices are not confined to illiterates and the superstitious public but are followed by business leaders, literate scholars and political leaders. This fatalistic orientation has a profound effect on the way they perceive the planning process in the Western world.

c. The Time Metaparadigm

Time is a fundamental issue in all cultures. The metaparadigm on this item shows basic differences between the East and the West. Westerners think of time as a straight line coming out of and going into the infinite, a continuum that can be divided into portions subject to precise measurement. Arising out of this thinking, the concept of deadlines, scheduling and punctuality develops.

The Chinese associate time with events rather than absolutes. With the Buddhist and Taoist influence, the Chinese see time very differently. Buddhism sees events as illusory; hence, time is illusory too. Taoism sees time as travelling in circles but not linearly. The concept of "Tai-Chi" gives the notion that a thing comes from non-being and things moves in a circular motion and finally returns to the starting point, the non-being. Hall (1976) outlines such a distinction and describes the linear view of time in the West as "monochronic" and the Eastern view of time as "polychronic". The implication is that the former enhances scheduling, coordinating and decentralising; the latter is orientated towards end results, sharing and centralising.

d. The Self Metaparadigm

The metaparadigm of "self" may be the most difficult dimension for the two cultures to appreciate each other on. Here is the point for the most fundamental conflict between China and America. The latter is currently pushing for human rights to be observed in a country, China, which has a different perception of the rights of the "self" in the high-context (Hall, 1976) nature of Eastern culture. It is not for me to discuss whether America is right or even realistic, but the issue reflects a fundamental diversification in the "self" metaparadigm as identified by Redding (1980b).
Elsewhere (Pun, 1991), I have suggested that the Chinese conception of the individual is that he or she does not exist in a vacuum but is inextricably connected with people in society, including clans or peer groups. The Chinese character "Ren", benevolence and human-heartedness, is composed of two persons. One's correct behaviour is judged by how one fits in with others in society and how one fulfils one's social obligations in conformity to the group and with respect to mutual dependence and expectation. If self has a different meaning to the Chinese than to the Western world, Redding (1980b) raised an important question about the applicability of both the achievement ideal and self-actualization. The former is connected with the pursuit of a goal defined in terms of a person's view of what one might achieve for oneself and the latter a general acceptance by society of this as justified and worthy. Using Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs as the basis of comparison, Redding's findings suggest that social needs amongst the Hong Kong Chinese are much higher than for average Westerners (Europeans and Anglo-Americans). The opposite is the case with autonomy and self-actualization, which the Chinese perceive as distinctly less important. High social needs amongst the Chinese are reflected in the use of social networks, informal groups, cliques and reciprocation of favours. Group obligation becomes an important part of oneself, who is indivisible from others. These needs are also reflected in a greater emphasis on harmony.

c. The Morality Metaparadigm

The Redding's concept of morality as a metaparadigm (1980a) differs from the general sense of this term. The emphasis is placed upon the mechanism whereby it operates. He states that "it may be valuable to consider the mechanism whereby a society impresses its morality onto its members and how it makes them more or less conform" (p.201). Describing this metaparadigm, Redding follows the concept of "shame" and "guilt" cultures as differentiated by Benedict (1946) in explaining the differences between Japanese and Westerners:

A society that inculcates absolute standards of morality and relies on men's developing a conscience is a guilt culture by definition...True shame cultures rely on external sanctions for good behaviour, not, as true guilt cultures do, on an internalised conviction of sin. Shame is a reaction to other peoples' criticism....Shame has the same place of authority in Japanese ethics that 'a clear conscience', 'being right with God', and the avoidance of sin have in Western ethics. (Benedict, 1946, p.222)
Redding notes that the above distinction also seems valid for Chinese and other Oriental groups. According to Benedict, in a Chinese (shame) culture, responses will vary according to situations, with conformity being enforced externally by sanctions. By contrast, she claims, in Western culture, there will be less situational response variance, since responses are determined by internal, absolute convictions.

Perry (1958) believed that F. Hsu (1949) had pressed beyond Benedict's guilt-shame differentiation. Hsu showed that guilt-shame feelings are only symptomatic of the chief "mechanism of socialization" which he identifies as repression and suppression.

Hsu uses repression in the Freudian sense of excluding from the consciousness that which is socially taboo so that it becomes deeply buried in the subconscious. By suppression he means that there is a self restraint from certain actions in the light of external circumstances. However, the person makes no attempt to exclude these circumstances from the consciousness. (Hesselgrave, 1978. p.430)

Repression cultures value internal control; the pattern of life is individual-centred. Suppression cultures value external control; the pattern of life is situation centred. In a study of four cultures, Hesselgrave notes that both mechanisms are operative in all four, but because of emphasis he identifies Germany and America as "repression cultures" and China and Japan as "suppression cultures" (Hesselgrave, 1978).

In respect to developing a sense of morality, M. Ng (1977) suggested that the Chinese socialization process can be described as one wherein the individual is trained into developing a highly sensitive pride and it is the wounding of this pride which controls conformity. Everyone has to suppress differences so that one will conform to the social expectation and one's pride will not be injured. The above might in a way supplement Redding's metaparadigm to explain the mechanism whereby a society impresses its morality onto its members and how it makes them more or less conform.

This supplement may suggest a criticism of Redding's work as being far from comprehensive in formulating this metaparadigm. However, I do appreciate his extending this metaparadigm to explain another very important concept in the social behaviour of the Chinese, "face". With Chinese in the "shame" culture, the individual is trained into developing a highly sensitive pride and it is the wounding of this pride which controls conformity. This latter is a largely
social force. According to Redding (1980b, p.138), a manifestation of this phenomenon in social behaviour is "face".

Goffmann (1955) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (p.213). Goffman describes social interaction as a theatrical performance in which each individual has to choose a "line" or coherent pattern or verbal acts to express himself or herself, to maintain an image appropriate to the current social situation, and to secure a favourable evaluation from others. Thus, the face mechanism operates to influence a person to behave in such a way that his own composure is maintained and, at the same time, does not cause embarrassment to himself and his interacting parties.

The influence of face in social interaction is universal but is particularly significant to the Chinese (Y.T. Lin, 1977). I describe (Pun, 1991) "face" as containing two elements: "Lien", represents one's moral character, and stands for its integrity: "Mianzi" refers to the kind of respect or reputation achieved by oneself or awarded by others. It stands for the kind of prestige that is ascribed by others. Face saving and face exchange may be done at a cost that appears absurd to onlookers of Chinese culture. Bond and Hwang (1986) give an interesting account of situations in which face mechanisms operate: enhancing, saving or losing one's own or another's face. Redding and Wong (1986) find that face is crucial to the success of business transactions, confirming that "face work" still operates today in Chinese interpersonal behaviour.

Although I do not find Redding's model genuinely original—Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) set out similar paradigms in analysing value orientations—his approach to understanding how Chinese think explains many Western myths about why Chinese behave in such an enigmatic manner. However, the major drawback of Redding's metaparadigms is that they represent Redding's personal metaparadigm—his outlook on the Chinese. These metaparadigms are not created out of the frame of mind of the Chinese researchees. Would it not be a more convincing approach to the study if the Chinese who have been at work in Hong Kong and in a Western country were asked to work out their own model of how they see themselves as different from Westerners? Chinese researchees could generate their own view of cross-cultural differences, in their own terms. This is the path this study attempts to follow.
III. Social Dimension of the Chinese

I argued above that Chinese people do not live alone as individuals but as members of social units with a series of mutual obligations to be fulfilled. In a high-context society (Hall, 1976), social rules and obligations govern the behaviour and inter-exchange of the people. These rules and obligation are not written but mutually shared and accepted. Five thousand years of civilization have developed amongst the Chinese intangible rules which regulate social interaction. These rules are deeply ingrained, forming a structure of behaviour to which the Chinese unconsciously adhere. Sun (1983) calls it the deep structure, which is like a "built-in" computer programme prescribing the expected behaviour of the Chinese. It will therefore be useful as a starting point to examine the social dimensions of the Chinese through examining some of the variables which "programme" them and of which they may not be fully aware.

As I pointed out earlier, the Chinese culture originated from a large flat plain around the Yellow River, inhibited by different clans and ethnic groups. The problem the Chinese faced, unlike the Greeks, who had to develop abstract concepts to deal with calculations for charting sea voyages and solving commercial accounting, was how these different clans could live peacefully together. The social dimension becomes a fundamental problem to be resolved. On the basis of my earlier work (Pun, 1991), I have proposed seven mental frameworks of the Chinese which have "programmed" their social behaviour.

a. The Social Harmony Framework

Harmony is the cardinal principle underpinning all the other mental frameworks. "Correct Behaviour" (Li) and "Music" (Yue) practices were established in early Chinese history as an internal control mechanism for social interchanges to achieve social harmony. With diversified ethnic tribes residing together on an open plain, disputes and conflicts were real threats to the Chinese people. Living harmoniously became a primary issue for survival. Philosophers, great thinkers and rulers made every effort to establish an internal control mechanism to ensure people follow a set of behavioural standards. Tracing the history of philosophy of the Chinese, one can find that "Correct Behaviour" and "Music" traditions were created.

The purpose of "Yue" (Music) is to produce harmony. Another method of achieving this is through "Li", the behaviour arising out of respect for oneself and others. "Correct Behaviour" is not
a set of rules, as some writers misinterpret it, but a set of behaviours expressed out of respect. The implication of this framework is far-reaching in the social dimension of the Chinese. The "Correct Behaviour" expectation forms the basis of "shame" culture (Perry, 1958) as a way to regulate one's behaviour. The "Yue" or music has laid the foundation for common rituals for a harmonious and non-confrontational way of living together. Hence, the Chinese appear socially as a harmonious and self-restrained group.

b. Relationship-based and Hierarchy-oriented Framework

The "Love" (Qin-Qin) and "Respect" (Zun-Zun) concepts, based on relationship hierarchy, were cultivated to maintain harmonious relationship among people in the social system. "Qin-Qin" means to love your loved ones. It lays the basis for development of strong family institutions and encourages the development of collectivistic dependence and obligation-oriented behaviour. "Zun-Zun" means to respect those who should be respected: that is, those holding a particular status on the social ladder. The above notions lead to the development of a clear-cut hierarchical structure in society. To save society from social disintegration, Confucius advocated a set of relationships to regulate the rights and responsibilities of people holding particular roles and status in the social ladder. He selected five of the most important relationships in society (Wu-lun), to prescribe the attitudes and behaviours appropriate to the status of each of the 10 roles in the five relationships: sovereign and subject, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, and between friends. To fail to act accordingly is an infringement of "Correct Behaviour" (Li).

It should be noted that the five relationships do not exist in equality but are placed in a hierarchial order. There is a set of complementary obligations. That is, the junior party owes the senior respect and obedience, and the senior owes the junior protection and consideration. Hence, this framework inhibits the development of egalitarianism in social exchange. The implication is that workplace democracy and participative management might find it a difficult trip to reach acceptance by the Chinese. Western management theories, based upon the assumption of individualism, democracy and participation on an egalitarian basis, are incompatible with Chinese social thought. The Chinese may well reject democratic practice when they experience it in Canada.

c. Cultivated Noble Person Framework

In a shame culture, respect and acceptance by the group is a notable force for social control
and compliance. To be socially respected, one has to develop an impeccable and unblemished moral character. "Noble Person" (Junzi), ideal moral character, is used as a role model for everyone to learn from: falling short of such nobility attracts social sanctioning. The Chinese describe the ideal man as a "sage within and a king without". In other words, he has such a noble spirit that he is worthy of being king. According to Fung (1966), it is the production of this kind of character that is the goal of Chinese learning. The Chinese are concerned with upholding this noble character and are therefore concerned with how they appear in the eyes of others. The issue of "face", then, becomes a central concern for the Chinese as a result of one's wish to live up to expectations of being an ideal noble person, socially respected by others.

The implication for behaviour at work is that the Chinese expectation of a leader may add on an additional dimension as a result of this "Junzi" framework. This additional dimension, "moral character" is not found in other dimensions of leadership studies in the West. Although research on leadership behaviour repeatedly shows the two dimensions of concern, either for people or task, recent research from China has revealed an additional, striking dimension which coincides with my supposition. According to Bond (1991), in the mid-1980s Xu Lian-cang directed massive studies of workers in different sections of the Chinese economy. His team from the Institute of Psychology in Beijing identified a distinct third factor of leadership behaviour, labelled "moral character". Westerners may simply place no value on this leadership behaviour because it is a longer-term concept than the more obviously instrumental concepts of task and people. Thus, leadership studies in the West have not paid attention to this dimension.

d. Unconditional and Compassionate Framework

Chinese speak highly of being "Compassionate" and "Human-hearted" (Ren). They expect the practice of "Righteousness" (Yi), that is, everyone, should, without thought of personal advantage, unconditionally do what one ought to do and be what one ought to be. A Chinese accused of not having any "Ren" or "Yi" has no place in the social circle and should no longer be respected. The Chinese conception of the individual is that he or she does not exist in a vacuum but is inextricably connected with people such as relatives and clans in society.

The Chinese character, "Ren" is composed of two persons. The meaning behind it is that one should extend oneself so as to include others which, in essence, is the practice of human-
heartedness. As I earlier mentioned, people in the Chinese culture are judged by how they fit in with others in society and how they fulfil their social obligations in conformity to the group and with respect to mutual dependence and expectation. This notion is represented by Hofstede (1984) as collectivist and against the individualistic orientation of the Occidental culture. The Chinese character "yi", righteousness, is composed of two parts—a sacrificial lamb and self. One is expected to make a sacrifice for others in the light of the worthiness of the cause. Hence, the unconditional and compassionate framework helps to explain how the collectivistic notion described by Hofstede is practised amongst the Chinese.

e. Golden Mean Framework

One noticeable social behaviour of the Chinese is that they seldom take a high profile. They are moderate and seldom go to extremes. Although this is a generalisation, there is a certain truth in it. The Chinese are "programmed" to not take extremes. Confucius propounded the ethic of the "golden mean", sometimes known as "Zhongyong". This framework advocates a balanced life, moderation, and control of one's emotions to reach a state of equilibrium. Some would understand it as simply doing things not more than halfway, but this is quite wrong. The real meaning of it is neither too much nor too little; that is, just right.

This framework denounces conflict, extremes, and competition. It is this cultural characteristic that accounts for the apparent high degree of control manifested by the Chinese in expressing their emotions or in taking an extreme stand. However, one should not misinterpret this to mean that they are numbed to feelings. In fact they are extremely sensitive; but their inner world is well concealed. They express emotions only indirectly or implicitly. They favour a comparatively reserved way of expressing themselves.

f. Ultimate Way of Nature Framework

Whilst the social dimension of the Chinese is greatly influenced by Confucian thinking, Chinese social thought is also influenced by Taoist and Buddhist thinking. One of the obvious underpinnings of the social dimension is "tian", coined by Lao-tze. This word is often known as the "Truth and the Way". It is not unfamiliar to Westerners. Similar wordings appear in the Bible: "I am the way, the truth and the life". However, this word has a deep meaning which is difficult for Chinese to fully, literally comprehend, nevertheless, it has much influence over their behaviour.
"Tao" can be interpreted as the "Way" and as "Nothingness". Philosophers point out that it is not a thing and hence is unnamable, yet it is everywhere but everywhere it is nothing. It exists prior to things. Taoism advocates that the essential but missing ingredient of right living has to do with the innermost self and its relation to the "Tao", the way to act, as attested by experience and reason. It is seen as the ultimate reality, way, truth, nature and God. It is not a code but a principle of right conduct that can be discovered through nature and education. When Tao is followed, the world becomes a place of harmony and well-being. The Way of Man emphasizes the need for individuals to reproduce the Tao in themselves.

When people follow this order, harmony and well-being will follow. This framework influences not only social behaviour but also the philosophy of leading an organization. It has many implications for Chinese leaders, who are expected to reproduce the Tao. If leaders, even the emperor, do not follow the "Ultimate Way", they are subject to being overthrown. A legitimate reason for any revolution or coup d'etat is enforcing the "Ultimate Way" to heaven if the leader is not fulfilling the obligation to reproduce the Tao. Implicitly, Chinese believe that there is an ultimate truth and way of practice that governs the order of the universe. People in positions of authority are therefore supposed to seek and reproduce the ultimate mission conferred by nature, and act out the order inherent in that role. Such expectations and understanding need not be explicitly stated like job descriptions or mission statements in the West. Yet, these implicit social expectations serve as the criteria for performance appraisal of the persons occupying particular positions.

g. Non-insisting and Non-imposing Framework

Chinese generally believe that it is the duty of every individual to achieve harmony with others and with nature, that is to say, to embrace the Tao, to hold to it and not impose your own desires. To do so is to practice "Non-Action" (Wu-wei). It is to live spontaneously in accordance with nature—not desiring, forcing or imposing one's will upon nature or others (Hesselgrave, 1978). Taoism advocates that Tao originated from one source and had one ultimate truth. However, different people hold onto one part of it and reject the points held by others. Conflicts and problems arise out of individuals insisting on their own viewpoints. In order to find the ultimate truth, one needs to give up one's own standpoint and arrive at a state of nothingness or "standpointlessness".
This framework expects the individual to humble the self and remove resistance so that one can take in the ultimate truth and reality. The concept of suspending one's values and taking in those of others is similar to the contemporary "dialoguing" approach to problem-solving expounded by David Bohm (1990). It will not be difficult to understand from this framework why Chinese tend to be in a listening mode rather than a telling-and-advocating mode when in classroom situations. It does not mean that they are unintelligent or not participative. Perhaps they just do not find it appropriate to assert their points or impose their ideas upon others publicly.

Although Confucianism and Taoism embody different schools of thought, both are directed towards harmony and denounce conflict, impositions and extremes. Such thinking programmed the mind of the Chinese in social interaction. This may account for the unique Chinese conflict-management style. This style stands out as one of the major characteristics which makes the Chinese different from Occidentals in the social dimension. In a research study into the conflict-management style of Chinese and British managers in Hong Kong, Tang and Kirkbride (1986) made use of K. Thomas's (1976) instrument to study whether there are any cross-cultural differences in this social dimension.

K. Thomas distinguishes and measures five conflict-handling styles: competing, avoiding, collaborating, compromising and accommodating. Competing is both assertive and uncooperative: it occurs where an individual pursues his/her own concern at the expense of the other party. Thus, this is a win-lose style, perhaps best summarised by the phrase "I win, you lose". Avoiding, both unassertive and uncooperative, occurs when one stays away from the conflict and lacks concern about the interests of both parties. In a way, this can best be represented by the phrase, "I lose, you lose as well". Thus, open conflict is swept under the carpet or covered up with surface harmony, such as being overly courteous to each other and staying away from any dependency relationship. Collaboration is assertive and cooperative; the opposite of avoiding, it represents an attempt to strive for an ideal arrangement to satisfy the needs and concerns of the other party. The best phrase to describe the situation is "I win and you win". Compromising represents the intermediate positions of both competing and cooperativeness and occurs when the parties are willing to sacrifice some of their concerns to achieve a solution. It can be represented by the phase, "I win some and you win some". Finally, accommodating is unassertive but means being cooperative to the other party: as...
such, it is the opposite of competing. This style is where one satisfies his or her concern for others. This situation is best represented by the phrase, "You win, I lose".

Tang and Kirkbnde's findings (1986) indicate that Chinese executives of both the government and private sectors show similar tendencies in their style, both favouring the less assertive "compromising" and "avoiding" behaviours as their dominant styles. On the other hand, the British managers exhibited a rather different pattern, favouring the more assertive "collaborating" and "competing" as their dominant styles. I agree with Tang's conclusion that the traditional values influence Chinese interpersonal behaviour. In addition, this particular conflict-avoidance behaviour of Chinese managers has resulted in many Western management practices and systems, such as management by objectives (MBO), performance appraisal, and discipline procedures, being difficult for the Chinese to accept, because these practises require the actors to be assertive. The frameworks underpinning the Chinese social dimension set barriers, if not limits, to integrating the West with the East.

IV. Organizational Behaviour Dimension of the Chinese

As pointed out earlier, organizational behaviour is an embracing term: it represents the human dimension of management. Chinese organizational behaviour is a field too immensely varied to be realistically discussed within the confines of this paper. To focus this investigation, I first examine the primary aim for understanding organizational behaviour and then find a theoretical model which can guide examination of the relevant literature. Primarily, the study of organizational behaviour intends to promote the performance of a social unit formed for the achievement of certain goals. To understand, predict and control the behaviour of people in the organization helps to achieve this aim. Understanding organizational behaviour becomes an important part of management, contributing to the effective performance of an organization. Studying organizational behaviour therefore closely entwines with investigating models of management function and processes. Fayol's (1916) model of management functions has always appeared to be a landmark study for understanding the managerial process and always serves as a starting point for the study of organizational behaviour. I shall therefore use it as the framework for examining Chinese characteristics in this dimension.
Fayol (1916), a French industrialist, considered planning, organising, leading and controlling as the basic functions of management. Although later critics consider that this model does not fully reflect the reality of a manager's job, it nevertheless serves to provide a comprehensive framework work of the process of management. Redding (1980b) links up this managerial process with his metaparadigms (discussed earlier) to explain the special characteristics of the Chinese that illuminate Chinese organizational behaviour. His metaparadigms—causality, probability, time, self and morality—put together with Fayol's planning, organizing, leading and controlling, form a matrix. This matrix forms a model, explaining the characteristics of the Chinese, that I will use as a framework for subsequent discussion.


(i) Planning and "Causality"

The Planning function encompasses defining goals, establishing strategies and making decisions on what to do or what not to do. The process of planning requires thinking in abstractions. It also requires what Redding (1980b) in the causality metaparadigm (discussed earlier) terms the "linear logic" linking activities such as environmental scanning, strategy formation, objective setting, budget formulation, performance management, feedback and corrective actions. As discussed earlier, the use of abstract categories and linear logic is characteristic of the Western mind but does not appear to be the way Chinese operate in their thinking dimension. Hence, behaviour in Chinese organizations does not normally feature formalized planning.

(ii) Planning and "Probability"

The process of planning in the West, though accepted as both an art and a science, rest on models that are data-based through systematic fact gathering, objective analysis and logical deduction of results. These are methods based on the scientific tradition prevalent in the West. Western planning practice, an extension of the causality metaparadigm, requires abstracting, categorizing and sequencing. It is founded on the assumption in the probability paradigm that results can be calculated; extrapolation is based on logical cause-and-effect sequence.

The Chinese appear to have a different modus operandi, in which sense-perception and
intuition are acceptable and common functions in the decision making process. Redding (1980b) describes this alternative view as a "mutual causal paradigm" in which the world is perceived as sets of mutually balanced interconnections. One of the outcomes of such a view is a sense of fatalism. The belief in fatalism is often seen in the West as unscientific, far from rational, and prevalent in "under-developed" nations.

Planning implies a sense of control over the future; it contradicts fatalism, which plays in Chinese thinking a part in the decision-making process. Hence the Chinese are not at their best in formal planning or target-setting, which carry the connotation that controlling the future is possible. They act best in adjusting to the changing environment, perceiving the way ahead and flowing with the situation rather than altering it. Hence, they may not truly believe in target-setting, output-based assessment, and formal, detailed planning as worthwhile activities for organizations. It is therefore no surprise that the Chinese do not genuinely accept MBO types of rational activities. Often they subtly sabotage the system, it being not their character to reveal resistance or objection. They may go along without commitment. Rationality in planning, generally accepted in the West, has also been challenged even there. The concept of "bounded rationality" proposed by Simon (1976), the Nobel Prize winner in economics, points out the limitations of our rational approach in really making optimal solutions! Only the first "good enough" solution, being satisfactory and sufficient, is chosen.

(iii) Planning and "Time"

I discussed earlier the time metaparadigm proposed by Redding (1980b) and the "monochronic" and "polychronic" classification proposed by Hall (1976). "Monochronic" culture, being linear and sensitive to the sequence of activities, is compatible with the Western planning process. Programming, scheduling, sequencing, and completing one activity after the other reflect the Western mode of co-ordination. I do not mean that Chinese do not perform these activities. However, there is a strong difference in their attention to the planning process. Instead of making linear, sequential arrangements, they allow many events and activities to take place at the same time. Co-ordination is achieved through centralised direction. This may account for the size of Chinese organizations and the paternalistic nature of the family business in Chinese culture. In micro situations, like buying, Chinese find it difficult to conceptualize why a Western sales person
insists on doing one thing after the other and not many things at one time, which the Chinese prefer. Rigid lining up and serving one customer after the other is often seen as inefficiency rather than as an orderly sequencing of the activity. This is a not uncommon reaction of Chinese visitors to Canada and other Western countries.

**B. Matching Organising Behaviour with the Metaparadigms of Causality, Time and Self**

To accomplish a task in an organization requires a structure to ensure that activities are properly arranged. Organising is therefore another important process to determine what tasks are to be done, who is to do them, how the tasks are to be grouped, who reports to whom and where decisions are to be made. Again, examining this part of the process with the metaparadigms proposed by Redding (1980b) offers interesting explanations and predictions of Chinese organizational behaviour. Unlike planning, which is connected with the causality, probability, and time paradigms, organizing is connected to the causality, time and self dimensions.

(i) Organising and "Causality"

Max Weber (1974) developed the concept of bureaucracy, which emphasizes specialisation, division of labour, impersonal relationships, systems of abstract rules and hierarchical structure. All these elements except the last do not appear as features of the Chinese organizations. Western organizations often represent their setup by means of boxes and charts with lines joining the departments for various functions. Obviously, such abstraction is needed to design a complex organization. Such conceptualization of an organization again requires abstract thinking and constructs, which are not common within the Chinese thinking dimension. Chinese organizations therefore attend less to structures in abstract entities and do not separate functions out as their Western counterparts do. Centralised structure, and co-ordination from the centre with very simple differentiation, prevail. When I taught the executive MBA programs at the University of East Asia and the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong, I conducted a survey on the performance-management system in Chinese companies. More than three-quarters of them did not have a formal job description that separated one's duties from those of others. In addition, their roles, functions and duties were subject to change at the discretion of the boss, who was the centre of all major decisions.
The implication is that Chinese work units are flexible to accommodate their roles, functions, and duties. They are not connected to each other by the boxes and the lines in the organizational charts the way their Western counterparts are. Job descriptions and charters of departments are subject to amendment at the discretion of the centre, with little consultation. Workers accept that the decision-makers at the top enjoy this prerogative. This may help explain why Chinese unions are largely powerless against change, restructuring and re-engineering. Concomitantly, the existence of unions and the adversary position between workers and management are not features of Chinese organizational behaviour. Conflict with a view to changing the status quo, causing chaos, is not desirable at all. "L.uen" (chaos or loss of order) is often avoided at a high price: it is the leader's role to make the work group avoid it. It is not surprising that in taking over the sovereignty of Hong Kong, the major guiding principle proclaimed by the Chinese Government is "stability and prosperity", rather than "democracy and fair elections" as proposed by the British Government. The latter may mean to the Chinese "chaos" and "loss of order". which must be avoided.

(ii) Organizing and "Time"

Because the Chinese see time not as linear but instead as cyclical, their way of coordinating activities in the workplace, such as scheduling and programming, differ from the Westerners'. The co-ordination process in Western organizations is impossible without a clear concept of time in linear form: deadlines should be agreed in advance and events should be predicted. Thus, programmed action can take place in concerted efforts to achieve the goal. Redding (1980b) summarised Hall's (1976) concept of monochronic (e.g. American) time as linear and polychronic (e.g. Chinese) time as cyclical:

Characteristic Activities in Monochronic Culture:
1. One thing done at a time, in a predetermined time-slot.
2. Emphasis on schedules, segmentation, promptness.
3. Allows for extensive delegation, and long hierarchies.
4. Tendency to schedule the goal and leave analysis of the job minutiae to the individual.
5. Organizations capable of much growth.

Characteristic Activities in Polychronic Culture:
1. Several things can happen at once.
2. General aim of completion without detailed scheduling.
3. Centralized control and shallow structure.
4. Control of individuals by the minutiae of what they do, and not when.
5. Organizations usually limited in size. (Redding, 1980b, p.145)

The implication of this dimension is not confined to formal organizational activities. Take, for example, the way we see Chinese have their meals as against that of Westerners. Some joke that the Chinese will eat anything that flies except a 747 and anything that walks except a robot. Not only that, they will not sit in long tables and pass the dish around in linear form as Westerners do. The Chinese round table with dishes in the middle allows maximum sharing both of the food and of social transactions. This sitting arrangement allows all to be aware of the common dish in front of them and to manage the sharing with sensitivity. The sensitivity includes what to take and when to take without being seen to be uncivilized, uneducated and unconcerned for others. Similar transactional patterns can be extended to teamwork in Chinese culture. Groups are not highly organized with formal structures. However, members share a common understanding and realize each other's roles. Their concern is not so much in scheduling, programming and contracting in advance, but rather in responding to the general need of the other party and changing their own functions to complement each other.

Linking these two phenomena, I propose the concept of "Chopstick Culture" to explain the special characteristics of the Eastern way of organising. Chopsticks, the primary Chinese artifacts for eating, fundamentally different from those of the West, are used in Eastern countries possibly influenced by the Confucian practice of "Li" (correct behaviour) for an activity so much emphasized. The large proportion of time and household income spent amongst Easterners in eating is evident: three hot meals a day and frequent dining out. The Westerners use knife, fork and their own dish; hence they do not have a similar need to make the meal a sharing event. The Western process is taken more as an individual than a communal activity. Thus, chopstick culture keeps reinforcing the communal concept of a unified social unit sharing an activity, rather than the concept of individuals doing the same activity. This fundamental difference can be further extended to explain the loose co-ordination in organising. The Chinese can achieve "just in time" and "coordinated" efforts in lieu of an elaborated system like that of the West; the latter is based upon separated-out activities
understood as abstract entities and worked out in Western form.

(iii) Organising and "Self"

Bond & Hwang (1986) suggest that there has been a resurgence of Western research interest surrounding the topic of the self; such interest has traditionally been lacking in Chinese research, perhaps because of the unhealthy alliance between self and individualism in the minds of the Chinese. The topic of the self becomes doubly fascinating in a collectivist culture, however, precisely because concern with the self is often derided and played down in favour of group consideration.

Self in the Chinese context does not exist in vacuum. It is connected with others in a high-context culture. The "I and thou" relationship is not so distinctive as in individualistic societies. As Sun (1983) suggests the Chinese find it odd and lacking "Ren Qing" (Human Compassion) to pay the individual share of a bill after dining out together. The common practice is that they take turns reciprocating with each other. Drawing a line too clearly between oneself and the other is seen as treating the other as a member of the out-group.

Bond (1991) argues that Chinese distinguish three main social groupings—family, associates and strangers—with whom different sorts of relationships take place. Family is a refuge against the indifference, the apathy and the arbitrariness of outside life. Family relationships become a lifelong affair, with family activities continuing whether one prefers it or not. There is a set of duties and obligations for one to be a member of this "in-group". Associative relationships through school, shared residence, occupation etc. are an important ring of the "spider network" (Sun, 1983): (the broad category of persons to whom one is connected either directly or indirectly). Associates are not treated as "outsiders" and will be given "in-group" treatment. However, strangers with a transient association unlikely to be repeated, such as those commuting on the same train (even daily), registry staff in the university with whom one may have irregular contact, or spectators of the same show, receive no affective response, for they are outside one's established group. They are a matter of indifference. Hence, it is not surprising that Chinese seldom talk to strangers in lifts or to people not properly referred or introduced.

A commonly accepted view among Chinese is that "self" is connected to others through "predestined" opportunities. K.S. Yang (1988) illustrates this phenomenon with the concept of
"Yuan" (lot or luck by which people are brought together), a concept the Chinese generally accept. Yang distinguishes the "permanent" type of Yuan, such as that of family members, relatives, teacher, friends, colleagues, and others such as master and servant. Of course, the formation of "Yuan" through blood connection has to be honoured. The other type is temporary, such as chance meeting through commuting, eating, residing, gaming etc. The relationship built upon "Yuan" is the basic reference point for connecting the self-paradigm with organising. Business is not done with strangers, who are members of the "out-group". Trust starts with people from the inner circle, such as family members and those who belong to the "permanent" type of "Yuan".

Organising may mean selecting not those most capable of performing the task but those who can be trusted and related to from the "spider’s web of interconnections". Such a spider’s web of interconnections is called "sodality" by Sun (1983). The self is extended to perform a task through the involvement of others selected from those the self can trust, preferably from within the interconnections formed through the "Yuan". Organising is done through personalistic networks. Tasks are preferably entrusted to people within the personalistic network rather than to the most capable people. Such a way of organising gives rise to a different meaning of "delegation"—a concept rooted in the West and connected to Max Weber’s (1974) notion of specialization in the bureaucracy. The Chinese way of delegation is "person-oriented" rather than "task-oriented". The delegatee is only the personal extension of the delegator (self) for the purpose of completing the task. Ownership of the task belongs to the delegator, who reserves the ultimate right of taking over and commanding how the task should be performed.

Delegates are often selected from within the "in-group" network. The selection is based on relationship rather than on mere competence. This selection logic appears to be without reasons in a collective society. The most difficult part of organising often rests with the building of a team—often what Western organizations try to achieve without real success. Selection of the most capable person is one approach for selection. Another is the selection of members with whom one has worked in the past: Mutual understanding and relationship, honouring pave the way for smooth working together as a team. Such working relationships, being essential to the organising process, may take years to develop. This latter approach is characteristic of Chinese organizational behaviour.
C. Matching Leading Behaviour with the Metaparadigms of Self and Morality.

A leader is said to be someone who has dreams and visions and is able to influence others to make these dreams and visions come true. Leading is the process of influencing others to give their best to the achievement of the organization’s goals. Leadership is a vast area of study in organizational behaviour. I will limit it by correlating this dimension with the metaparadigms of self and morality.

(1) Leading and "Self"

When one lives up to the obligations of others in a collectivistic culture, the self needs to respond sensitively to the role expectations in the system. Given the values and traditions that support the hierarchial structuring of "Guanxi" (interpersonal relationships), Chinese social groups will accept a more authoritarian interaction pattern between the leader and followers than Westerners will. Most contingency theories of leadership examine the leader's style in balancing the relationship and task dimensions in given situations to achieve greatest effectiveness (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). With this consideration, Chinese followers will function smoothly when the leader places the relationship variable equal to, if not above, the task-achievement variable, in light of the Chinese emphasis on "Guanxi" and personalistic networks.

Meade (1970) asserts that Chinese groups, in an experimental situation, are much more cohesive under a controlling style of leadership than are American groups, and that the reverse holds under a more democratic style. Other leadership studies, using the Leadership Behaviour Questionnaires and similar instruments (Bond & Hwang, 1986) suggest that subordinates in Chinese groups prefer a leadership style in which the leader maintains a harmonious, considerate relationship with followers and defines a clear-cut task for each member of the group. Y.S. Hsu (1982) also shows that the subordinate's job satisfaction is negatively correlated with the leader's coercive power, but positively correlated with the leader's expert power and referent power. In daily work situations, this means Chinese do not like a punitive leader, but they do like a leader with abundant expertise and ability respected by others. Leadership style is one of the variables potentially affected by the self paradigm.

Leader in Chinese characters contains two words: "collar" and "sleeve". In ancient and even contemporary dress, these are protruding and conspicuous part of one's clothing. They are critical
too because, if they are grasped, the person can thus be controlled and overthrown. It will be shameful if they are not tidy nor respectable. Their tightening and loosening may serve to control the person's movement. The implication is that a leader plays a critical role both as a figure-head (being conspicuous) and as practically important in a strategic sense (functionally vulnerable). A leader, like part of one's clothing, serves a protective function, makes one look respectable and is physically close to one. Chinese leaders are expected to behave paternally and control the behaviour of others.

It should not be surprising that the Chinese expect a leader to be "bossier" than their Western counterparts do. Given that the Chinese generally accept a more authoritative style, the followers will find it odd for the leader to put priority and time into consulting those being affected, gathering opinions for policy formulation, reasoning with peers, explaining to subordinates, settling differences with opponents, and developing followers. Similarly, I expect Chinese working in Canadian culture would find it hard to accept the role played by leaders here as facilitators of work teams rather than the roles and functions corresponding to Chinese expectations. Canadian managers may go for informality and call each other by first name, dress like their subordinates, mix together with less consciousness of rank, and share work which may appear nasty or trivial.

Chinese followers expect a leader to maintain a greater power distance from them, dress more formally or better than they do, and spend little time on nasty and trivial things that should be done by subordinates. The followers are morally bound to share the burden and trouble of the leader, whether work-related or otherwise. The Chinese adage says: "Eat the gains of the boss; share the worry of the boss". Mismatch between the perception of the leader and the attributes displayed by the leader will likely diminish their respect, leading to the loss of leadership effectiveness. In addition, in the light of their belief in paternalistic leadership, Chinese followers may find an instrumental relationship, with little personal touch, hypocritical and unacceptable. Their commitment is generated through relationship building rather than through extrinsic reward. Hence, Chinese not uncommonly respond better to a pat on the shoulder and "honour the relationship and face given by the boss" than to a coercive way of being led. "You honour me for a foot; I should honour you for a yard" appears to be the attitude Chinese find appropriate for a leader.
(ii) Leading and "Morality"

Leading is closely associated with influencing and controlling people's behaviour; it must therefore rest on a sensitivity to what people will recognize as influencing and controlling forces. In shame-based culture, where external sanctions and criticism from social units serve as the forces for control, the gaining of face and personal pride serve as important motivating factors. Equally, action perceived as causing the loss of face will be highly de-motivating. East and West value these intangible rewards and sanctions differently. In the Western culture, where guilt is the primary force for control, personal achievement and proof of ability tend to carry more weight than external sanctions as the motivating forces. Hence, the Western leadership practices of measuring results, assessing predetermined targets, and installing participative management systems may have less effect on the Chinese than on their Western counterparts, or even none. The Chinese may view such practices with suspicion and, in certain extremes, reject or avoid them. The gaining of face through recognition and a pat on the shoulder by the boss has more effect in motivating them to perform their best than reminding them of the need to meet pre-determined targets.

D. Matching Controlling Behaviour with Metaparadigms of Causality, Time, Self and Morality.

Control is the part of the management process that involves monitoring activities to ensure they are being accomplished as planned and correcting any significant deviations. Examining this function in the context of Redding's (1980b) metaparadigms, one can see many of the arguments may overlap with those discussed above. These arguments will not be repeated here. Control is not an isolated activity. It is not possible to be effective without detailed planning. Detailed planning means predicting the future, setting measurable objectives, and scheduling events. These activities require the beliefs that: success or failure is not attributable to fate; the future can be controlled by human beings; events follow a linear time sequence; and prediction relies on analysis and not intuition. With these criteria, the Chinese metaparadigms of causality and time do not support planning behaviour in the Western form. Without the basis of sound planning, control becomes difficult, if not impossible.

Control measures results and achievements. Corrective action is taken regardless of who made the error. However, the self metaparadigm affects the control process. In a high-context
society, where relationship has to be honoured, one must be very careful of pointing out a mistake without first finding out who made it. Pointing out what is wrong will often lead to conflict and argument, which is not normally handled openly in light of the face issue. One must be sensitive to the possibility of breaking the relationship. Corrective action is often perceived as punitive; therefore taking such action needs particular attention, because the Chinese self-metaparadigm suggests that the Chinese do not easily separate issue from person.

From my observation (Pun, 1991) of action-learning groups of Chinese, I realised that Chinese managers do not easily separate comments on one's behaviour or performance from comments on one's personality. The Chinese tend to view and think holistically: they therefore tend to take things personally. Hence, performance appraisal systems from the West face serious challenges in Chinese culture. Pointing out one's weakness in the job will probably be taken sensitively as a criticism of the person per se. The Western way of calling a spade a spade may be seen as hurting: a Chinese manager's discreet way of making comments on the performance of a Western subordinate will be found too indirect. To avoid "putting people on the spot" and to attend to the sensitivity of relations, a "middle-person" is often asked to pass along negative comments and warnings. The boss's right-hand man, or the first amongst the equal subordinates, is often the messenger of such messages from the boss. Such an indirect method of giving feedback is not seen as proper in Western culture. However, it is not completely unacceptable, being sometimes favoured for conflict resolution. I conclude that the self paradigm makes controlling different between East and West.

E. Communication Behaviour

Organizational behaviour studies of the Chinese would be incomplete without examining the topic of communication. Actually, no planning, organising, leading and controlling is possible without communication, which serves as the link for the whole management process. I start by examining Chinese communication patterns.

Social scientists observing Chinese verbal behaviour often come to a common view that the Chinese are modest. Their modesty is often reflected in the way they play down their own ability publicly, flatter others effusively, and attribute their success to their boss, teacher or group rather
than to themselves. Bond (1991) labelled this "relationship-honouring" and this way of discourse "self-effacement". There are no lack of examples where Chinese are complimented but refuse to accept it, making Westerners embarrassed. For instance, when one compliments the dress of a Chinese lady as pretty, she not uncommonly disagrees with the comment; however, this does not really indicate that she refuses to accept the compliment. On the contrary, this "self-effacement" is an act of modesty. A Westerner finds it rude when a compliment is rejected, while a Chinese finds it arrogant when one is accepted. It would be no wonder if neither side ever had anything nice to say about the other.

Chinese students often appear reluctant to raise questions and make comments. They refrain from debating. Similarly, I also observed (Pun, 1991) Chinese managers in action-learning groups avoiding "real encounter". To avoid open challenge and acknowledgement of doubt, Chinese managers will resort to ritualistic behaviour. For example, they will allow others to speak first and exchange compliments among the members. If the facilitator adds "pressure" to bring issues out into the open, a very cautious response or a complete silence will result. It is true that to be tolerant is a Chinese virtue. Arrogance or assertiveness is not seen as appropriate behaviour. When Chinese are put into a situation where they must have open communication—for example, a performance-appraisal situation or a debate in a meeting—the avoidance can reach the depths of playing a game to meet the demands of the situation if non-compliance or non-participation would be interpreted as uncooperative. They can easily "put on a show" to meet the communication demand.

Parliamentary debate is an important part of Western political activity. Not only at school, but also in the family itself, are small parliaments for children in the West to learn asserting one's rights and opinions. This pattern of communication is never a feature in the Chinese family. Children not only are discouraged from debating with their elders but also are not supposed to assert their rights. The father has the absolute right to make choices for the children and overrule their decisions. Consultation is not a common practice, yet children can expect benevolence and consideration from the parent. In work situations, which often require challenging one another, there is always the potential risk of offending others. Chinese managers often choose not to risk offending anyone, by keeping silent, not making any committing comments nor taking any stand. Similarly, criticism is often construed as not giving face to the other. Defensive responses are natural if
someone intervenes and acts as devil's advocate in discussions. Because losing face in front of others is a serious matter, Chinese managers tend to confront or withdraw rather than to change their position if the change would involve the loss of face. "Taking disagreement personally" is not uncommon amongst the Chinese: "agreeing to disagree" is more easily found in the West than the East.

Bond postulated two types of communication, Instrumental versus Affective:

An instrumental style of communication is goal oriented, and aims to bring the individual into verbal exchange. People use words as tools to chisel an agreement from the intersection of everyone's goals for the interaction. Those in the instrumental position, like Americans, perceive speech as a resource for control and self-extension. An affective style is relationship oriented, and the verbal content reflects the attempt of the speaker to adjust to the feelings of the other parties to the conversation. The participants are more concerned about the attitudes of the other parties than about the outcome of the conversation. Indeed the enhancement of the relationship itself is likely to be the important outcome, even in business encounter. Chinese fall within this affective tradition, since one component of the indirect style values group harmony over individual assertion. The emphasis on relationship and affect during verbal exchanges also means that people avoid confrontational, argumentative talk. In Chinese culture the light of truth does not arise from the clash of opposing opinions: too much is at stake.... The Western tradition of straight talk, open debate, friendly disagreement, and loyal opposition has no place in an interpersonal system focused on relationship rather than 'truth'. (1991, p.55)

In many ways, the Chinese tend to be more sensitive to "communication interferences" over harmony and team cohesiveness. Knowing how to adjust to the other parties' fugue in the conversation--particularly to people in authority or in decision-making positions--is a communication skill essential for survival in Chinese culture. The Western way of assertiveness, seeking the light of truth and the optimal solution through arguments, is not valued in Chinese culture. One may win the battle but lose the war in business by not attending the Chinese to communication practice.

In the light of this conflict-avoidance style, Chinese may not verbally hold to their own principles and marshal their arguments when the situation is risky or the other party to the conversation is aggressive. As a result, in negotiations they may not choose to advance their wants and arguments openly. However, they may expect the other party to be aware of their need and
situation and to make concessions accordingly, even without openly arguing that the other party is responsible for doing so. If one party takes the initiative to do so, the other party will honour the respect by reciprocation. "Rao"—to return and honour the favour received—is an obligatory act in interactional processes amongst the Chinese. Failing to observe the rules of this "game" will be criticised as lack of "human compassion" or "Ren Qing", a concept discussed earlier. Often the gesture of showing concession or honouring the feelings of the other party in the negotiation process that can bring about unexpected results.

On the other hand, adherence to rigid principle, to one's political stand, and to wordings in a written contract may be seen as an aggressive act of opposition. When the act is perceived as diminishing the other party's face, the reaction can be disproportionately aggressive. The principles of harmony and "face giving" will apply only if the relationship is maintained. Once it is broken, the rules of conflict will be totally different. The Chinese Government's reaction to the Hong Kong Governor's (Hon. Mr. Chris Patten) inflexible position in bringing about proposals for democratic reform to the Legislative Council in Hong Kong resulted in political tension and a verbal battle in 1993. The end result was "loss / loss" situations, in which the stock market became very volatile in Hong Kong and the threat of retaliation on British's companies' investment in China was imminent. However, the greater the threat, the more the Chinese side stiffens and resists to change. Face once is broken is difficult to mend. Communication breaks down and negotiation comes to a halt. All the "I.I" (correct behaviour) will no longer be observed. "When thou are short of human-heartedness (Ren), I shall be short of righteousness (Yi)". This is a good excuse to put away restraint and to start the real fight. Politics in this situation is played differently when conflict reaches this stage.

The Western tradition of straight talk, open debate, disagreement with facts and not the person, respect for difference in opinion, acceptance of diversity and divergent views has no place in this situation. Backbiting, gossiping, innuendo, rumours and even personal attack are common strategies in the face of opposition. Governor Patten of Hong Kong said in a TV interview that Chinese descriptions of him as a "whore", a "guilty man in history" and other degrading phrases made his wife amazed that he still looked the same to her! Such verbal attack from a government within a diplomatic relationship can hardly be seen from the West as rational and reasonable.

To conclude, reviews from literatures suggest the that the psychology and organizational
behaviour of the Chinese are in many aspects unique. Their cultural and behavioural characteristics are different from the Westerners. Tracing from their child rearing practices, family education and schooling, we find the Chinese socialize and learn differently from the Westerners. Due to the unique characteristics of the written language, some scholars suggest that the result of learning it shapes the Chinese way of thinking to being concrete. Other scholars suggest that for geographical reasons, the Chinese develop their unique ways of relating to people. In a high-context culture, Chinese people interact and relate to each other differently from the Westerners in the low-context culture. Some scholars argue that their metaparadigms of causality, probability, morality and self are different from the Westerners. As a result, planning, organising, leading, controlling and communicating behaviour of the Chinese in organizations are equally different from the Westerners. These differences and unique characteristics of the Chinese were discussed in the socialization, learning, thinking, social and organizational behaviour dimensions of the Chinese under four different sections in this chapter.

Understanding the cross-cultural differences between East and West from different perspectives discussed above help find out what behind the Chinese face and the Chinese mind that explains their behaviour. One approach to understanding what is behind human minds comes from knowing their outlook or their constructs. The following chapter will discuss the human process of perceiving and interpreting the world through the development of personal constructs. The subsequent discussion will also touch on the theory and techniques which capture how people learn to know their world. It also lays the foundation for the methodology proposed for this research.
Part II

Rationale of the Research Design

and

Research Methods
CHAPTER 4
Perceiving and Interpreting the World: The Personal Construct Perspective and Methods of Inquiry

What causes people from different cultures to misread each other and produce conflicts in the workplace without even realizing it? One noticeable cause, deeply ingrained yet little recognized, is the mental map or mind-set people use to examine new situations and behavioural transactions in another culture. This mental map is built upon the values and perceptions formulated in the course of their socialization. Senge (1990) suggested that fundamental change from this established view involves "Metanoia—a shift of mind." which is difficult yet necessary; learning involves a fundamental shift of mind.

Revans (1984) argued that learning equals programmed knowledge plus questioning insight, a learning formula (L=P+Q) with which management educators and action learning proponents generally concur. Questioning insight involves challenging deeply ingrained assumptions and the mental models that we use to understand our world and take action. Changing our mental model is difficult and involves pain. Rogers (1969) pointed out that there is no growth and learning without pain, because the process involves self-reorganization in the perception of oneself, is threatening and hence tends to be restricted.

Problems in the shift of paradigms are often the fundamental barrier to change. Understanding and transforming the mind-set that shapes our world views are the keys for change to take place. We can avoid misreading each other only through knowing other people's world view. Cross-cultural conflict in the workplace can be minimised only if we can assume the outlook others employ to perceive their world of reality. For this reason, I start this chapter's discussion by examining the concept of world view and perceptions of reality.

I. World View and Perception of Reality

Abbey (1960) refers to world view as the way people see reality, the way people see or perceive the world and the way they "know" it to be. It is the way people see themselves in relation
to all else or, conversely, it is the way people see all else in relation to themselves. People from the same culture share similar world views, being collectively programmed by virtue of similar socialization. Hesselgrave (1978) sees culture and world view as closely connected. In the first place, people in large cultural groupings tend to share certain fundamental commonalities in defining reality around them. This commonality is a part of culture. In the second place, people are born and reared "into" culture. They are "enculturated", to use the anthropological term. By this process, their culture is made uniquely their own; the cultural reality becomes their reality over time. In the third place, taking this culturally determined view of reality does not mean that every way of looking at reality is valid. However, I should stress that the way of looking at reality that prevails in a particular culture is valid for the members of that culture. It is that validity that one must take seriously. People in that particular culture will interpret messages within the framework of a reality provided by their own culture. Downs (1971) considers that people live in coherent groups and define the world around them; they decide what is real and how to react to this reality.

Geisler (1978) likens the various world views to coloured glasses through which people see themselves and the universe around them. Everything is given the "tint" or "hue" of whatever particular "world view glasses" the person is used to. Learning to know another culture is putting away one pair of glasses (even temporarily) in order to look at the world through another pair. The literature I discussed in earlier chapters shows that Chinese wear world view "glasses" which are very different from those of Canadians. What would happen when the Chinese with their tinted "glasses" view the Canadian workplace while the Canadians with a different pair of "glasses" view the behaviour of the Chinese? Understanding the "glasses" of the Chinese and "what their perceived reality is" in the Canadian workplace will shed light on how to better manage cultural diversity and business dealings with the Chinese. I earlier examined the "glasses" of the Chinese through a literature review of Chinese psychology and organizational behaviour. I shall later examine through the data the picture of organizational behaviour perceived by the Chinese and try to understand their reality from that frame of mind.

Why do people wear their cultural "glasses"? We know that they may give a distorted picture when people perceive reality. Ritt and Funkhouser (1986) argue that people like predictability and dislike uncertainty. In the everyday course of their lives, people would like to know in advance what
to expect and how to guide their behaviour; probably they want to conserve their energy and attention for those events that are not everyday, for which they have to work out fresh solutions and behavioural repertories. Consequently, if they already possess routines that experience has shown function smoothly, they develop “trustworthy recipes for thinking as usual” or handy scripts for producing and interpreting behaviour in everyday situations (Lewis, 1980). So people really don't have to think much about what they are doing in everyday situations; they just follow the recipe. These recipes also provide implicit explanations for events. And these explanations in turn are embedded in the cultural contents of myths, symbols, and ritual. These recipes are required for people entering a new cultural map, which guides what one ought to and ought not to do. This is where social perception comes in, shaping the interpretation of behaviour and events within the cultural framework of the organizational players.

Ritti and Funkhouser (1987) support the notions shared by other writers on social perception that “what we believe is what we see”, “what we perceive” is not actually what is there, nor is an event we see what is happening. We unconsciously patch up, distort, or add to “reality” to make what we “see” consistent with our other perceptions or with our past experience. People form their reality not solely from what is out there but also from their own perception, through their own store of facts, prejudices, and stereotypes. They consequently arrive at a coherent, though erroneous, account of what they saw. Our social perception of organizational events, according to Ritti and Funkhouser, is influenced by context, just as is physical perception. But the context for social perception includes all our past organizational experience, including beliefs, stereotypes, and those trustworthy recipes for thinking-as-usual. When we realize that inconsistencies exist between what we see and what we know, we tend to sort out this dissonance through various defence mechanisms. We consciously and unconsciously ignore, distort and invent so that reality accords with what we believe. As a result, reality is not determined by what is out there, value-free and totally objective. It is clouded by our subjective interpretation and our interpretation is shaped by that collective programming of the mind, culture. Similarly, Koffa (1935) argues that every datum is a behavioural datum; physical reality is not a datum but a construct.

So far, little work has been done to understand how the Chinese perceive reality and interpret organizational events from their own perspectives. Most of these few studies were based not on the
participants' epistemology but on that of the researcher. Bougon, Weick, and Binkhorst (1977) state that organizational problems are mind-environment problems. In other words, problems in organization can be better understood and solved if we understand the outlook and the world view of the organization's participants. It appears that my approach to understanding organizational problems and cross-cultural differences shares the same epistemological view. However, authors who write about the concept of "world view", though insightful, have not provided methodologies and ways to capture how people perceive reality and interpret the world. With this in mind, I would like to examine in greater detail the methodologies that may help explore how people perceive and interpret reality. Furthermore, I shall discuss these techniques of capturing the process of perception and interpretation.

II. Exploring how people perceive and interpret reality—Theory and Technique

In this research, I studied the problem from a qualitative perspective. Though there are variations between different qualitative approaches, my underlying rationale rests on the theoretical perspective of phenomenology, where the emphasis and focus of the research is the researchees. The researcher takes the epistemological stance that knowledge rests within subjective experience. The appreciation of world phenomena depends on the ability to understand how human beings shape the world from inside themselves. My main objective, then, is to understand the researchees' experience from their own perspective and frame of mind. This study supports an emic orientation to knowledge creation, in contrast to the positivist "etic" orientation that reality and knowledge is "out there". The former seeks to understand the phenomena in terms of the way they look to the respondent, using the respondent's conceptual categories. The latter tries to understand phenomena in terms how they look from the outside, using the researcher's conceptual categories.

Studying cross-cultural differences in organizational behaviour requires understanding not only the difference in the form of behaviour between two cultures but also the interpretation of the behaviour and the mental maps by which these behaviours are interpreted. The mental maps for interpreting reality, derived from the participants' life stories and lived experience, are known as narrative schemata or meta-narratives in phenomenological, hermeneutic terms (Polkinghorne, 1988). We can only understand the respondents' thinking, process of interpreting each other's
behaviour, and meta-narratives through the interpretive research paradigm. Hence, the qualitative approach under an interpretive paradigm is the most appropriate one for my study.

A. The Personal Construct Perspective

"What is a personal construct?" At first, a grand term that terrifies people when they first hear it. G. Kelly (1955) believed that human beings look at their world through transparent patterns or templates, which they first create and then attempt to fit over the realities that compose the world. He names these patterns used as ways of understanding the world "constructs". These enable people to chart a course of behaviour and make proper responses to stimuli. People improve these constructs by increasing the repertory, by altering them to provide better fits, and by subsuming them in superordinate constructs or systems. From an adult-educator's point of view, people learn when they make changes in their constructs. Kelly was convinced that human beings create their own ways of seeing the world in which they live; the world does not create them for the human beings. People build constructs and try them on for size. They organize constructs into groups and systems that embody subordinate and superordinate relationships.

A construct therefore is a representation of the universe, a representation erected by human beings and then tested against the reality of that universe. The universe being fundamentally composed of a course of events, testing of a construct means testing it against subsequent events, in terms of its predictive efficiency. Although we use constructs to forecast events, we must also employ them for assessing the accuracy of the prediction after the events have taken place. Predictions of events are verified by the constructs' degree of accuracy as the world keeps running. One will modify one's bias on the basis of whether the predictions are valid or misleading, thus generating change and new theories for action to achieve greater predictive efficiency. This fact offers the basis for revision of constructs and, eventually, for their wholesale replacement. Daily experience therefore serves as input for consolidating some of the existing constructs, revising the outdated ones and abandoning the invalid. This holds true for any scientist who formulates a theory and puts it to the test. In the light of the test outcome, the researcher modifies the theory; any theory is transient, subject to verification by new evidence. Our theory of life is similarly modified in the light of our outlook on future events and discoveries. Hence, G. Kelly asserted that human beings are all scientists (1955).
When we speak of "man-the-scientist" or "woman-the-scientist", we are speaking of all humankind and not merely a particular class of people who have publicly attained the stature of "scientist". To construe a person in his or her scientist-like aspect, we refer to the scientist's motivation to predict and control. Not only the professional scientist but also everyone else, in this scientist-like aspect, tries to make sense of experience and anticipate events. In a way, contemporary theorists on adult learning (e.g., Kolb, Rubin & Osland, 1991; Revans, 1987) echo this notion.

Kolb's experiential learning theory (Kolb et al., 1991) suggests a person learns from formulating new theories and testing them out after reflection on concrete experience. Everyone learns from daily experience and from going through the experiential learning cycle to create new theories. One modifies one's theory in the light of the outcome of the experimentation stage. Similarly, Revans (1957) argued that managers learn through exploration, hypothesis testing and theory creation in a similar fashion to man-the-scientist. Though not as a learning theory, G. Kelly (1955, 1969) puts forth similar notions to Kolb's and Revans'.

G. Kelly (1955) observed that there are times when a person holds back from experimenting because of fear of the outcome. Mann and Subas (1989) called such fears blocks to learning. The conclusion of an experiment may lead to ambiguity or upsetting the result of previous experiments. In consequence, one's previous base for prediction and control becomes no longer valid. However, one may also keep one's constructs strictly to oneself, to avoid having them tested prematurely. Kelly referred to this idea as the tightening of constructs, which hinders change. Mann refers to it as blocking learning by ignoring experience, denying data, avoiding implications and rationalising away chances to formulate a new theory. The learner holds back from trying out new experiments.

G. Kelly's theory (1955), though akin to a learning theory, stands in contrast to learning theories like behaviourism, which has been most popular in North America. G. Kelly explicitly refuses simplistic behaviourism on the grounds that "one does not learn certain things from the nature of the stimuli which play upon him (but) only what his cognitive framework permits him to see in the stimuli" (p.75). This notion supports the importance of one's world view in perceiving reality, rather than to reality out there as an object.

Adams-Webber (1977) pointed out that originally the central focus of personal construct theory was psychotherapy. The principal function of the "therapist", from the standpoint of personal
construct theory, is to assist the clients in formulating theories, deriving and testing hypotheses, evaluating the results of their own experiments and revising their hypotheses in the light of the data. I see many striking parallels between this view of therapy and the views of experience-based learning theories. They both focus upon personal change and shift of mind as a result of experience, reflection and experimentation.

Probably because of this, researchers have applied the personal construct theory to the field of human resource development, in academic research as well as in operational uses such as interviewing and vocational guidance (Easterby-Smith, 1980). Equally true is that its application flourishes more in the UK and Europe than in North America. Cooper and Cox (1989) attributed this to cultural differences and dissimilarities in social science traditions. Much American social science is based either on behaviourism or the humanist school. In Europe, the dominant influences are the psycho-analytic schools (particularly in southern Europe) and an empirical but cognitive approach owing much to the gestalt school (Cooper & Cox, 1989). Significantly, American theories that have achieved wide acceptance in Europe are essentially either psychoanalytic (e.g., transactional analysis, Berne, 1961) or cognitivist (e.g., personal construct theory, H.H. Kelly, 1971). It is therefore no surprise that personal construct theory, with its epistemological stance that is contrary to behaviourism, has proven less popular or acceptable in North America. The cultural diversity of Canada demands, however, a theory that is valuable rather than traditional; hence, personal construct theory should gain in popularity and significance in the future. It is also gaining greater acceptance not only because of its contributions but also because of advanced computer technology's assisting the time-consuming and lengthy analyses the theory requires when dealing with a large number of respondents.

Personal construct theory was originally developed as a basis for counselling. It was not until the late 1960s that researchers realised its potential in non-clinical areas. Since that time, it has been used in many other fields, including education, management research and business applications. The personal construct theory not only is a body of knowledge or a discipline but also contains several diagnostic techniques. One of these techniques, the repertory grid, has been adopted extensively by psychologists and professionals in other disciplines. The repertory grid is a powerful method of exploring personal construct systems. It attempts to stand in others' shoes, to see their world as they
see it, to understand their situation and credit their concerns. In this study, I adopt the repertory grid method. It would be timely to introduce it at this point. However, I shall further discuss the philosophy of the personal construct theory, on which this grid rests, after setting the stage by introducing the grid itself.

B. The Repertory Grid--as a Method of Inquiry

G. Kelly (1955, 1969) argued that it would be useful to look at personal construct systems as consisting of hierarchically linked sets of bipolar constructs, such as tall-short, smart-dull, arrogant-humble etc. Adams-Webber (1977) asserted that a construct is meaningful in so far as it provides the basis for perceived similarities and differences among the events to which it is applied. One pole of the construct represents the basis of perceived similarity between at least two events, and the other pole denotes the basis of their contrast with at least one other event. A person's construct cannot be fully understood without encompassing both its poles, since the contrast is just as necessary as the similarity in defining its meaning. Hence, a personal construct is a system of integrating and differentiating objects, persons, or events to give meaning to the person holding the construct. Understanding the personal constructs of the participants in this study can bring about understanding of how Chinese perceive their world and the workplace. It sounds good in theory that such an understanding can be achieved. What instrument can be used to make this happen? I have found that the repertory grid has the capacity to do so. It provides a means of representing and examining how individuals perceive what is going on around them. As a research technique, I find that it focuses on revealing how one develops an understanding of one's own world. It also contrasts with conventional psychological tests, which attempt to classify people within the psychologist's world view (Easterby-Smith, 1980).

Candy (1990) describes the repertory grid as a conversational strategy that seeks to externalize and, to a degree, to objectify salient aspects of a respondent's personal construct system: that is, the respondent's thinking and feeling about a set of objects, ideas, people, or events. The repertory grid draws on real-life experience; it allows respondents to express their points of view in personally meaningful terms. Perhaps most important, it embodies dimensions rather than mere descriptions and hence allows for the identification of different ways in which the respondent could
view the situation. Candy further suggests that, apart from the elegance and completeness of G. Kelly's (1955) theory, one of the factors that has led to the recent increase in interest in personal construct psychology is its congruence with recent trends in phenomenological and constructivist research paradigms.

I shall now describe the procedure of applying the repertory grid method for research studies. (For clarification, please refer to the simple grid in Figure 3.) First of all, the grid in action asks for a definition of the focus of the investigation. This focus question of the grid should be made as specific as possible. For instance, a specific focus question would be, "How does behaviour in the workplace in Canada differ from that of Hong Kong as demonstrated by different role holders?". It is followed by selecting appropriate elements from which to build the grid. Simply, elements are objects, persons or events being examined. For instance, they can be: "Canadian Boss, Chinese Boss, Canadian Subordinate, Chinese Subordinate...". Constructs generated by the respondents, in simple terms, are dimensions of the object being examined as perceived by the respondents. They are the results of the inquiry. In this case, the findings are dimensions expressed by the respondents, such as "Asserting vs. Listening". There are many way of eliciting the constructs from the respondents. Before turning to how the constructs can be captured, I start with outlining what constitutes a repertory grid. A full repertory grid contains three components:

1. Elements which are the objects of that which is being examined e.g. people, tasks, things, etc.
2. Constructs, which are the ways people compare and describe the different elements.
3. A linking mechanism, which shows how each element is being assessed on each construct.

As the elements determine the focus of the grid, it is important state them as specifically as possible. There are two general points to emphasize about the specification of elements. First, the elements should be homogeneous (i.e., they should all be drawn from the same category). For example, Chinese Boss, Canadian Boss, Chinese Peer, Canadian Peer, Myself, Chinese Subordinate, Canadian Subordinate; they are different yet belong to the same category: people in the workplace. The reason for not mixing categories in a set of elements is that the constructs generated from elements in one category are probably not applicable to elements in another category. For example, the construct "friendly vs. unfriendly" can be applied to most people, but it would be difficult to describe setting job priorities in terms of friendly versus unfriendly. In the second place, the
elements should provide representative coverage of the area to be investigated. A grid about the key tasks of a university professor that does not include research would be distorted. It is also important to include opposing dimensions, such as a “effective professor vs. ineffective professor”, or in the case of this study, “Chinese vs. Canadian”.

Elements can be generated in a variety of ways. First, the researcher can supply the elements, for example by providing a list of named individuals or several job elements. Second, one can provide role or situation descriptions, specifying a number of types of people or some typical activities at work. The respondent must then give specific examples to fit these general descriptions. Third, elements can be generated through a defined “pool”. For instance, the researcher asks the respondent to name three effective professors or to list six major activities at work, etc. Fourth, one can elicit the elements through discussion; the interviewer prepares a number of prompts to help the respondent draw up a list of specific elements. Each method has its merits and drawbacks. The investigator should choose the method on the basis of practicability and the objective for which the grid is used. For this research, I provided a role description: Chinese boss, Canadian boss.... It provided flexibility to allow the respondents to fit into these roles the actual names of people they encountered in the workplace who best represented these roles. At the same time, the provision of roles enables me to group the results from various respondents together for further analysis and pattern identification.

As I mentioned earlier, one can also generate constructs in various ways. First of all, one can supply them. This helps to focus on some important dimension to be investigated. The constructs supplied must be well known to the respondents, because they are not being asked to contribute their own descriptions of the elements. For instance, a participant on a leadership course may be asked to rate the leader he encounters on such dimensions as "gives clear instructions vs. gives unclear instructions", "supports new ideas vs. inhibits new ideas", etc. However, this method goes against the personal construct theory and should only be used when the constructs have been originally generated by the respondents. Otherwise, the method will collect ratings based on the researcher’s construct rather than those of the researchees. Second, constructs can be elicited from triads. This involves selecting groups of three elements (triads) at random from the full list of elements. The interviewer asks in what way two of the elements are alike and different from the third. This
procedure is repeated until the interviewee cannot think of further descriptions or new constructs of the elements. My research follows a modified way of triading to generate the elements, which I will discuss in later sections. Another way of generating the constructs comes from laddering, which is normally used in conjunction with one of the other methods. Thus, a few constructs having been elicited by triading, the interviewer then asks the respondent to look more closely at the first construct: Which end of the construct is preferable and why is this so? In this way a series of new constructs can be generated. The question “why” tends to reproduce constructs described in general terms, while the questions “what” or “how” tend to produce more specific constructs. It is the latter category of construct for which this research intends to look.

When the elements and constructs are generated, there are different ways to link the constructs in relation to the elements.

1. Dichotomizing: If the respondent considers the element is closer to the left pole of the construct, a tick is placed in the box; if it is closer to the right row, a cross. Dichotomizing tends to be more useful if manual analysis is required or if the grid is to be used for discussion purposes. When the research is intended to be a qualitative one and discussion of the phenomenon is intended, the dichotomizing approach can be used.

2. Dichotomizing could be seen as a 2-point rating scale. More normally rating scales would have 5, 7, or 11 points. Ratings on 5- or 7-point scales allow for slightly more discrimination on each construct. However, 6, 8 or 12 points can be used if the middle rating in the odd-number rating scale is not preferred. The results can easily be dichotomized manually with ticks and crosses for quick analysis with the respondents. This rating-scale approach also provides an opportunity to check whether the elements really are in the range of convenience of all the constructs—and thus if the grid has been construed correctly.

3. Ranking allows, in the case of six elements in a grid, the elements to be put in order from 1 to 6 on each construct. This is like a 6-point rating scale where no score may be repeated. Ranking scales provide much greater discrimination, but this may force interviewees to indicate differences between elements where they really see no difference.

The choice of methods depends on the purpose for which the grid is designed. A researcher using the triading method can write each element onto a card, the give the respondents three cards
on every occasion, asking them to select which two are most similar. This elicits a word or phrase that describes what is similar about the pair selected and a contrasting word or phrase which describes what is different about the singleton. In a trial test of this method, I asked the respondents to state "How behaviour in the workplace in Canada differs from that of Hong Kong". This is the focus question for the grid. The elements on people are placed on the top column. These elements include: "Canada Boss", "Chinese Boss", "Canada Peer", "Myself", "Chinese Peer", "Canada Subordinate" and "Chinese Sub-ordinate". The procedure described above generated the results in Figure 3.

The dimensions generated are constructs on the side columns. The (/) and (X) become the linking mechanism. The (*) indicates the triads taken; for each triad, there should be a pair of (/) and a (X). Examining the grid externalizes the respondent’s mental picture for our examination. The repertory grid can be analysed by computer. The manual method is useful when the number of grids for analysis is limited. For a more elaborated analysis and for grids to be compared, a computer programme is necessary. However, when an individual grid has been analysed manually before analysis by computer, the process allows the researcher to assimilate and digest the data better for in-depth analysis. I consider this part of the process very important, although it is time-consuming. Only through such a method can the data speak more personally to me.

To elaborate how the grid is analysed manually, I shall again use Figure 3 as an example. As a starting point, simply look at the phrases or dimensions used to describe each construct of the grid in the table. For instance, in this grid, "power conscious vs. indifferent to power", "demand for concrete result vs. demand for time together", "loyalty vs. self oriented", "informal vs. serious/formal" and "mixing vs. distant". These are the interpretations the respondent placed upon the cross-cultural differences between the Canadians and the Chinese. What's important is not only what dimension the respondent chooses, but also which the respondent sees as not similar. The outcome of the phrases gives clues to perceiving themes and for coding data collected from other grids and interviews.
Apart from examining the dimensions of the construct, it is useful to focus on the pattern of ticks and crosses in the matrix, because the matrix shows how each construct is being used in describing the set of elements. It also indicates which elements and which constructs the respondent see as alike or different. Through looking at the columns as a start, one may obtain a thumb-nail sketch of how each of the people have been described. Thus, a Chinese boss (element 2) is perceived to be power conscious, demanding concrete results, loyal, serious, formal, and distant. The person who completed this grid sees himself (from the data in the "myself" column) as similar to "Chinese Boss" on all except the last construct. It indicates that the respondent is "mixing" but his perception of Chinese boss is "distant". The comparison between "Canada peer" and "Canada subordinate" (elements 3 and 5) shows matched ticks or crosses on all 5 constructs. One might conclude that this respondent sees that “Canada peers” are more like “Canada subordinates” (at least, in comparison with the other 5 people in this set). On the other hand, the comparison between "myself" and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canada Boss</th>
<th>Chin. Boss</th>
<th>Canada Peer</th>
<th>Chin. Peer</th>
<th>Canada Subordinate</th>
<th>Chin. Subordinate</th>
<th>Myself</th>
<th>( X )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power Conscious</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>In-different to power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand for Concrete Result</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Demand for Time together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Serious &amp; formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Distant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Illustration on the use of Repertory Grid
"Canada peer" and "Canada subordinate" shows disagreement on all except the last construct.

"Myself" is similar to others in the dimension of mixing but not in the other aspects. Hence, the respondent does well socially with the "Canada peer" and "Canada subordinate" but may differ totally in other dimensions. In addition, if we compare "Canada boss" (element 1) and "Chinese subordinate" (element 6), they show disagreement on all constructs. The cross and ticks are exactly dissimilar to each other. What will be the implication for a Canadian boss having a Chinese subordinate? Equally, what is the implication for a Chinese boss having a Canadian subordinate when they show dissimilarity in all the constructs? In a way, the respondent in the grid identifies himself more with the Chinese in general and in particular with the Chinese boss. His strength lies in his perceived ability to mix with others as a major point of commonality with Canadians. If he can make use of the contact and the mixing, he may loosen his construct and resolve the cultural differences.

By examining the columns, we may draw a number of conclusions about how the respondent views the cross-cultural differences in the workplace from the roles of different people. However, it is also possible to see by looking at the rows of the matrix whether there are any underlying trends in the way these classifications are made. By counting the number of matches and mismatches in the ticks and crosses, one can see that Construct A ("power conscious vs. Indifferent to power") and Construct C ("loyalty vs. self oriented") are used in the same way for all elements. Thus, in most cases the respondent may see loyal people as power-conscious people. A comparison of constructs D ("informal vs. formal") and construct C ("loyalty vs. self-oriented") shows disagreement for all 7 elements. But if the ticks and crosses were switched round so that it read "loyal"-"self-oriented", the two constructs would be identical. Therefore, these constructs have a complete negative correlation. In essence, these are the same construct: in all the seven cases, serious and formal people are perceived to possess loyalty. In addition, informal people are seen as self-oriented. Equally true, the respondent sees serious and formal people as power-conscious and informal people as indifferent to power; row 4 is exactly the opposite of row 1. This mental map hidden in the respondent's psychological process channels the way he anticipates behaviour and how he will respond. The grid externalises perception so we gain some insight into his personal construct in cross-cultural aspects.
We should also note that row 1 and row 3 are identical and row 4 and row 5 are nearly identical. Thus, although five constructs are written down for this grid, when we examine them, we can see that there are only three distinct concepts being applied in distinguishing between the 7 people listed as elements. It is, indeed, uncommon to find people who have only three completely distinct ways of making classifications about people or situations—most of the descriptive terms they use are mere nuances of these overall themes. It would be useful if I can extract such classifications from the grid for the people interviewed for this research. I hope to identify common themes shared by the participants in order to expand our knowledge of the perception of cross-cultural differences between Chinese and Canadians in the workplace. These themes or commonality grids, sorted through the computer, I will use as basic data to compare with the themes identified through the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach, which I use as a method of triangulation. If the data are reliable, the themes identified should not contradict each other. In summary, the value of the grid is as follows.

First, perceptions of obscure and ambiguous relationships, though abstract in nature, can be written down precisely in concrete terms for analysis. This is similar to the video camera’s ability to capture action, in that the grid captures people’s mental activity. Second, the visible representation of the perceptions helps to externalise our world view and focuses our analysis. Third, the analysis leads to a better comprehension of how one is dealing with one’s experience. In addition, we can understand how the respondent theorises his or her situation. Fourth, through detailed analysis, we can perhaps probe into areas which can generate surprises and thus understand how the person becomes a "man-the-scientist" or "woman-the-scientist". In a way, we can better predict others’ behaviour by getting into the outlook and the world of the people we research. The world is not a model imposed by the researcher; it is created by the respondent. Equally, the respondent may gain self-insight and benefit from this exploration. It is not only the researcher who is the prime beneficiary of this exercise, but also the individual being invited to this research process.

C. Theory underpinning the Repertory Grid Method

Although the repertory grid method is a powerful tool, there is a danger of taking it merely
as an instrument without grounding it in an appropriate theory. Some practitioners have applied the grid method for the sake of its novelty without consulting the theory underpinning it. The outcome can be disastrous and the results of the application can be misleading. Bannister (1985), in an introduction to a book (Beail, 1985) on the repertory grid, pointed out, though in an exaggerated manner, that the grid method is a Frankenstein’s monster which has rushed away on a statistical and experimental rampage of its own, leaving construct theory neglected, stranded high and dry, far behind. Similarly, Neimeyer (1985) has observed that “psychologists have become so fascinated with grid-induced riddles... that they fail to ground their increasingly esoteric methods in a suitable comprehensive theory” (p.154). It is important that the use of this method is well grounded in its parent theory. In applying the grid method, the researcher takes into consideration the philosophical underpinning of the personal construct theory on which the method rests. It is timely to consider the key assumptions of this theory, which explains how people perceive and interpret the world. I shall explain at suitable points how these ideas coincide with the assumptions behind this research and in what ways the grid method is used in this study.

G. Kelly’s (1955) original work is written in very sophisticated terms not easily comprehended. Especially difficult is the language Kelly uses to describe the postulates and corollaries. I have tried to express the concepts more comprehensibly than the original work does. At the same time, I will link these ideas to the design and assumptions of the research at suitable points.

D. Key Assumptions of the Personal Construct Theory

a. Fundamental Postulate: A person's processes are psychologically channelised by the ways in which [the individual] anticipates events.

A fundamental postulate in a scientific theory is the basic assumptions tentatively accepted as true for subsequent discussion. "Person" refers to the individual rather than any particular process or any particular part of the person's behaviour. "Processes" refers to the existence of mental energy and its kinetic nature. When we use the term "psychologically", we are conceptualizing processes in a psychological manner, rather than other ways, such as physiological or sociological.
"Psychology" refers to a group of systems for explaining behaviour and "channelized" means that a person's process is operated through a network. This network is structured yet flexible, in order to both facilitate and restrict a person's range of action. "Ways" are channels established by the person to achieve the purpose. Each person may establish and use different ways to channelize his or her processes. "Anticipates" fits into the predictive and motivational feature of the theory. The person's structured network of pathways leads toward the future so that the person may anticipate: anticipation is carried on so that future reality may be better represented. With the above notions, G. Kelly (1955) asserts that people are oriented towards the future rather than the past, and that one's own approaches to anticipating what will happen in the future will determine what one does. It presents a view of the person as a kind of "scientist" in one's own right, continually exploring one's world. Thus, the instrument, the repertory grid, should be used to help the individual (rather than the observer) understand his or her world, and it is best used as a kind of psychological "mirror" (Easterby-Smith, 1980).

b. Construction Corollary: A person anticipates events by construing their replications.

In building his system of the psychology of personal constructs, G. Kelly (1955) relies on a single basic postulate and then amplifies the system by stating certain propositions known as corollaries. This corollary introduces the notions of construct and replication. I am using the term construing in this test with a similar meaning as Kelly, who states it as "placing an interpretation". A person construes when he or she establishes a structure, within the framework of which the substance takes shape or assumes meaning. It is important to note that the substance that one construes does not produce the structure; the person does. The structure established is basically abstractive. During the process of construing, the person notes the features in a series of elements that characterize some of the elements and that are uncharacteristic of others. Thus, the person establishes constructs of similarity and contrast; both similarity and contrast are inherent in the same construct. A construct that implies similarity without contrast would represent just a chaotic and undifferentiated abstraction. Kelly also proposes that people anticipate events by construing their "replications". It should be noted that the substance that a person construes is itself a process, a continuous and unending process. It only makes sense when one attunes the ear to recurrent themes
in the continuous flow. In brief terms, once one has given events their beginnings and endings and has construed their similarities and contrasts, it becomes possible to try to make predictions. For example, tomorrow will follow today. What is predicted is not that tomorrow will be a duplicate of today but that there are replicative aspects in a day’s events that may be safely predicted.

**c. Individuality Corollary:** Persons differ from each other in their construction of events.

Individual differences exist not only in the events one seeks to anticipate but also in one’s approaches to the anticipation of the same event. This corollary puts forward the perfectly understandable view that two people in exactly the same situation may perceive the events and react to them in totally different ways. Despite individual differences, sharing of experience is possible, for each may construe the likeness and differences between the events in which they are involved. The repertory grid, which we shall examine later, is particularly sensitive to individual differences. This provides rich and undistorted data for analysis, but combining the grids for each individual requires other mechanisms. Basically, this is the strength as well as the weakness of the instrument.

**d. Organization Corollary:** Each person characteristically evolves, for his or her convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs.

In anticipating events, our constructs may lead to incompatible predictions in the same manner as we experience conflict and contradictions. It is necessary for us therefore to develop ways of anticipating events to transcend contradictions. To understand this corollary, it is necessary to find out the meaning of individual terms. "Characteristically", according to G. Kelly (1955) refers to the personalistic nature of the process. The way constructs are arranged is personal too. This systematic and personal arrangement that characterizes the personality and the individual differences. The construction system does not stand still, although it is relatively more stable than the individual constructs. Hence, it is "evolving".

What, then, is a "construction system"? It is a grouping of constructs in which incompatibilities and inconsistencies have been minimized. They do not disappear but the systematization helps the person avoid making contradictory predictions. Within the system, the constructs bear "ordinal relationships". One construct may subsume another as one of its parts. To make this concept easier to understand, consider the construct "good vs. bad". This construct may
subsume, amongst other things, the two ends of the "intelligent-stupid" dimension. In this sense, "good" would include all "intelligent" things and "bad" would include the "stupid" things plus other things outside the boundary of "intelligent" and "stupid". Again, the "intelligent vs. stupid" construct can be subsumed as a dimension under the construct of "evaluative vs. descriptive". So both "good vs. bad" and "evaluative vs. descriptive" may thus be used as superordinating constructs. One can see that within a construction system there may be many levels of ordinal relationships. When one construct subsumes another, the first's ordinal relationship may be termed "superordinal" and the second's "subordinal". A person systematizes the constructs by arranging them in hierarchies. To anticipate events, one relies upon a system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs. This forms the "organization" of a system for predicting the future. The system can be changed or modified; it is up to the person to preserve or replace the faulty parts of the system.

**e. Dichotomy Corollary**: A person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs.

What does the construct system look like and of what is it "composed"? It consists entirely of constructs and its organizational structure is based on constructs of constructs, in hierarchical form, abstractly cross-referenced in the system of ordinal relationships. "Dichotomous constructs" implies that the construct denotes an aspect of the elements lying within the range of convenience, on the basis of which some of the elements are similar to others and some are in contrast. To make the formation of a construct possible, one needs to have at least three elements in the context, so that two are similar and the other is contrasting. Let's take an example to explain this in concrete terms.

How do people anticipate events? They do so by noting the replicative aspects of what happened before. The process involves choosing which aspects of two events are replications of each other and which other aspects of another event are definitively not a replication of the first two. For instance, I choose Toronto, London and Hong Kong as events for my understanding. They have a commonality--places I have lived. When I choose an aspect in which Toronto and London are similar but in contrast to Hong Kong, it must be the same aspect of all three that forms the basis of the construct, not one aspect of London and Toronto that makes them similar and another aspect that makes them different from Hong Kong. It is the same aspect of these three places where "I have
lived" upon which I base the similarity and differences.

The choice of aspect which determines the similarity of two and contrast to the third is that Toronto and London are in my frame of mind "Western". People speak English there. In this case, I abstract an aspect called "language" as the basis of contrast. Of course, there are other dimensions such as the "parliamentary system", "people will tell you openly if they do not like certain things" and "people eat with fork and knife" that account for other contrasts. The abstracts in them are different from those in Hong Kong that relate to "political", "assertiveness" and "habit". However, having chosen an aspect with respect to which two events are similar to each other, I find, by the same token, another event is definitely not a replication of the first two. With respect to this aspect, two places are similar and the other stands in contrast to them.

How about if I add "furniture" to these three elements for the construct? The latter is not relevant at all and falls outside what is known as the range of convenience of the construct based on "places where I have lived". The range of convenience is generally known as the boundary. Although, "places where I lived" do not offer similarity and differences amongst elements, it helps to determine the boundary or range of convenience. This is an important notion upon which the repertory grid rests. G. Kelly supposes that "all constructs follow the basic dichotomous form. Inside its particular range of convenience a construct denotes an aspect of all the elements lying therein. Outside this range of convenience the aspect is not recognizable.... We suspect that this comes nearer representing the way people actually think" (1955, p.60).

Why does G. Kelly (1955) consider that there is a "finite number" of dichotomous constructs in the corollary? Basically, a person's thinking is not completely fluid; it is channelized. To think about something, one has to follow the network of channels one has laid down for oneself, through socialization, culture, learning etc. New channels are created as a result of recombining the old ones. These channels structure one's thinking and limit one's access to the ideas of others. The channels are, in my own term, mental maps and we see these channels existing in the form of constructs. The challenges to this corollary are "Do people really think in terms of dichotomies?" and "Do people always abstract on the basis of both similarity and contrast?". G. Kelly defends this proposition by stating that much of our language and thinking implies contrast, though not necessarily explicitly. Otherwise, our speech is meaningless. For instance, how does our notion of dichotomous constructs
apply to such "class concepts" as white? Is white not a statement of contrast and of similarity? When we say a person's skin is white, we distinguish it from non-white, or black, yellow, brown and so on. When we talk of "armchair", the construct of "table" has meaning; not only is "armchair" one of the many objects similar to "chair", but also certain other objects of furniture stand in contrast in this respect, for instance, "table" or "bed". The personal construct theory emphasizes the dichotomous nature of the personal construct, which channelises the psychological process.

f. Choice Corollary: A person chooses for himself or herself that alternative in a dichotomized construct through which one anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of one's system.

A construction system not only constitutes dichotomous constructs but also a system by which one places relative values upon the ends of the dichotomies. In this way, the person "chooses" some values as transients and the others as principles. When "choosing", one involves oneself and perceives oneself as being modified through the chain of ensuing events. Because the choices cannot involve a construct that is not dichotomous (e.g. an object that is "edible" and at the same time "nondible") we form "alternatives": otherwise the construct has no meaning at all. Though a construct is composed of mutually exclusive alternatives, G. Kelly (1955) does not imply they cannot be relativistic. Relativistic does not mean ambiguity. We can have "black vs. white" and at the same time have "grey". Grey means one object is relatively less black than the other. With this, we have scales in dichotomous constructs. However, we cannot have the other object blacker than itself. "Grey" is a further abstraction of the construct "black vs. white".

A person anticipates events and therefore makes choices in favour of alternatives that will provide "greater possibility" for accurate prediction. A safety-conscious driver chooses a shorter route rather than speeding to save travel time, because the alternative offers "greater possibility" for achieving one's goal. The choice favours an alternative not only that offers a better "greater possibility" but also moves towards a system that is more explicit and exact. Hence, the choice favours extension and definition. One anticipates events but tries to become more comprehensive; at the same time, one can become more certain of fewer things. Seeking to anticipate events, we make elaborating choices to define and extend the system that helps us to anticipate events. Putting all these together, this corollary implies that people will choose courses of action that will give them
the greatest chance both of succeeding and of increasing their understanding of events. This is the closest that construct theory comes to what is conventionally known in industry as motivation.

**g. Range Corollary:** A construct is convenient for the anticipation of a finite range of events only.

All constructs, like any theory, have a focus and a range of predictability. There is a limit and a boundary to what they can anticipate. The range can sometimes be wider and at other times narrower. The common usage of the term construct has come more and more parallel to the term "concept", however, these two terms should not be confused. Both involve abstraction, but construct is more relevant to what psychologists call "percepts". Construct carries the idea of a personal action and the term emerged more within the context of experiential psychology. Concept is also an abstraction, but is detached and has not emerged from one's personal action.

Let us combine the Dichotomy and Range Corollaries to explore what will take place. Consider the example of studying a Chinese's perception of cross-cultural differences on the construct "assertive vs. obedient". Under conventional logic, researchers try to find out how broadly the respondent applies the term. By that I mean we attempt to expand the term "assertive" to find out what it embraces. The term may cover for a particular individual "verbally expressive", "argumentative", "keeps talking", "insisting on one's point of view". However, as researchers, we may miss a great deal because we assume that everything the respondent does not construe as "assertive" is irrelevant. However, the respondent's use of the construct may be more specially meaningful because of it excludes rather than because of what it includes.

We cannot understand what one means by "assertive" unless we know what one sees as relevantly opposed to "assertive". In this case, the opposite of "assertive" means "obedient", which is more than "unassertive". Obedient is represented by not trying to make known one's viewpoint, argue back or debate. The approach here is to look for the contrasting elements of the person's construct as well as the similar elements. G. Kelly's (1955) position is that contrast is an essential feature of all personal constructs, a feature upon which the very meaning depends. Research looks not only for similar but also for contrasting elements of the respondent's construct. Unless this is understood, researchers in cross-cultural studies cannot claim that they really realize the significance and content of cross-cultural differences, at least not from the framework of those being affected.
h. Experience Corollary: A person's construction system varies as he successively construes the replication of events.

The construct "system" contains groupings of elements made consistent with ordinal relationships between constructs. The construction system is not a stable one but "varies" with input of new percepts. When the construing process is being seen as segmented in sequences of events, we may speak of construing as taking place "successively". A person theorises from each event, which allows the replication of events through reconsidering the replicative aspects. This is very similar to the concept of experiential learning as described by Kolb, Rubin and McIntyre (1991). G. Kelly calls this the "experience corollary" because experience is made up of the successive construing of events. "It is not what happens around a person that makes one experienced: it is the successive construing and reconstruing of what happens, as it happens, that enriches the experience of one's life" (1955, p.72).

With similar notions, experience-based learning advocates such as Revans (1987), Kolb, Rubin and Osland (1991) and Schon (1987) all emphasise reflection and not merely experience. It is only through the processes they call reflection and theorising that experience becomes useful. Learning does not occur merely by repeating the experience but by reconstruing the themes of what has happened. The discovery of replicative themes is essential to learning from experience and for developing new theories. This notion is different from that of the behaviourists. Learning, from their point of view, involves the use of positive or negative reinforcement to fix a response and non-reinforcement to extinguish it. The theme of this corollary argues that learning is not as described by the behaviourists but rather depends on how the person phrases the experience, what recurrent themes the person hears, what reality the person defines and what validation of the predications the person finds. This is why the present research studies the respondents' subjective experience.

i. Modulation Corollary: The variation in a person's construction system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose range of convenience the variants lie.

A construct is "permeable" if it will accept new elements that do not at present exist in its range of convenience. "Permeable" does not mean the construct is loose, inconsistent or tenuous:
it merely refers to the capacity to embrace new elements. A construct, or an aspect of the construction system, can be called permeable if new experience and new events can be added in a differentiating manner to those which it already embraces. A permeable construct may shift slightly but that does not mean it is unstable. Permeable constructs possess resiliency under the impact of new experience and are fairly stable. Stability refers to those aspects of the system that can span a greater variety of new subordinate variation and are less shaken by minor daily events. Constructs that may replace each other are known as variants. For instance, people holding constructs of "coercing" and "instructing" may shift them to "collaborating" and "consulting". Whereas people who worked in the Eastern culture once construed leaders as "coercing" and "instructing", they may now see the difference cross-culturally of leaders seeking "collaboration" and "consultation" with the subordinates. To allow this shift, people may need another construct, within their range of convenience, permeable enough to accept the notion of "collaborating" and "consultation". The two constructs, the old and the new, are the "variants". A personal construct system can hardly be said to have universal utility. A construct has its focus of convenience—a set of objects with which it works best. Over a somewhat larger range it may work only reasonably well; that is its "range of convenience". Beyond the "range of convenience", it fades into uselessness. This term simply means outside one's limit of knowledge to make the interpretation meaningful.

Thus, although our experience corollary implies that one's construction system varies as one successively construes the replication of events, progressive variation must take place within a system. G. Kelly (1955) uses the analogy of governmental procedure, where instructions can be changed only within the framework of fixed directives, and directives can be changed only within the framework of fixed statutes, and statutes can be changed only within the framework of fixed constitutions. One's personal constructs can be changed only within subsystems of constructs, and subsystems can be changed only within more comprehensive systems. Changes take place only through the person construing and making senses out of the events. Hence, one does not learn new things merely from the nature of the stimuli imposed. One learns only what one's framework is designed to permit one to see in the stimuli. In this respect, G. Kelly's theory agrees with my supposition that it is important to research not the reality "out there" but the framework people design to allow them to see the reality.
j. **Fragmentation Corollary**: *A person may successively employ a variety of construction subsystems which are inferentially incompatible with each other.*

This corollary tries to explain that the construct system should not be seen as logic-tight and wholly internally consistent. Such an ideal system cannot exist at all in a meaningful way. What is consistent with what? Is keeping silent in the face of unfairness (a virtue in the East) consistent with the culture in the West? Yet Chinese people here still tend to keep silent when they are treated unfairly. Is working like a dog for the sake of money in the East consistent with the life-style in Canada? Yet, many Chinese give quality of life less attention than making money even after immigration to a new culture. If everything can be reconciled and made to appear consistent, this will not meet our basic criterion of a construct—at least two things are alike and the third different from the other two. When it is not a construct, it cannot anticipate events. The term "construct" therefore has no meaning.

However, we deal with inconsistency by using what Festinger (1957) called "cognitive dissonance", in which we distort our own perception of the reality to make the reality compatible with our belief. In dealing with the incompatibility, one can dismiss or ignore the alien idea, reinterpret the inconsistency in such a manner that it can be assimilated, or alter the attitude one previously held. Consistency and inconsistency are personal labels. One person or group of people in the same culture may see inconsistency where another may see consistency. Arguing for your own right when it has been neglected by your boss may be an inconsistency to some people but totally consistent to others. A person's consistency is a construct and it is a personal one. In essence, the fragmentation corollary means that one's subsequent bets on the turn of minor events may not always match with one's earlier bets. Linking up with the Modulation Corollary, it tolerates inconsistency between subsystems.

k. **Commonality Corollary**: *To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person.*

That two persons are involved in the same event does not mean that they construe the event in the same way. Because they construe the events differently, they predict and therefore react
differently. However, a person anticipates events by construing their replication. We can argue that when two persons encounter different events, if they employ the same construction of experience, their psychological processes will be similar. Note that these arguments differ from the notion that if one person has experienced the same event as another, the second will duplicate the first’s psychological processes—an assumption made by stimulus-response psychology.

In addition, "it is not what happens around one that makes one experienced; it is the successive construing and reconstruing of what happens, as it happens, that enriches one's experience" (G. Kelly, 1955, p.72). With this understanding, we need not assume that it would take identical events in two people’s lives to make them act alike. Two people can act alike even if the stimulus presented to them is different. It is in the similarity of the constructions of events that we find the basis for similar action, and not in the events being identical to each other. This notion helps to resolve the possible implications of contradiction between the individuality and the commonality corollaries.

Why does G. Kelly use the term "to the extent" to start explaining this corollary? He is referring to the fact that when we say “Mary is different from Nancy” we do not mean they have nothing in common. We express it thus to indicate a differentiation for the listener. Hence, we are designating a totality of aspect in which the two listeners’ constructions of experience may be considered as similar—commonality. However, there are still differences which can be considered under the individuality corollary. “Construction of experience” involves taking stock of the outcome of the successive process of conceptualising the event. If the two people’s outcome of the stocktaking is similar, their anticipations will be similar.

The above has many implications for the study of culture. Certain groups of people behave similarly. We attribute this to the fact that culture plays a role, in that people can be grouped according to similarities in their upbringing and their environment. This way of seeing cultural differences is based on the stimulus-response theory. However, according to G. Kelly (1995), culture means similarity in what members of the group expect of each other. The similarity-of-expectations view of culture is also consistent with the fundamental postulate that people’s psychological processes are channelized by the ways in which they anticipate events. That makes the psychology of personal constructs an anticipatory theory of behaviour. People belong to the same cultural group,
not merely because they behave alike, nor just because they expect the same things of others, but also and especially because they construe their experience in the same way. This commonality corollary therefore offers useful insight from another perspective on why people from the same culture think and behave alike.

1. Sociality Corollary: To the extent that one person construes the construction process of another, one may play a role in a social process involving the other person.

To better understand and predict behaviour in any given social situation, we place ourselves in the shoes of another person. This process requires more than construing another person’s behaviour; it involves construing the other person’s construction process. When we construe another person’s way of seeing the world, we activate in ourselves a version of the other person’s world view. Only through role-enactment can the viewpoint of others be truly sensed. Thus, a "role" can be seen as a continuous pattern of behaviour that follows from our understanding of how the other is associated with us. It is also understanding a position that one can play in a certain social unit without even waiting for it to be signified. Role is tied to our personal construct system. It is the outlook of the role player and behavioural patterns emerging from a person’s own construction system rather than out of the social circumstances. A person acts out of what is expected and out of the attitude of the others in the social unit. This theory sees role as a process rather than a "self-concept". It is activity carried out with an understanding related to other people connected with that particular role. Note that there is a difference between two persons holding the same construction system and two persons understanding each other so that they can play roles in relation to each other. Viewing another as a construer and thus playing a role in relation to that person means that our role constructions are validated in terms of the expectancies of those with whom we have established this role (Fransella, 1970). People’s behaviour can be predicted if they continue to play out the role in relation to others and fulfill the expectancies place upon them. People of the same culture may develop many similar expectancies and as a result behave similarly. The expectancies of people around the construer act as validators of the construer’s personal constructs. Thus, people in the same culture learn how to construe the constructions of others.

Perhaps the best summary of this corollary is that people do not have to be alike in order to
work together effectively, but they do have to understand others' viewpoints. Again, my research fundamentally aims to allow others to see and understand Chinese viewpoints and conceptions. Increasing this understanding can enhance opportunities for managing cultural diversity and promoting team development in different cultural groups. Social harmony and cultural progress are not achieved through common or similar cultural backgrounds. They can only be achieved through accepting the other persons or groups and their ways of seeing things. The problem right now for Chinese and Canadians is that they both have almost no knowledge of each other's ways of seeing things, not to mention acceptance or understanding. This applies to other ethnic groups in this culturally diversified country.

I share G. Kelly's notion that "the person who is to play a constructive role in a social process with another person needs not so much to construe things as the other person does as he must effectively construe the other person's outlook" (G. Kelly, 1955, p.95). In a way, the personal construct theory offers interpersonal understanding. If one can predict what others will do, one can make adjustments to the behaviour of the other. This adjustment is mutual and achieved through understanding each other. When the understanding is at a higher level of generality and related to the outlook of the other person, one may understand another better than one is understood. Hence, in understanding world views of the Chinese in the work place, we understand them at a higher level of generality. It is the job of this investigation to achieve this understanding.
Similarly to the personal construct theorists, the schema theorists offer another perspective to understanding how people comprehend and interpret reality. The term "schema" can be traced back as early as Kant (1787/1975) but it was not until the 1930s that Barlett (1932) worked on schema and turned it into a theory to explain cognitive structures and processes. The schema theory has been used widely to study the cognitive structures and processes of comprehending, recalling and summarising. Since the 1970s, there has been a surge of interest in using schema theory to focus on the structure and recall of stories or narratives (Cortazzi, 1993). The schema theory suggests explanations as to how people comprehend and interpret reality. As my research inquires into the participants’ lived experience through analysing their narratives and life incidents, schema theory offers a useful framework for analysis. In many ways, this theory is consistent with the personal construct theory: they are compatible with each other.

Bartlett (1932) suggested that “the past operates as an organized mass rather than as a group of elements each of which retains its specific character” (p.197); recall is “a construction rather than reproduction” (p.204). The recall of an experience or an event is not exact but is an imaginative reconstruction. In reconstructing their life experience, people flatten the contents by omitting details or condensing parts, sharpen by elaborating or exaggerating other parts, and rationalise by modifying contents to reduce incongruence and increase consistency. They actively organise past experience and elements of recall into structured wholes. Hunter (1964) concluded that the recall of events was inferential and constructive in character: “The very best we would expect of the retelling is that it should give the main characteristics of the story in words which are largely the person’s own rather than those of the original” (p.154). The narrator encodes materials in terms of his or her schemata, keeping only sufficient detail of the original story to allow a reconstruction on recall. The record of personal experience is actually a reconstruction based on an abstraction. The narrator is using a schema to fill in plausible detail with content that is typically said on such occasions or with what
the narrator now thinks a person should or would have said. Narrators are generally not aware of this role played by their own interpretation.

The above notions are very similar to the personal construct theory in explaining how reality is comprehended through “tinted glasses” and how the outcome is only people interpreting the data from their own mind sets, resulting in seeing what they believe or are conditioned to see. These schemata are similar to the clusters of construct systems that are arranged in hierarchial systems. According to Thorndyke (1984, p.173), the schema theorists share the view that schemata have five properties. First, a schema represents a prototypical abstraction of the concept it represents, encoding constituent properties that define a typical instance of its referent. Second, schemata are hierarchically organized in memory, according to different degrees of specificity. Third, the properties that characterize a schema are represented as variables or slots that can be filled whenever the schema is used to organize information. Fourth, people use schemata predictively, to guide the interpretation of incoming information, to support inferences and to match input to expectations. Where information does not turn out as expected, it may be filled in by default. Finally, people form schemata by induction from numerous previous experiences. Individuals have prior experience, organized knowledge and expectations about the world and the events to come. These knowledge structures make interpretation possible. Tannen (1979, p.144) suggests that, in the process of interpreting these concepts people reflect back on their perceptions to justify their interpretation. Personal construct theorists have made fewer attempts to narrow down the very complicated Kellyian (G. Kelly, 1955) perspectives into easy-to-grasp concepts. However, successful attempts have been made to put the schema concepts in succinct metaphors—known as frames, scripts, plans and goals—to make them more concise and comprehensible.

Core Concepts of the Schema Theory

a. Frames

Frame is the smallest cognitive unit and represents a data structure for an individual to interpret reality. Minsky (1975, p.212) defines a frame as a data structure for representing a stereotyped situation. It is like a single slide that enables individuals to compare what they perceive as being similar to or different from that one image. Encountering an event, an individual will sort
through previously stored-up frames among a variety of hierarchies of frames, selecting and fitting the event into one. Frames can be seen as schemata having slots that one can fill with appropriate values or information. These frames therefore are mechanisms to sort, cluster and compare information. If a specific piece of information cannot find a slot, it will be fitted into the most appropriate space. When a particular piece of information is not given a slot, the message receiver selects the most commonly expected value from the data and places it into a frame by default. This process helps explain why flattening, sharpening and rationalizing occur in hearing and narrating an event. From the perspective of a schema theorist, a frame is a static representation of knowledge as compared to a script, which is more dynamic.

b. Script

MacIntyre (1981) defines life as an enacted narrative, a story put into practice. To understand life, we have to have access to the stock of stories that constitute its dramatic resources. Thus, the meaning of life is dependent upon the stories that surround it. "Life is lived according to a script that makes it intelligible" (Widdershoven, 1993, p.4). Schank (1975, p.264) defines scripts as predetermined sequences of actions that define a situation. They are knowledge structures that describe routine events. Life consists of stereotyped, routine event sequences: these events are played out like scripts in an almost unconscious manner. For instance, "starting the day at school every morning" is a routine event but this script has cultural differences. A Chinese student in Hong Kong is required to stand up with the whole class to greet the teacher before starting a lesson: the class stands up and says good-bye when the lesson ends. A different script is played in classrooms here in Canada. Unless we understand the script people play in a particular culture, we do not understand their practices and the meanings behind their actions. These scripts are taught through socialization and the default values for actions are highlighted. In the course of time, they become routine sequences of action: people expect the replay without needing to mention the rationale.

A script becomes useful in interpreting reality, because it fills in the blanks in our understanding. When people construe and report an experience, they will script events in a certain way—not because these events have occurred as such but, because that is the typical chain of events in similar situations. Bower, Black and Turner (1979) point out that, in the course of recalling, parts of a script not mentioned originally tend to be mentioned in later reproductions. A narrator will
retrieve script actions in sequence even when the events are presented in a scrambled order. Scripts are linked as sets in sequence and hierarchically ordered. Abbott, Black and Smith (1985) suggest that scripts differ from frames because they are temporal sequences. The script concept helps to explain why people in different culture are programmed to interpret reality in different ways. People have a set of role expectations of individuals holding particular positions in an organization and expect them to play out the script. Knowing the mental script of the Chinese in an organization offers insight into their world view.

c. Plans and Goals

Psychologists talk of motivation, incentives and conditioning as they follow the presupposition that behaviour is goal-directed. In order to understand people’s behaviour, schema theorists also suggest taking into account the script players’ goals, plans and intentions. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) consider that plans are global patterns of events and states leading up to an intended goal. One can better interpret the behaviour of others, even if there are missing links, if one knows the goals and plans of the parties involved. The person is likely to fill in the information by default and interpret the reality through the available limited data.

The recall of events is largely determined by the plan schemata of underlying events. Actions in narratives are recalled better than descriptions. Recall of goal-directed actions is better than that of non-goal-directed actions. Events with more tightly-knit structures are judged more coherent and comprehensible than events with less tightly-knit ones. The former can be better retrieved. Bower, Black and Turner (1979) pointed out that goal-relevant deviations from scripts are remembered better than script actions. Goals and plans are important elements in episodic events; they include people’s motives and intentions. Understanding people’s plans and goals, we are more likely to interpret their behaviour. However, our understanding is also a schema that represents our subjective interpretation, not the other’s actual plan or goal. Hence, the schemata facilitate interpretation and also tailor it to fit our reality expectation. Without schemata, the reduction and organization of large amounts of information would make storage, organization and retrieval impossible. Schemata are therefore basic to the understanding, comprehension and interpretation of reality.
Thematization - as a method of inquiry

The core principle behind the schema theory is that, situations, events or texts can be understood only in terms of the schemata available to the comprehender (Rumelhart, 1977, p.301). Shaping depends on one's perception of what is typical. Schemata shape and rationalise occurrences according to a person's prior knowledge and expectations. My participants interpret organizational behaviour in Canada through the prior knowledge and values they learnt in a different culture. They use a different set of schemata from that of Canadians to comprehend reality. To understand the Chinese world view, I reveal their schemata through collecting their life experience, examining their narratives and formulating themes which reflect the way they perceive reality. The products of this process I call meta-narratives: these represent the participants' world view for interpreting reality, derived from their life experience and narratives.

I should define the term "meta-narrative" at this point of the discussion, so as to differentiate it from and compare it to other terms, such as narrative, concept, paradigm, metaparadigm.

a. Narrative

I inquired into the participants' lived experience by eliciting from them narratives, or in simple terms incidents or anecdotes, that inform them about the differences in organizational behavior. These lived experiences in narrative form explicate the participants' way of seeing the world. Polkinghorne (1988) suggests that experience is meaningful and that human behavior is generated from and informed by this meaningfulness. Thus, the study of human behavior needs to include an exploration of the meaning systems that form human experience. Inquiry into the narrative helps to understand the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful. Narrative meaning is a cognitive process that organizes human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes. Because it is a cognitive process, a mental operation, narrative meaning is not an object available to direct observation. However, the individual stories and histories that emerge in the creation of human narratives are available for direct observation.

Barthes (1966 / 1974) believes that narratives perform significant functions. At the individual level, people have a narrative of their own lives which enables them to construe what they are and where they are headed. At the cultural level, narratives serve make shared beliefs cohesive and to transmit values. Although the data collected in raw form are narratives oriented
towards lived experience working across cultural lines, the research goes beyond collecting
examples. The researcher, going through the transcribed text, reflects upon the narratives to enable
inquiry into the internal meaning structures of the lived experience. From a research point of view,
all human science has a narrative quality, rather than an abstracting, quantitative character.
Narratives have become a popular method for presenting aspects of qualitative or human science
research (Van Manen, 1994).

Narratives are not simply descriptions of certain events or incidents. Narrative is considered
by Polkinghorne (1988) as

a scheme by means of which human beings give meaning to their experience of
temporality and personal action. Narrative meaning functions to give form to the
understanding of a purpose to life and to join everyday actions and events into
episodic units. It provides a framework for understanding the past events of one's
life and for planning future actions. It is the primary scheme by means of which
human existence is rendered meaningful. Thus, the study of human beings by the
human science needs to focus on the realm of meaning in general and narrative
meaning in particular (p.11)... Narrative is the fundamental scheme for linking
individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable
composite. For example, the action of a narrative scheme joins the two separate
events "the father died" and "the son cried" into a single episode. Seeing the events
as connected increases our understanding of them both - the son cares for his father,
and the father's death pains the son. Narrative displays the significance that events
have for one another. (p.13)

Narrative is the scheme that displays purpose and direction in human affairs, that makes
individual human lives comprehensible as wholes. We conceive our own and others' behavior
within a narrative framework, and through it recognize the effects our planned actions can have on
desired goals. Narrative is a meaning structure that organizes events and human actions into a
whole, thereby attributing significance to individual actions and events according to their effect on
the whole. Narrative provides a symbolized account of actions that include a temporal dimension.
In many ways, the notion of narrative schema is very close to G. Kelly's (1955) construct system.

The term "Narrative" can bring about ambiguity because it can refer to the process of making
a story, to the cognitive scheme of the story, to the organizational scheme expressed in story form,
or to the result of the process—also called story, tale or history. Although hermeneutical writers will
use narrative and its cognates to refer to both the process and the results, the context should
normally remove the ambiguities, clarifying which meaning is intended. However, the double meaning carried in the same term is unsatisfactory; the lack of clarity can bring about misinterpretation. In my study, narrative refers to the stories or anecdotes provided by the participants. The cognitive scheme or meaning structure I later explicate, which informs us how the participants see the world, I refer to as the meta-narratives.

b. Concepts

Meta-narratives are derived from examining the transcripts, using the selective or highlighting approach suggested by Van Manen (1994); he called this distilling process theme analysis. In literature, theme refers to an element that occurs frequently in the text. Phenomenological themes may be understood as the structures of experience. So when we analyze a phenomenon, we are trying to determine what the themes are, the experiential structures that make up that experience. When we have extracted the themes, we put them into categorical statements in concept forms; such as “harmonising vs. confronting” and “committing vs. contracting”.

I do not call these statements concepts. I share Van Manen’s view (1994, p.79) that “it would be simplistic, however, to think of themes as conceptual formulations or categorical statements. After all, it is lived experience that we are attempting to describe, and lived experience cannot be captured in conceptual abstraction.” Concepts are notions out there to be shared universally; themes are appropriated by a particular person or group of people. I do not consider theme is the right term because the outcome of the extraction is not just a structure of experience but also a construct or lens through which the world is viewed in a particular way.

c. Paradigm and Metaparadigm

In considering the question of frameworks people use in comprehending the world, it occurred to me that there was a very close parallel between G. Kelly’s (1955) notion of the personal construct system and Kuhn’s (1970) powerful notion of paradigm. However, paradigm as a term applies more to the existence of a set of assumptions, theories and models shared by a community of scientists: Kuhn labels this set the “paradigm” (Candy, 1982). Guba and Lincoln (1994) define paradigm in a research context as a basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. Although a paradigm is related to personal construct systems, its application to the belief structures
of science does not fit the way of seeing the world derived from the participants' narratives in my study.

Redding and Martyn-Johns (1979) use the term "metaparadigm", which carries a very similar meaning to the meta-narrative concept I use in this study. Metaparadigm refers to the models of reality and cognitive maps used by the people in a particular culture to comprehend reality. According to Redding and Martyn-Johns, these models of reality are philosophical, equated with a set of beliefs, a myth, an organizing principle governing perception itself, a map and something determining a large area of reality.

Cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner (1986) has proposed that narrative understanding is itself one of two basic intelligences or modes of cognitive function, together with the logico-scientific mode, which he calls the "paradigmatic" mode. He comments that we know very little about how narrative processes work and that this meager knowledge stands in contrast to our extensive knowledge of how the paradigmatic processes used in formal science and logical reasoning work. The two function differently, and each mode uses a different type of causality to connect events. The paradigmatic mode searches for universal truth conditions, whereas the narrative mode looks for particular connections between events. My study does not point to the universal truth conditions proposed by the paradigmatic mode; it explicates the meaning structure of the participants' lived experience in working across the cultural line. Meta-narrative therefore better represents the research's intention.

4. Meta-narrative

In conclusion, meta-narrative, for the purpose of this study, refers to a meaning structure for interpreting experience, a template for perceiving the world, a set of construct systems and organizing principles governing perception, a model of reality and a mental map for guiding human action. As the meta-narratives in this study are explicated from the Chinese and are oriented towards cross-cultural differences, they represent a collective programming of the mind set or world views of Chinese working in Canada. I first collected the data in this study from the participants, in the form of narratives, incidents, anecdotes and stories, through interviews. Later I explicated the meaning structures or templates that inform us how the participants see the world. The outcomes of these explications are meta-narratives.
Thematization as an inquiry technique

In order to grasp the essential meaning of the participants' lived experience of working across the cultural line, I attempted to grasp the essence of their experience by making hermeneutic, phenomenological reflections. Van Manen (1994) suggests:

Human science meaning can only be communicated textually—by way of organized narrative or pose. And that is why the human science researcher is engaged in the reflective activity of textual labor. In order to come to grips with the structure of meaning of the text it is helpful to think of the phenomenon described in the text as approachable in terms of meaning units, structures of meaning, or themes. Reflecting on lived experience then becomes reflectively analyzing the structural or thematic aspects of that experience. (p.78)

Theme, in literature, refers to an element which occurs frequently in the text. Thematization is the process of recovering the themes that are embodied in the evolving meanings and imagery of the narratives. It is not the simple process of mechanical application of frequency counts or coding. It is a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure—grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a creative way of seeing meaning (Van Manen, 1994). Van Manen further suggests:

Phenomenological themes may be understood as the structures of experience. So when we analyze a phenomenon, we are trying to determine what the themes are, the experiential structures that make up that experience....(p.79) Phenomenological themes are not objects or generalizations. metaphorically speaking they are more like knots in webs of our experience, around which certain lived experience are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes. Themes are the stars that make up the universe of meaning we live through. By the light of these themes we can navigate and explore the universe. (p.90)

To derive the themes, one can follow the phenomenological process of reading the qualitative data as proposed by Van Manen (1985). Reading over the transcripts, texts and documentary evidence hermeneutically, one can enter into the “world” of the participants. The process enables themes to emerge, themes that are fasteners, foci or threads around which the phenomenological description is woven. When the knots in the weave are identified, one can look for the best phrase to capture the essence or the meaning of that particular theme. Phrases which best describe the meaning for the participants should be used. The thematic phrase thus formed is a meta-narrative. These are products of deep searches through the thematization process.
CHAPTER 6
Research Design and Methodology

It is my experience that when ones lives in societies with a different culture, one begins to feel like a fish out of water; at that point, one begins to realize what type of environment one has been conditioned to live in. Or, one becomes conscious of differences in the water the way a fish becomes conscious of the differences when it moves to another pond. This metaphor attempts to depict my strategy in working out this research design.

The influx of Hong Kong Chinese--possessing a wealth of work experience from Hong Kong and carrying the cultural values of Oriental organizations--immigrating to Canada and learning to live in another culture makes this a rare historical moment to carry out this study. Capturing their perceptions of the difference and their recognitions of their own cultural values should contribute to our understanding of cross-cultural differences in world views and in the ways people behave in organizations.

Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to capture Chinese world views and perceptions of cross-cultural differences in organizational behaviour. The research questions can be broadly stated as follows:

1. What do the Chinese in Canada perceive as the major differences in world view about people and behaviour at work between them and Canadians?
2. From the participants’ lived experience, how do the modus operandi differ between organizations which are staffed by Chinese and by Canadians?
3. In what ways do the participants perceive the major cross-cultural differences in the characteristics of the role holders in organizations?
4. How can people from these two cultures achieve better understanding of the cross-cultural differences in organizational behaviour?
Data Sources and Selection of Research Participants

To understand the Chinese perception of cross-cultural differences in organizational behavior, I confined myself to selecting participants who were Chinese, who had worked in organizations in Hong Kong composed mainly of Chinese employees, and who were in positions that exposed them to interacting with individuals, groups and systems in the organization. In addition, they had worked in Canada and been in situations which allowed them to interact with Canadians.

The pool of participants was composed of Hong Kong immigrants who had settled in Canada and had local working experience. They should not have continuously stayed in Canada for more than 10 years. Otherwise, they might have changed their values or orientation too much, although some authors argue that changes in mental programming are often difficult: if it changes at all, it does so slowly (Hofstede, 1984). The sample size was 10. The participants had the sensitivity to be aware of the cross-cultural differences and were able to articulate them. Their age should be between 35 and 55; an age range which is neither too near to retirement nor too limited in organizational experience. Gender was not a factor to be isolated in drawing the sample, because discrimination by sex at work is allowed neither in Hong Kong nor Canada. However, I included 2 women because they might have other views and reasons that should be taken into account in analyzing the data. Sampling was on a non-random basis. I considered most suitable those individuals who had expressed awareness, concern, experience and opinions about the differences in how people in organizations behave in Canada and Hong Kong. Although the literature does not support the assumption that organizational culture eliminates people's ethnic culture and values. I "played safe" by seeking some degree of homogeneity in the type of organizations for which people worked. All the participants came from service rather than manufacturing organizations. The following set of criteria served as checklist to ensure the participants were appropriate.

- A Chinese from Hong Kong whose first language is Cantonese.
- Knows how to read and write in Chinese.
- Has been a citizen of Hong Kong and has now immigrated to Canada.
- Is able to communicate in English, both verbal and written.
- Has worked in Hong Kong in organizations with predominantly Chinese-speaking staff members.
Has been in Canada for less than 10 years.
Has worked in Canada with predominantly English-speaking staff members for more than a year.
Whose work involves interacting with other people who are English-speaking Canadian workers in the organization.
Has working experience in organizations which are service-oriented rather than manufacturing-oriented.

Amongst the 10 participants, 8 were men and 2 women. Three-quarters of the participants were in the age bracket 40-45. The eldest was 52 and the youngest was 40. They had an average of 3.5 years of work experience in Canada; their average experience in Hong Kong was 13 years. None had less than 3 years of work experience in Canada, nor more than 6. They had lived in Canada for 4.5 years on average. No one had been in Canada for less than 3 years nor more than 7 years. All the participants were working in service-oriented organizations. These included hospital, placement centre, employment centre, social services agency, secondary school, university, research centre and government. Half of the sample held managerial positions and the others held professional or technical-grade positions in Canadian organizations with English-speaking colleagues. They held job titles like director, manager and coordinator. The professional and technical position-holders had such titles as officer, dispenser, or teacher. More than three quarters of the sample had held management positions in Hong Kong; the rest were professionals there: they had held positions as chief executive officer, senior executive officer, management advisor, counsellor, headmaster, senior social welfare officer, lecturer and assistant director. All participants except one were degree holders. The exception held a technical qualification to work in Canada and had been trained in England in industrial relations. Two participants were Ph.D.s and another 5 participants held Master's degrees. High qualifications do not guarantee they were better quality participants. However, their educational background enabled them to grasp the subtleties of cultural differences and facilitated their articulating their perceptions. Coupled with their work experience, their education enabled them to inquire with myself into different aspects of the organizational behaviour and management issues. Had they not been exposed to management training or management positions, I would have had more difficulty in exploring the issues with them.
Data Collection Method

In qualitative research, the researcher often uses as himself or herself the research instrument (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) for the collection of data. Being myself a Chinese, who had studied and worked in overseas countries and Hong Kong, now immigrated to Canada, I had a unique mix of experiences from the basis of which to conduct this inquiry. Not that I could be better than other researchers, but at least I could serve as an appropriate instrument for this qualitative research. The unique mix helped me to overcome barriers in understanding the participants’ language, subtleties, sensitivity and background.

I collected the data through in-depth interviewing and the repertory grid method. In considering the data-collection method, I concur with Glesne and Peshkin's (1992) criteria that the chosen techniques should (a) elicit data needed to gain understanding of the phenomenon in question; (b) contribute different perspectives on the issue; and (c) make effective use of the time available for data collection. The interview process could be roughly divided into two parts. One was formal, the conversation being either taped or properly documented during the repertory-grid exercise. Informal discussions took place over lunch after the formal interview. The occasion enabled me to go back to the interviewees and dialogue with them about the data they offered. Some months after the interview, when I had analysed the data, I discussed the findings with 5 participants who could afford the time to meet again. This part of the interview was again informal and not taped. The purpose of this discussion with the participants was not only for them to examine the findings but also to provide an opportunity for reconnection. We discussed other issues, such as their work and their concern over the research's progress.

The first part of the interview was an in-depth interview. The focus of the questions was to elicit from the participants the organizational behavior phenomena that they perceived as being different from what they had been used to. The questions inquired about critical incidents and events which arose from their experience of working across the cultural line. Their stories and narratives provided facts from experience, forming a picture through which to understand the phenomena. Probably due to their abundance of lived experience and their eagerness to share it with someone who had similar encounters, the participants did not require much "pumping" to offer their experience and feelings. The question "What do you realize as the major differences of behaviour
at work between organizations in Hong Kong and Canada?”, raised after the initial warming-up, normally led to a smooth flow of information. I put greater effort into asking for a specific instance, situation, person or event to make them stay close to their experience. There was little need to follow a particular questioning schedule, but reminding them of the purpose of the inquiry when they digressed ensured the research focus was not lost. I used notes taken in the process to check back on information and seek clarification. I used the notes to prompt their reflections and additions during the lunch time. Two recorders were set up for the interview. The participants were slightly excited to have the interview taped, because the taping symbolized the importance of the information they offered. As managers, they were used to recorded meetings and conferences. They showed no reluctance about the taping and ceased to be conscious of the machine shortly after the interview started.

Although data from the interviews provided important information, I intended to help the respondents explore through themselves-as-scientists and externalize their inner world. To achieve this, I used the repertory grid method for this exploration. Though the interview primarily collected data, discussions of the repertory grid to elicit the respondents’ personal constructs added fun and variety to the whole process. They viewed the grid as fun and as a challenge. Most of the interviews took place in the morning. The repertory grid came after a break, as a timely change of format after the 2-to-3 hour interview. The grid exercise took less time to complete than it had earlier in the pretest and other research projects. It took from 30 to a maximum of 45 minutes to complete the whole grid. It was possible to speed up the process because the earlier interview had prepared and warmed up the participants so much that ideas came almost spontaneously. They had to spend some portions of their time to get used to the format and to give serious thought to descriptions and labels for the constructs.

The informal part was lunch, or a meal on another day if the participant could not make it on the day of the interview, in a nearby restaurant that provided a quiet place for discussions. The meal (laid on by me) was culturally appropriate to express appreciation to someone who had “laboured” for half a day sharing something quite intimate to them. It would have been “inconsiderate” and discourteous not to offer a meal together after a half day’s work together. Readers should not construe from a Western perspective that buying the meal had other
implications, such as soliciting information with a "payment", hence biasing the trustworthiness of the data. The occasion served not only as a way to honour hard work but also as another hour and a half to reflect with the participants on some of the major issues revealed during the interview. This informal conversational "interview" served as an occasion to collaborate with the interviewees, who had by then become partners or co-researchers of their experience and of some of the cross-cultural issues: it acknowledged a change in the relationship and a feeling of a closer co-working relationship. These meals turned increasingly into hermeneutic interviews, reverting again and again in dialogues with interviewees about the data collected.

For some of the participants, this informal process did not end after the meal. I contacted half of them again nearer to the end of the data analysis process, about a year after the interview. They saw the result of the analysis, their own repertory grid, the participants' composite grid, the table of association with others, the sociogram and the meta-narratives so they could reflect on and validate them. I asked whether they had any additions or disagreements. All of them were surprised by how well the grid reflected their ideas and how their ideas were compared to the other participants'. As L.F. Thomas (1976, p.3) wrote, the direct experience of discovering emerging patterns of personal meanings within oneself by oneself, or in close conversation with another, enables an individual "to set out on a voyage of exploration within the private space of his or her own phenomenal world. No one returns from such a voyage unchanged". The participants' excitement was enhanced by the impressive diagrams and sociogrids done by the computer. They commented with appreciation on the words and phrases used in the meta-narratives, which so vividly represented their way thinking.

Readers may not have much difficulty in understanding how the interviews proceeded. However, the repertory grid method is not easy to understand without some explanation of how the personal constructs were elicited. I explained at the outset that the purpose of this grid exercise was to explore the participants' views of working across the cultural line and of the people in organizations in Hong Kong and Canada. The first step in working out this exercise was to identify the elements or items extending over the range of convenience—in this instance, the people to be compared. I developed a common set of 7 elements for the participants to work out their constructs. These elements were, Canada Boss, Chinese Boss, Canada Peer, Chinese Peer, Canada Subordinate,
All these elements were people of whom the participants had personal knowledge and who were within their range of knowledge for comparison. These elements covered the major types of role sets held by the organizational players at different levels. In addition, the element of self ensured that these role sets were not stand-alone items, but rather items that the respondent could personally relate to themselves for comparison.

I elicited the constructs by offering the participants a list of triads (Appendix 1, grid form) and asking how 2 of the 3 elements were alike in some important way that distinguished them from the third. For instance, row A asks the participants to take Canada Boss, Chinese Boss and Myself as a triad for consideration. Similarly, row B asks the participant to consider the triad Canada Peer, Chinese Peer and Myself. The elements to be taken for triading in each row are asterisked in the grid form. I reminded the participants that they could repeat those items about which they had more to say and could choose elements not asterisked for further triading. All the constructs they supplied went onto the data sheet in their own words, except the last construct item—most effective vs. least effective. This dimension allowed checking their perception of how they subjectively viewed the value of different role players in the organization. In order that they should not make generalisations and so that their constructs were personal, I asked them to think of an actual person who most represented the role written out for them at the first row. I suggested that they put a name or a synonym in the bracket to remind them of the person they were describing.

Taking the triad, the participants worked out the pair and the singleton. They were to supply a word or short phrase describing how the pair were alike. Their description went on the left-hand column. Similarly, they supplied a description of how the singleton was distinctive from the pair, which went into the right-hand column. Hence, descriptions in the left hand column indicated similarity, those in the right-hand column the opposite characteristics. After all their constructs, the participants finally rated each element on a scale of 3, 2, 1, -1, -2, -3, with 3 denoting the highest degree of similarity and -3 the highest degree of difference. Their allotted values were recorded in the boxes in the grid form. This process continued for about 30 to 45 minutes, using the triads in the grid form until the participants had nothing more to add. I left the allocation of values to the very end, to ensure that the statistical work did not distract the participants from the focusing procedure.
and the major purpose of the study: the revelation and exploration of personal and shared patterns of meaning as they evolved during the interview.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis rested on thematic analysis through hermeneutic-phenomenological reflection (Van Manen, 1994) and on personal construct analysis through the repertory grid (G. Kelly, 1955) as discussed in the previous two chapters. I listened to the taped data collected in the interviews many times until I felt myself having entered into the participants' world. At the same time, I transcribed the tapes and translated major chunks of the materials into English. The transcribing and translating, though time-consuming, allowed me to really merge with the data.

I read over the transcripts and entered into the "world" of the participants. Reading their narratives led me to begin caring for the participants who had gone through such experiences. I also allowed myself to imagine seeing their world through their "glasses", leading to experiencing action without having to act. I felt that I had existed in the world created by the words. The process enabled themes to emerge, themes that are fasteners, foci or threads around which the phenomenological description is woven. Instead of the detailed or line-by-line approach to uncovering the thematic aspects, used by some researchers, I took the selective or highlighting approach (Van Manen, 1994). When I identified the knots in the weave, I looked for the best phrase to capture the essence or the meaning of that particular theme. I modified the phrase so that it best described the meaning for all the participants. The thematic phrase thus formed I refer to as meta-narrative. These meta-narratives were shown to more than half of the participants, who not only agreed on the phrases' truthfulness, but also found the phrases enlightening, becoming more aware of their own world view. Despite these phrases' expressive power, one must beware their limitations. They cannot convey the fullness of a phenomenon's life. Hence, I reproduced descriptions and quotations from the participants to give readers the best sense of their lived experience. The phrases could only serve to point at, to allude to, or to hint at, an aspect of the phenomenon, as Van Manen (1994) has pointed out.

I recorded the participants' constructs and scores for the repertory grid on the form (Appendix 1). Initially, I did not put these data into the computer for analysis. I handled each grid manually and studied it carefully to get a feeling of how the participants construed their reality. I
also crudely analyzed each column and row by hand using the (/) and (X) instead of ratings to gain a feel for the participant's way of thinking. Meanwhile, I read the transcripts and studied the narratives again. Images arose in my mind; thus and then real meanings; the descriptions in phrases had ceased to be constructs in words. They became a world view to me. However, there is a limit to this process; after a long period of comparing the (/) and (X) for each row and column, the analysis can be mind-boggling and confusing. At that point, the computer became useful. However, without having gone through this manual step, I would not have done justice to the data nor have stayed really close to them. The manual analysis enabled me to shorten my distance from the participants and made them my close friends, who enabled me to see their world by letting me use their "glasses".

By then, I had fitted the constructs and ratings from each participant to the Focus programme to form a table. The crude data before focusing, or in other words prior to reordering with similar constructs and elements together, form one table (e.g. Appendix 2B--Display:AT). In this table, the ratings translated to a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 equated to the original -3 and 6 equated to the original + 3, to allow easy reference and computer calculation. In reading the table, note that the constructs in the right-hand column are represented by higher ratings, from 4 to 6. Similarly, the constructs in the left-hand column are represented by the lower ratings, from 1 to 3. The added value of having this table is that using shades and shadows for ratings with similar value allows quicker detection of patterns. However, the elements and constructs are not reordered according to their similarities, a function performed by the Focus computer software.

I used the Focus computer program (L.F. Thomas, 1979; M. Shaw 1980) to analyse each participant's grid. The Focus technique provides a cluster analysis to sort the elements and the constructs into 2 separate sets, so that like is put with like for the element columns and for the construct rows. Distance scores are first calculated for all elements and construct pairs; following this, a 2-way hierarchical linkage analysis clusters elements and constructs separately and illustrates each with a dendrogram or tree diagram. The sorting and pictorial summaries only represent the original grid organized by "neighbourness" of its elements and constructs. The re-arrangement of the grid's parts identifies the main structure and patterns. The relationships of the constructs and the elements that showed the highest similarities in the clusters were visualized as tree diagrams. (A
The Sociogrids program (L.F. Thomas, 1979; M. Shaw, 1980) helped to explore the participants' similarities and differences in construing. This technique rests on G. Kelly's (1955) commonality assumption that there are areas of shared meaning among individuals. The programme analysed each set of repertory grids from the group and based similarity on the ordering of the elements (Diamond, 1991). It thus extracted the mode grids from the group in Appendix 14A.

Appendix 15 (PAT), a table, contains the mode worked out from the grids to allow comparisons between individual participants in terms of percentage of association with Myself in relation to other elements. For instance, the mode row shows that the participants associate themselves very weakly with Canadian subordinates but strongly with Chinese peers. They also associate themselves more with the Chinese than with the Canadians, irrespective of rank or level. Thus, they find similarity and association in terms of culture rather than of positions, roles or ranks. I will further analyse the percentage of association table and the mode grid in Chapter 9.

The repertory grid allows the extraction of qualitative data in a non-a priori manner and the quantification of results. The researcher guards against possible distraction by statistical data and the danger of turning a naturalistic study into a number-crunching exercise. Though the Focus program does use statistics, its strengths are the tree diagrams, the reordering of the positions of the grids and elements, and the graphical displays, which make patterns visible for analysis. This study takes advantage of the Focus programme's strengths and as far as possible avoids getting into the analysis of figures—an approach inconsistent with the tenets of my study. Many other computer programmes, such as Omnigrid and Gpack, which I used during pretests, I discarded as too statistically oriented. Hence, the statistical analysis will not distract from the study's basic qualitative approach.

**Triangulation**

My research strategy involved a "triangulation" of methods (Denzin, 1978). According to Denzin, triangulation is the use of multiple methods for studying the same object: "Triangulation, or the use of multiple methods, is a plan of action that will raise sociologists above the personalistic biases that stem from single methodologies. By combining methods and investigators in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator or one

As explained earlier, this study involved two methods for collecting data: in-depth interviews and the repertory grid. I constructed meta-narratives from the thematization process and from phenomenological hermeneutic reflections. One of the functions of the Focus program is drawing commonalities between the different grids. This is known as the sociogrids technique. This technique was developed by L.F. Thomas (1976) to map one grid onto another so that one can explore the constructions among a group of interviewees. The Focus program allows mapping one grid onto another or onto a larger number, up to 5. The latter requires a greater level of commonality for an item to be selected as a mode construct; I used it for this study, producing the mode grid in Appendix 14a (Focus: mg0592). This method lists constructs extracted from all the grids, producing a continuum ranging from those most shared by the group to those least common. A mode grid or shared perspective emerges from the mode constructs, which usually consist of the same number as elicited in each of the individual grids. These themes or commonalities the participants shared, identified through the sociogrid method, I used as basic data to compare with the meta-narratives and the modus operandi at work. The triangulation criteria was that these two sets of data should not contradict each other; if they do not, the world views identified from this study are reliable.

Limitations

I have given my arguments for choosing the qualitative rather than the quantitative approach for this study. Qualitative research method, using the researcher as the instrument for emic study with a large amount of descriptive data to analyse, makes it necessary to limit the sample size. It subsequently limits making generalizations from the data, a major prospect of quantitative study. However, the prospect of this study is to seek illumination and understanding by creating a model that serves as a spring broad for further studies or testing. The limitation of sample size and generalization is compensated in this study by the rigorous use of the research and triangulation methods. The time, resources and other factors also limit a single study by one person to conduct a longitudinal study which involves following through ten participants before their immigration to Canada until they settled in with a job in this high unemployment market. Hence, this study excludes the longitudinal study approach for studying the adjustment process or perception changes but realistically limits it to capturing the static snapshots of the participants' perceptions or world views.
Part III

Analysis and Discussion
of the Findings

Part three contains three chapters. The meta-narratives structuring the ways Chinese see the world are in Chapter 7, of which each section discusses one meta-narrative—seven in total. The Chinese perceptions of cross-cultural differences in modus operandi at work are in Chapter 8, with four sections. The findings in both chapters are from the in-depth interviews, analysed through the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach. Chapter 9 contains findings of the participants’ perceptions of cross-cultural differences in the characteristics of the major role holders in organization: these data were collected through the repertory grid. In addition, I used the constructs thus collected for triangulation in this inquiry.
Chapter 7

Meta-narratives: Chinese vs. Canadians

Meta-narrative is different from narrative, concept, paradigm or metaparadigm, which I discussed in Chapter 5. Meta-narrative represents people’s mind maps, formed from their lived experience and life stories, which shape their way they interpret reality. It is a meaning structure for interpreting experience and an adjustable template for viewing the world. Each individual has his or her own “glasses” for viewing reality. However, people of the same culture share commonalities. These commonalities stand out more clearly and specifically when they are compared with another culture’s. From the research participants’ lived experience, I identified 7 major meta-narratives which shape their way of seeing their world as different from the Canadians’. These meta-narratives are:

- The meta-narrative of existence
  - People exist for Organization vs. Organization exists for People
- The meta-narrative of achievement
  - Insecurity & Achieving vs. Optimism & Carefree
- The meta-narrative of work
  - Committing vs. Contracting
- The meta-narrative of conflict
  - Harmonizing vs. Confronting
- The meta-narrative of power
  - High Inequality Tolerance vs. Low Inequality Tolerance
- The meta-narrative of relationship
  - Permanent vs. Transitional
- The meta-narrative of communication
  - Spacious Grey vs. Tight Blue

I will describe and explain each of these meta-narratives in the following sections, analysing and discussing the findings. I will make comparison with other research findings whenever appropriate. Reading through the following sections will bring the reader into the participants’ phenomenological world. Taking an experiential trip into the mind of the Chinese may bring about surprises, challenges and emotions such as joy or anger. Western readers who put on another culture’s “glasses” to view the world may feel uncomfortable. Westerners hold different values from
the participants; hence, they may not agree with the Oriental participants' world views. Readers who do not identify with the participants may feel uneasy or even angry with the way the Chinese view organizational behaviour in Canada. Some participants' comments may not be politically correct and some may appear to be egocentric or parochial. However, the information they offered to the researcher was frank and honest. Their uninhibited expression of their views and feelings should be accepted, not condemned. These views may be biased but they plainly represent the differences in world view which this study intends to examine. Thus, readers should accept the differences without negative feelings.

In explaining these meta-narratives, I shall select quotations from the interview transcripts to substantiate my arguments. Because the interviews were in Cantonese, translation was a challenge. The dicitions, syntax, metaphors, sequence of expression and other aspects of the language are different from English. There are limits to how well the quotations can be turned into everyday English without distorting the meaning. Thus, some English text in the translated excerpts may appear awkward. I chose to preserve the meaning and feelings of the participants during the translation, sometimes at the expense of sacrificing fluency for meaning. Translation is a real puzzle challenging cross-cultural researchers.

( 1 ) The Meta-narrative of Existence
People exist for Organization vs. Organization exists for People

One major shock experienced by the research participants when they worked across the cultural line in Canada was the reversed order of importance as between people and organization. Being brought up in a culture where employees are mentally programmed to give way to the demands of the organization, the participants experienced perplexity and confusion. Some even experienced a strong sense of guilt when they were unable to contribute their best. In Hong Kong, the templates or "glasses" they wear made them believe that they were responsible for guaranteeing work outcomes despite outside circumstances or external factors. They were held accountable for the output and given few excuses for failure due to personal problems or difficult situations. Everyone was expected and therefore programmed to put the organization first. This mental
programming was unconscious; willingness to sacrifice for the organization became a reflex action. Acting contrary to this requirement created guilt and shame. These unconscious patterns seldom became conscious knowledge until they had lived in another culture and experienced the difference. Their situation is analogous to fish leaving the original water in which they were bred and experiencing different water in another pond; when the fish are in the new pond, they suddenly become aware of what kind of fish they are and in what type of water they had been living.

This meta-narrative that people should exist for organization rather than the organization existing for people has so strong and pervasive an impact that it becomes a dominating value, unconsciously controlling behaviour. Canadians, who are brought up in another “fish pond”, may think that this value represents the effacing of individual rights or even outright slavery; such a value would not receive support in Canada. However, values represent basic convictions that “a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state existence” (Rokeach, 1973. p.5). They contain a judgmental element, in that they carry an individual’s ideas of what is right, good, or desirable. People enter an organization with preconceived notions of what ought and what ought not to be. Of course these notions are not value-free; on the contrary, they contain interpretations of right and wrong. The meta-narratives offer people a scheme to decide that certain behaviors or outcomes are preferred to others. “People exist for organization” is a core belief which stands high in the hierarchy of Chinese values. This narrative represents an underlying theme that gives meaning to how the Chinese are programmed to behave differently from the Canadian employees. This dominant value structure accounts for the willingness of the Chinese to sacrifice the “little self” for the “big self”. The participants perceive that the behaviour of Canadians, standing firm for their personal rights is not compatible with theirs. The Chinese world view of existence for organization means personal sacrifice, loyalty and submission to the good of the whole. This meta-narrative makes the Chinese behave differently from Canadians in the organization.

The participants were culturally shocked to find individuals placing their own concerns or personal problems above those of the organization. A community development officer was perplexed and at the same time relieved, remarking:

When your kid is sick, you would like to request absence to take them to consult the
doctor. The response you get here will be more positive than that in Hong Kong. In HK, if you have to make such requests frequently, you may in the eyes of the boss have a "black mark". You should not have a career if you need to go home from time to time to take care of the kids. You are expected to settle your family business before you come to work. The expectation here is different. For efficiency, it may be lower, but this is a cultural difference of what you expect or actually what the society demands. Does the society demand so much? In HK, if your efficiency is not high, you should not survive. Here, the society can tolerate lowering the efficiency of an organization to accommodate its people.

The participants had mixed feelings about placing an individual's priorities above those of the organization. They appreciated this humane practice but at the same time found it unacceptable, because it reduces the efficiency and output of the organization. The "slave" or "workhorse" loyalty to the organization at an individual's own expense is considered tolerable by Chinese. Also, demands for staff members to place higher priority on work than personal matters are completely acceptable in Hong Kong but not in Canada. For instance, a research participant lamented over the granting of leave to settle personal matters in Canada, which would be so difficult in Hong Kong. Such a difference was incredible, she pointed out:

In HK, when your husband or children are sick, you take vacation time to settle the problem of taking care of them. You are not entitled to take leave of absence to take the kids or husband for medical consultation. Workers have to offset absence for such family matters by reducing their annual vacations. Here, when your immediate relative or spouse is sick, you may stay home to take care of them. The leave is classified as leave. For moving house, you can take a day to get it done. Here, family life is given emphasis... As a supervisor, you cannot demand your staff get the work done through thick or thin like in Hong Kong. That is acceptable to place such a demand on your workers. You will be in trouble if you apply the Hong Kong demands here. You cannot be too demanding here.... I spent a lot of overtime .... My counterpart departments see that as a threat for doing so.... I have to be very sensitive.... Their complaint is that I overworked my staff. This is not a justified complaint in Hong Kong.

Culture has collectively programmed the Hong Kong Chinese to believe that overworking their staff is not inappropriate. Diligence is a virtue highly regarded in the workplace. Work takes priority over personal matters in an organization. One can pacify the workers for their hard work, but should confine this to outside office hours, as one participant perceived. From the Chinese perspective, the organization's agenda is to produce results; the staff members are employed to
achieve the goal of production. Taking the staff members to a meal and a movie during work time is a strange, if not silly, idea. An executive director of an employment agency felt it was overdoing practice to recognize employees for their good work at the expense of office time. Her Chinese world view suggested that she should take for granted employees would contribute their best. She remarked:

Being from Hong Kong who is used to pushing for results, people may feel that I have overworked my staff, even my boss buys into this idea. This is a sure cultural difference. He is very happy with what we have achieved in the office.... We had done well, but he said something like that to me, which I considered silly but to them it is not. He once demanded I take a day off next week and take them [the workers] for a meal and movie... I find that I have to learn as well. Previously in Hong Kong, I realized, I would have done the same thing but it would be done after office hours.... May be I am born not to feel OK without being fully engaged at work. It is a difficult life and I cannot tolerate no work.... Why should I work so hard?

At an extreme, valuing the employees' input and attending to their needs, as in Canada, the participants perceived as spoiling the staff. In the Chinese world view, people are employed to contribute to the organization, suppressing their feelings and needs in return for organizational efficiency is appropriate. If employees feel that the organization is not doing them justice, they can choose to leave for another organization:

What I appreciate least in Canada is the over-use of the humanistic approach to treating the employees. Such an approach spoils the staff. Their needs are too much attended to. In Hong Kong, showing appreciation to their needs and feelings is only a public relations exercise. Their needs are of relatively little concern to the organization. Here, the staff's input, their ideas and feelings, have to be taken seriously.... If an organization seeks profit and output, I consider achieving efficiency is more important than staff concerns. However, output has to be achieved at the expense of neglecting people's feelings. Staff members in Hong Kong choose to stay, or leave the organization if they do not feel the organization is doing them justice. People's feelings are not treated as an important issue in Hong Kong.

I was moved by an incident from one research participant. She experienced a strong sense of guilt when she had to take a break in her very busy schedule to consult a doctor because of a high fever. She had been in Canada for 3 years. Because of some personal reasons, she had to spend 3 months back in Hong Kong to serve her previous employer. She said that she became a totally different person when placed once again in the Chinese work culture. Her guilt at taking time off
because she felt ill overwhelmed her when she worked in Hong Kong during that stay. Chinese are culturally programmed to treat organizations and their tasks as taking priority over one's personal concerns or even one's health. The same person who had already worked in Canada for 3 years was immediately reprogrammed to function as Hong Kong Chinese culture demands:

When I was back to HK a few months ago to complete my unfinished contract, I was suffering from bronchitis. I did not take half an hour of sick leave. At that time, every piece of work was pushing at me. I had a fever over the weekend and had a bad cough at night. I had no time to see the doctor. I had a meeting in the afternoon. I was not feeling OK, and felt my body is heating up. I found that I was not OK and after the meeting at 4.30 p.m. I sneaked out of my office to my friend, who was a medical doctor, for consultation. My friend said I had bronchitis.

It was 4.30 p.m. It was reasonable for me to sneak away to consult the doctor. It was my intention to get back to the office to sort things out and I had told my colleagues that I would get back to the office after consulting the doctor. My friend told me that I was really sick and gave me a prescription. I felt really tired, so I went home at 5.30. I phoned back that I could not get back to the office. Here, when you have a slight cough, you are supposed to go back home for a rest. Here, when things cannot get done, no one will say that is wrong. But in HK, when things cannot get done, it is seen as a crime and you feel bad or guilty about it. Here [in Canada], if I am sick, what can I do? I do that [stop working]?

The meta-narrative of “People exist for Organization” shapes the Chinese way of seeing one’s rights and responsibilities as a member of an organization whether as employee or as a leader. It is an underlying principle that prescribes the appropriate behavior in an organization. This meta-narrative influences the way of thinking in other areas as well, such as in the power and conflict meta-narratives discussed in later sections. In the Kellyian (G. Kelly, 1955) perspective, it is a superordinate representing a major value in determining the behavior of the Chinese at work. Also, such behavioural patterns set differences between the Chinese and the Canadians.
(II) The Meta-narrative of Achieving

Insecurity & Achieving vs. Optimism & Carefree

Van Manen (1994) suggests that the ego-logical starting point for phenomenological research is a natural consequence of using personal experience as a beginning. In drawing up personal descriptions of lived experience, the phenomenologist knows that one’s own experiences could also be those of others. Weighing his proposition against the research of lived experience, I similarly reflected upon my own experiences. I found that my experience has many similarities with that of the participants, relating to the meta-narrative discussed now.

I started this programme of study 2 months after I landed in Canada as an immigrant, when my family needed to learn how to get settled. Schools for the kids, an automobile, a permanent place to dwell, routines for basic living etc., all had to be found and established. My family and myself had to adjust to a different country, culture, system, people, language and climate. When I told my Canadian colleagues in class what I had done within the first 2 months, they saw me as over-achieving by doing so many things in such a short time. They equally saw me as forcing myself ahead to get established in Canada through studies and volunteer work, as again speeding forward and achieving as much as possible within the shortest time. While I was struggling my best to study like others, I tried to secure an assistantship and SSHRC scholarship. Though their availability was limited, I managed to gain places. Many colleagues felt that I had made my study a struggle rather than an enjoyable process. During my struggle, they thought I had sacrificed my leisure life and time for my family. On reflection, what they said was true. But I was educated with the value that leisure is a luxury, that struggle is a part of enjoyment. Does the world view of enjoyment and struggle differ so much between Chinese and Canadians? This phenomenon of struggling for achievement provides a prelude to the particular meta-narrative discussed in this section.

I spent time with the research participants for warmup and casual chats before and after their interviews. During that time, they all asked me whether I would return to Hong Kong to work after the study and leave my family in Canada. They also shared their intentions, struggles and problems about having an “astronaut” family. With the economic downturn in Canada, many breadwinners of newly-landed families shuttled between Hong Kong and Canada to work. A new term coined in
these few years referred to these frequent international "commuters" as "astronauts". They keep shuttling between their home country to work and the country in which they are immigrants to visit their families. These people are "space travellers", having a lifestyle similar to that of the astronauts. They give little time for being together with their spouse and kids, in return for material gains and achievements. In the eyes of many Canadians, such a way of life may be queer and odd. In fact, most "astronaut" families are not in real financial difficulties. The return for this way of working just brings them a higher standard of living. These "astronauts" are not living at a subsistence level warranting their physical separation from their family. Yet they choose this way of living. Some participants had attempted to be "astronauts" and others were seriously considering whether this was a viable option. Some chose to stay behind but felt very uneasy about enjoying a more leisurely type of life. What are the forces motivating them to keep a "busy bee" type of life but not enjoying the honey? What is the underlying world view that keeps the Chinese struggling and achieving? From the discussions and the interviews, the meta-narrative of achievement emerged. A strong sense of insecurity forces them to a life-long struggle for achievement. They perceive and admire Canadians as optimistic and carefree. A participant perceived that ongoing struggle for more money, with no quality of life, is not the Canadian way:

Many people return to Hong Kong and try to earn more. Being "astronauts" will mean that they lose a few years of family life. They choose to gain as much money as possible... When the Chinese hold such a value, they are basically non-Canadian in value and thinking in terms of their work value. A balanced life—work and family—is a Canadian way of thinking absent in the Chinese. Our Canadian colleagues at work will not choose this way of life. The loss of a few years would probably mean the loss of a few years of prime time of their life.

The Canadian employees can feel happy about what they possess and have less worry compared to the Chinese. Those people who come from Hong Kong still worry a great deal, even though they possess much money. This is a major difference. The Hong Kong Chinese work like dogs to earn and worry a great deal. To give an illustration, Canadians enjoy their long weekend and take a trip even though they can just barely afford it. They may not have much money in the bank, yet they are optimistic about what may come. However, the Chinese employees are different. They certainly do not choose to go for a trip when they do not have full employment or when they are between jobs, despite being "loaded" and even owning some properties. They are of a worrying type and less optimistic about the future. I come to a belief that we tend to grow up in an environment and culture of worry and
pessimism. I really don't know. We come to Canada because of our worrying nature. We still immerse ourselves in worries when we get here.

Though some participants considered themselves as coming from a worrying culture, others called their experiences feelings of insecurity. To keep struggling for achievement becomes the way to eliminate their sense of insecurity. One participant found the sense of security different between himself and his Canadian contacts:

We see differently what symbolises security. When we do not possess a "nest" or a "den" [a flat or house of our own] we feel very uncomfortable. Hong Kong people work a whole life for a flat. It also accounts for the property boom in Hong Kong and the behaviour of Chinese buying properties in Canada. For an average Canadian, owning a house is not an easy thing. Living in a rented apartment is not degrading, and having money for coop housing is already very satisfying. They seem to have a different sense of security from that of the Chinese. We worry about 1997. If without this worry, we basically have no need to immigrate to this place. In a way, we all carry a certain degree of worry in coming to this community. This action reflects our insecure nature.

G. Hofstede (1981) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another (p.25)... Culture is not a characteristic of the individual: it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience (p.48)." Are the Chinese being conditioned to this meta-narrative through their education and their culture systems? The participants offered an affirmative answer from their lived experience. One participant, who holds two doctoral degrees, offered this narrative and insight into this phenomenon:

In Hong Kong, people always told us that we were not good enough. We had to try our best and be alert all the time to find ways to deal with the problems given to us. Our problem-solving potential was being pumped out through tests and examinations. It is not a matter of smart or clever, but we believe there must be other alternatives and better solutions. Comparatively speaking, in Canada, the style is less competitive.

The above participant's experience regarding the competitiveness and pressure inherent in Chinese education and the examination system coincides with the descriptions outlined in the Llewellyn Report (1982) discussed above. The following participant considered the effect of such pressure from the education system shaped them to have a low sense of security:
In Canada, when I do not have a job, the Government has a responsibility to take care of me. There is less survival tension [insecurity]. The survival tension is low. They face less pressure to explore more alternatives for survival. Their potential is not fully explored in problem-solving, as they know there is a backup system from the social welfare agency, the government and the society as a whole. It is the atmosphere for the society to be caring. Canadians are kind and they will not be harsh to people. They smile and treat each other kindly. In HK or Asian countries, we are finger-pointed at and criticised for not being fully efficient. People are waiting to take over our job and we will be out if we make mistakes. In Canada, there is less pressure of being sacked due to inefficiency. Coupled with the union system: They can go to the union and the whole group will fight for us. They are relatively secure and have a smaller survival problem. As the Chinese, we are a very insecure group and we save up money to make survival possible for the hard time.

Canadians are so different in the eyes of the Chinese. Though the Chinese are feeling insecure and worrying, they perceive the Canadians as optimistic and carefree. Canadians do not feel a strong need to over-achieve and are more optimistic about what will happen on the rainy days. With a bit of sour grapes, one participant made remarks envious of his Canadian colleagues’ being carefree and optimistic:

Canadians are under less pressure to make long-term plans to save money, buy a house, get settled with the mortgage. We are anxious to plan our next step and what we shall do in the next three years. Overall, my colleagues [Canadian peers] at work do not have the same plan... This is the same for my wife’s colleagues. They are less planning driven to control their future. They care less about spending when they have money and their credit cards are always over-stretched. They may buy a new car but when we go for dinner together, they may find themselves not having enough money for the week or the week after. They ask when is payday.... They may have good incomes. But they may not have money left. I have another typical example from experience. My Canadian colleague may stay in a very pleasant apartment with a monthly rent of $2,000. As for Chinese, we very rarely rent such an apartment for such an amount. We surely will save a down payment or to make instalments for a house. They may also get a nice car and a boat [despite their job maybe not being very secure]. They are carefree. Possibly they were brought up in a secure environment. They do not have a need to make a long-term plan.

The Chinese’s strong sense of insecurity becomes more intensified after they have migrated to Canada. After they have joined the workforce here, they observe that there is little security of employment. Laying-off was a rare feature in organizations where they used to work. The unemployment rate’s reaching 3.5% in Hong Kong in 1995 had already caused an outcry. The
double-digit unemployment rate in Canada was horrifying and alarming to the Chinese from Hong Kong, who had never experienced such an intense problem. Their expectation of working in an organization for their whole life became unrealistic in Canada. Their expectation of having a career progression, climbing up the ladder from the bottom in the same organization where they had their first job, was no longer valid. They expressed concerns about being laid off and discomfort about seeing others being laid off. The current employment situation intensified the participants' sense of insecurity, thus they expressed their annoyance about it during our discussions. They expect long-term employment and security from the job. The ruthless and abrupt layoffs further confirmed their meta-narrative of achieving more whenever opportunities are available:

I believe that a promotable staff should be good and should not be laid off. I have friends in Canada whom they have promoted twice and then laid off. In Hong Kong, we do have some sort of planning, such as annual plans, forecasts etc. Here, [X financial institute] is a subsidiary of a major bank. There is no reason for the personnel to recruit a person not knowing what is down the road in six months time. [Her colleague joined this bank but was laid off a few months after being recruited.] This is an insecure place for employment.

The main differences [between Hong Kong and Canada] are in job security. There is very little sense of job security here. The program planning is different between these two places. Here, a contract is renewed every year, depending on the funding position. Hence, everything is very uncertain and unstable including, the government. Despite the job being called a full-time permanent job, that does not mean it is so. When hard times come, the funding is cut. The job will disappear. Hong Kong is different. It offers a greater sense of stability and lack of funding seldom results in cutting the job. Here, when there is no funding, the post will be cut. There are no other ways. Cutting a whole department programme is very difficult and rare in Hong Kong.

The culture has programmed the Chinese to work very hard and hoard money so that their future can be secure. Researchers in organizational behaviour have looked for theories to explain motivation at work. Maslow (1954) hypothesized that human beings have five types of needs that motivate them. These needs form a hierarchy: from the base to apex, they are: physiological security, social, esteem, and self-actualisation. Security includes more than safety and protection from physical and emotional harm; it also means consistency and predcibility. There is little sense of security if one cannot predict whether the provision of protection is forthcoming. People feel
insecure if they cannot predict the outcome of their action. It appears that the Chinese are locked up in this level of need. The Canadians do not place security needs as high as the Chinese do, probably because of the social security web in Canada. However, the Chinese in Canada who are protected under this web are still locked up in this level of need. They hoard money for bad times and feel great discomfort when they are between jobs. They admire the Canadians for being able to put aside this lower-order need to fulfill the higher-order needs, such as self-actualization. For instance, to go back to university or to start a new career at a time when they have become established is incredible for the Chinese.

We [Chinese] particularly those from Hong Kong, we have a strong sense of insecurity. We try to save as much money as possible. For instance, I have a group of good friends who are rich by my standards. They have more than $1 million Canadian. But, they consider that this amount is small because it is not enough to maintain their living for the rest of their lives. They feel insecure and uncomfortable when their savings could not make financial assurance for themselves and their children. They secure financial provisions for at least two generations. One of my friends has $1 million cash plus a house. This amount makes him "loaded". I suggested he retire and stay in Canada. However, his reaction to my comment was "This amount is not adequate to cover my whole family. We have four members and each of us have less than a quarter of a million. We cannot rely on this sum only". He worried for the next generation. He continues to work and shuttles back to Hong Kong as an astronaut to make more money. He took up two jobs at one time. He works really hard and cannot find joy in his family life. He considers that this is the right thing to do. In the local Canadians, I have seldom seen such a strong desire for achievements driven by insecurity. Possibly their culture does not encourage that. Also, the Canadians are more individual-oriented. They expect members of the next generation to have a responsibility to make their own living. They do not have the same extended responsibility for the next generation as the Chinese. Family values influence work values. Even for the local Chinese here, I still find that they have the same insecurity feeling. They feel an urge to hoard enough money. More or less, when they have $10, they wish to save $8 and spend $2. They are not sure when they may lose their jobs. They also admire the "easy going and carefree" attitude of the local Canadian but will not aspire to the same work value. The Chinese cannot sustain such stress psychologically.

The above narrative can also be understood from another organizational behaviour theory proposed by Alderfer (1969), who revised Maslow's (1954) needs into three core groups: the needs for existence, relatedness and growth. The existence need is concerned with providing basic material
requirements; it includes those items considered by Maslow as physiological and safety needs. The second group of needs, relatedness, concern the human beings' desire for maintaining important interpersonal relationships. The growth needs include the intrinsic desire for personal development, equivalent to Maslow's esteem and self-actualization needs. Obviously, the need for existence dominates among the Chinese. The driving force of their sense of insecurity and the threats of existence push them to suppress relatedness needs. Many of them fly back to Hong Kong as "astronauts" in return for security. The Chinese have a strong family concept and the family system does not break up easily if the members do not stay together. One of the research participants lamented:

Although we may say that we have passed beyond the stage of agricultural psychology but we are still keeping the farmer's world view regarding inadequacy and rainy weather. We always fear bad times and want to do everything possible to make life under our control. The farmers save enough wheat in the barn and maintain a system of support in the village. Despite the time has changed, we do the same thing. We save enough money in the bank and purchase houses with Chinese neighbourhoods in this foreign place. We still feel insecure and wish to achievement.

As reported by the participants, the Chinese collective behaviour to face insecurity is not confined to hoarding of wealth nor to working hard. They appear to have developed what I call an achievement impulse. Such an impulse drives them to seek higher income, material gain, production and extrinsic reward to relieve their insecurity. Through grasping these concrete things, the Chinese feel more in control of their life. This world view is generally shared by the participants, as one has pointed out:

People in Canada and Hong Kong have great differences in their point of view. For example, come from Hong Kong, we tend to measure people by price tag: What big jobs have you done? What is your annual income? My experience was that, I once met some Canadian chaps and asked what they wanted to take up as their career. One of them said, he wanted to be a carpenter. To a Hong Kong chap, shit, this is a degrading job. Manual jobs are not respectable ones. However, as a Canadian, this choice means very differently to him. He chose the job because, he said, "I love to see I can accomplish things with my hands". The sense of personal achievement and satisfaction despite how others view the job becomes important. In Hong Kong, being a carpenter is degrading. Here, it is not degrading to tell others that your job choice is a carpenter. Yet in Hong Kong such a choice by any kid or students can be looked down upon. Ha! However, earning more money is not so important to a
Canadian compared to a Hong Kong guy. To the Canadian, a balanced life is more important. There is no sympathy for the marginal groups or the misfits in Hong Kong. If people cannot meet the requirements of an organization, they should be sacked or they should leave. Canadians appreciate the value of individuals and the groups. If people do not do well, they should be helped. People need to be supportive. Hence, our Chinese world views are so different. As for us Chinese, our world view is very critical, competitive, achieving. This is a problem in Chinese organizations. The value here is that employees are considered responsible if they are able to perform the given duties. Exceeding what is required is not the norm. The norm for Chinese workers in Hong Kong is highly achieving and competitive. They have to survive this test to stay on in the organization.

Such an orientation may be explained by McClelland’s (1961) theory of motivation. He described the need for achievement, which includes the drive to excel, to achieve in relation to a set of standards and to strive to succeed. My Chinese participants described themselves as having a compelling drive to succeed and as striving for personal achievement. McClelland found from his research that high achievers distinguish themselves from others by their desire to do things better. My participants described themselves and their Chinese fellow-workers as high achievers. The interviews also brought to consciousness their orientation toward over indulgence in work and over-achievements. Such an orientation is a natural response to their insecurity meta-narrative. With this meta-narrative, they formulate the “glasses” to view people, life, work and success in terms of price tags, figures and material possessions. Chinese consider themselves very different cross-culturally from Canadians, who treasure the intrinsic quality of work life, optimism and a carefree attitude at work. The concomitant of this world view is a lack of appreciation of, and intolerance towards, Canadian organizational behaviour.
( III ) The Meta-narrative of Work

Committing vs. Contracting

People in some cultures see marriage as a commitment, but in other cultures marriage is a contractual relationship. Commitment is long-term and permanently binding; a contract is binding on paper but can be made revocable if both parties agree. Marriage is a metaphor that can be applied to work relationships. The employees’ world view of their relationship with the organization influences their loyalty, contribution and commitment. The research participants felt that their world views in this aspect differed from that of their Canadian counterparts. They saw no clear boundary between their work life and their private life. When they enter a relationship with an organization, they commit to it in a holistic manner. Hence, they tolerate the organization’s intrusion into their private life. This organizational behaviour difference causes them to feel awkward with their Canadian counterparts, who clearly distinguish between their personal and work lives. A teacher, who was an employee in a realty sales company, related his cross-cultural experience:

Between work and life, Canadians try to avoid work that intrudes into their personal life. Suppose they are on leave; they take that as their personal time. In contrast, the Chinese are used to bringing notes and files during vacation to work at home or at their cottage. Canadians may do so occasionally if it is their home business. But this is an exception rather than a rule. From my experience, working or making sales calls during vacations trip are more acceptable among the Chinese than the Canadians. It is more common for the latter to separate work life from private life. One of my previous bosses was a Chinese. He went to Miami for a holiday, but brought with him his clients’ telephone numbers for contact when he was free. He found it natural for work and personal life to be mixed rather than separated. My Canadian counterparts divide time into chunks; some belong to the office and others to themselves personally. Their social circles are divided more clearly than the Chinese in this way as well. I may have colleagues who are good friends and can mix well. They somehow belong to another group outside that of their personal life. But I do not draw a clear line to divide my circle of friends as colleagues or family friends too clearly. In the workplace, I make friends and they become my family friends. We extend our circle and turn our colleagues into personal and family friends.

The Chinese have a less clear-cut boundary between their work time and their private time. This phenomenon may also be influenced by other factors described in the first and the second
meta-narratives: the Chinese believe that people exist for organizations and tend to overachievement, propelled by their insecurity. The culmination of these factors leads the Chinese to see work as their primary goal in life. Some research participants describe work as their whole life and the loss of a career is impossible for them to tolerate. Hence, it is understandable that people become “astronauts” and shuttle back to Hong Kong for work. Because they place great emphasis on work and treat it as a personal commitment, they feel disoriented to find their Canadian counterparts being so careful about making sacrifices of personal time and resources to help their organizations. A programme coordinator outlined the differences of expectation between the two cultures in their commitment of time at work and in the degree of personal accountability for output:

In HK you put in your whole self for the office. Work is your whole life. Here, there are advantages and disadvantages. For our personnel policy [in Canada], we cannot ask our staff to work more than is required. They just revert to doing the things as specified in the job description. In Hong Kong, we are bound to finish what is given to us. The pressure is greater. In Hong Kong, when some assignments are not thoroughly done, we are obliged to complete them through thick and thin. In Canada, although it is written clearly in the personnel policy that my job requires me to work irregular hours, I am not often required to do so as compared to Hong Kong. Here, we are required to work at irregular hours, but we are not expected to work continuously for more than two more blocks of time. For instance, we work either afternoon and evening or morning and afternoon, but we cannot ask a person to work through the whole day. Hong Kong is different. We have to work through the night consecutively to make sure assignments are rightly done. There is no clear distinction between your office and home time.

The difference in seeing work as a contract rather than a commitment leads to large differences in organizational behaviour and the meaning and interpretation of loyalty at work. The Chinese interpret unwillingness to sacrifice break time or to stay late for work as being disloyal. Loyalty demands full commitment and a sense of responsibility to ensure that the job will not be left unattended. It is not responsible behaviour to break up a piece of work into different parts and view some as “theirs” and others as “ours”. If the job has to be divided into different units for people in another shift or branch to complete, the Chinese expect a clear hand-over. Loyalty is a social value highly espoused in Chinese history, which highly praises heros and martyrs who sacrificed their life for loyalty. Loyalty is a virtue to be upheld in organizations. It is not surprising that one participant adopted a reprimanding tone in reporting his work experience with Canadians, who had different
work values from him:

The locals [Canadian workers] seldom sacrifice a minute of their private time to their employers. A break is a break and they take the full break. They will not arrive to start work five minutes earlier nor leave five minutes late after office hours. If you have passion and loyalty to the organization, you will never be so clock-watching. I am not criticising the locals. If they see that it is approaching off-duty time while their work is still not finished, they either complete it in a manner or pass the buck to another person. Or, they just put away the task and go. In Hong Kong, I do not expect decent workers to perform in such a manner. If they cannot complete the job, they should pass it to their colleagues for help. Alternatively, they can tell their colleagues that they will have the job done tomorrow if the boss asks about progress. This is how they would perform at work among the Chinese. Here, you cannot expect the same. Hence, Hong Kong people feel very frustrated in taking over the duties of another person or duties from another shift. I sometimes need two to three hours to clear the backlog or leftover irregularities before I can really start work for that day. Hence, the Chinese workers here encounter great problems in this area. If I tell my colleagues of the situation, I seem to be “ripping” their face off. If I don't I have to get the work done for them.

At the time of this study, the O.J. Simpson case was a hot issue and on television. The Chinese community was surprised at the television broadcast of the prosecution attorney refusing the judge’s request to extend the court session for the O.J. Simpson case on the grounds of her babysitting arrangements. From the Chinese world view, it is only natural to put a lower priority on family and personal matters, particularly in a serious case that attracts such a degree of publicity. The following participant is more appreciative of the North Americans’ not sacrificing their personal time for office matters. However, he still holds the value that commitment means placing work above personal matters in priority. He finds it unacceptable that, when the job cannot be finished on time, the problem should go back to the job allocator rather than to the worker. He cannot identify with such a Canadian practice. To him, a committed worker has the responsibility to fix the problem for management even at the expense of making personal sacrifices. He quoted examples of other, younger Chinese from Hong Kong, who had worked with him in the same organisation and whom he saw to be collectively programmed to behave in the same manner:

Also, another less obvious example of cultural difference is the Canadians’ punctuality in starting and finishing work. In a way, you cannot criticize them. They may have many domestic burdens. They cannot afford to be unpunctual. They may
have someone baby-sitting their child and they have to pick up their kids at a specified time. Also, the train leaves at a particular point of time. As the boss, you have to let them go.

In Hong Kong, examples of that are rare. You can say that the Hong Kong Chinese are pretending, or that they have a real devotion to job. They are prepared to work earlier than others and leave later by ten or twenty minutes. Overall, our Chinese value is: Hand in the complete "homework" and provide the full service. The Canadian employees may not take this approach. The Chinese coming from Hong Kong will not take a break if they cannot complete the job. If they cannot finish the job, they prefer to stay late to finish it. Anyway, it is my personal responsibility to finish my own area of work. I am one typical example.

The other research participants shared the same theme about commitment at work and found their interpretation of what constituted proper behaviour at work different from that of their Canadian counterparts. They considered it a wrongful act not to stay late when the job was not complete. Overtime should be accepted as a norm. Putting the burden back on the boss is inappropriate, because it reflects lack of commitment. Being calculative and non-cooperative with the management is not proper behaviour. The way Canadians see the job as a contract for service caused the participants to feel disoriented and uneasy; as one said:

Secretaries in Canada do not take for granted that they need to stay behind for an unexpected influx of work. When their work is not finished, they will leave it to the next day and not feel obliged to spend overtime to get things done. If the work cannot be done, it cannot be done. They will just say "sorry" and leave the job for tomorrow. Basically, the value toward work can be different from the Chinese. The Hong Kong style attends to performance and loyalty. Our contributions are measured by our devotion and meeting the office requirements. Working overtime and having no grumble about being stretched to the limit are indications of our devotion. People are more willing to make sacrifices and work overtime. We show more understanding to the organization. Here it is more contractual. If there is no overtime payment, they are reluctant to perform extra duties after office hours. Some may even refuse to do overtime work even if they are paid to do so. Some may demand a different pay rate for overtime work, one hour pay for half an hour’s work. They are calculative with the management. I feel it odd to treat my boss or organization in this manner.

A contract for service usually specifies in clear terms the performance requirements and the remuneration. It ensures both parties clearly and specifically know their obligations and the returns they can expect from each other. People examine the details of the conditions laid down in the contract and the wordings used to avoid ambiguity. The outcome of contracting is a legal document
written in formal language; it is binding, stiff and formal. After having entered into a contract, neither party can vary the terms and condition without the consent of both parties. Each party must honour its promise. Should there be any arguments about the rights and obligations, the parties will resort to the terms of the contract and demand each other’s compliance. This is a Western style of entering into a working relationship. Chinese participants hold a different world view of the relationship between the organization and the employees. A research director, who is also a board member of a not-for-profit organization [X] that raises money for underdeveloped countries, made the following observations from experience on how Chinese and Canadians differ in their world views about work commitment.

Canadians divide tasks more clearly into units. When they promise to work specific hours for the person, they devote the number of hours as agreed and leave after that. However, when Chinese enter a working relationship, we are making a commitment to getting the task done... Take the example of [X]. Our Canadian counterparts utilize volunteers but they calculate the service on the number of hours. The appointed volunteers turn up for 2 to 3 hours and after that. They are very precise with the number of hours. They spelt that out clearly in the first instance. Then they are contracted to something rather than committed to something. The Chinese... normally, do not spell out how many hours they will spend. [X] asked me how I could mobilise 60 volunteers in a sponsored 30-hour hunger strike for charity. Our Canadian counterparts thought that the Hong Kong Chinese were unwilling to take part. I just pointed out that the success depended on whether you know how to get them involved. With my credibility and being known in the community, people were willing to come... My experience in Hong Kong and here with the Chinese is that when we share ideas, visions, when a big picture is formulated, they made deeper into the water (get more involved). They become dedicated and end their devotion only after the project is done. They do not count the hours spent. However, they may choose never to help you again or resign after the project is over, hahahaha!

Canadians stay with the terms they have contracted and may not devote more. It is your [the management’s] ultimate responsibility to make the project successful but not their [volunteers]. The people in the Chinese culture are less like that [do not draw a line between us and them]. They [the Chinese volunteers] are willing to spend more time or money if they know the project is halfway done and cannot be completed with extra effort or resources. [He then turned to the experience in mobilising the Chinese] ....when they organise a large project, the one or two nights before the D-day, the whole group is prepared to burn the midnight oil to complete it. Everyone is not calculative of how much they put in.... [Speaking as if he were a Canadian] Canadians can be fully devoted for the 2 hours [period] as contracted.
Work does not change [get into] my plan [personal life]. I am committed to the two hours. If that [the contribution] cannot work out to complete the project, it is not my responsibility. It is you who are responsible for finding another person to man it. The Chinese, in the same circumstances, may volunteer to fix the problem due to righteousness.

People in organizations are bound to make judgements about others. Managers have to judge their co-workers’ performances and appraise how much effort their team members have put into their jobs. These judgements have important consequences for their organization. But how and on what basis are these judgements made? An important judgement that managers make about employees is whether they are loyal to the organization. Organizations expect employees in all levels to make commitments to their work. However, commitment is often interpreted differently in different cultures. In the incidents the participants described, the Canadians see no lack of commitment in stopping work when the contracted requirements have been fulfilled. However, the Chinese perceived employees who are not prepared to sacrifice their personal time and work beyond the contractual requirements for the good of the organization as not fully committed to their work. Chinese management interprets such employees as being far from loyal members of the organization. The issue is not whether organizations are right in demanding loyalty, but how much the assessment of an employee’s loyalty or commitment is a cultural judgement. People from different cultures look at the same issue but perceive it differently. What one culture perceives as loyalty, another may see as excessive altruism or even slavery. In this case, the meta-narrative of work can be interpreted very differently by Chinese and Canadians, resulting in their misreading each other’s behaviour and loyalty at work.
( IV ) The Meta-narrative of Conflict

Harmonising vs. Confronting

Conflict is an inevitable part of life in an organization. Incidents of conflicts are unforgettable experiences to people; in addition, they are often sources of tension and nightmares. People have different responses to conflict. Different cultures have different game rules in for handling conflict. Some may “fight” while others prefer “flight”. Only people who can stand the pain and know the game rules of conflict can learn to survive in organizations. The research participants found conflicts were expressed, handled and resolved differently as between Canadians and Hong Kong Chinese. They had few difficulties recollecting their lived experience in this aspect, because conflict is associated with intense emotions and tension. Before getting into the participants’ views of conflict, I would like to put the discussion in perspective by finding a definition of conflict. Fink (1968) suggests that there has been no shortage of definitions for conflict. I do not intend to add another one. From my understanding of the participants’ perception, conflict can be defined as a dispute or struggle between two or more parties that is characterized by overt expressions of hostility and intentional actions to interfere with the opposing party’s goal-attainment. Conflict can also be psychological, in which case one finds discomfort caused by cognitive dissonance. For instance, the participants considered it important to assert their views in Canadian society, but they did not do so. Psychological conflicts are tensions and discomfort arising from inconsistencies between what people think they should do and what they actually have done or failed to do.

All participants encountered different degrees of conflict, either interpersonal or intrapersonal. The former they experienced both in Canada and Hong Kong. The latter involved their feelings of dissonance between organizational behaviour they considered appropriate and what eventuated in the Canadian workplace. Some participants became more emotional than others when they brought up the issue of struggles in “organizational battles” and their “struggle to resolve cultural differences” in Canada. Some of them were excited and uninhibited in sharing their feelings and perceptions. This phenomenon is probably due to the fact that as a researcher I am non-judgmental and most willing to listen. My cultural identity as a Chinese helped to build up their
trust. There were no obvious barriers to inhibit them from sharing their views or biases freely and safely. They also took the opportunity to let off their pent-up feelings. In the process of venting their grievances, they described how they managed to deal with their conflicts. Such descriptions indirectly offered data about their conflict-management styles. Their perceptions of how they differed from their Canadian counterparts in handling conflicts emerged through these reports of conflictual incidents.

The discussion of this meta-narrative might best begin with a few life-incidents the participants reported. The first one comes from a research-centre director who used to do research at universities in Hong Kong and Canada. His experience of how he and other Chinese resolved the conflicts offered insights into how they differed from Canadians in this respect. As a research centre director, he was responsible for raising funds through donations and making arrangements for Chinese scholars and public-policy makers to visit Canada. The object of these funded visits was to expose these "agents" to Western thoughts so that the Chinese would incorporate Western perspectives in their decision-making process. The selection of scholars for these funded visits is an important process. This university puts all donations in a central pool for allocation. Conflict arose when the university administration tried to uphold the principle of "open to all" competition. The donor and the director considered this practice lacked flexibility, restricting their ability to select the person they had in mind as the scholarship recipient. With this background, read how he perceived conflict and how it was handled in the following incident:

The university administration refused to grant the scholarship to a particular candidate intended by the donor. This is an example of conflict between the university administration and a private donor. The funding was given by a Chinese donor on the understanding that it would support a mainland Chinese scholar for study in Canada. However, the university administration argued that the donation was made to the institute and the institute should not be obliged to grant the scholarship to any particular student. Following the equality principle, the scholarship should be available to people of all colour and should not be made to any particular person. In the light of the obstacles and the conflict posed by the administration, the donor and I then got around the issue by suggesting that this sum of money be made a loan. An understanding was made between the donor and the scholarship candidate that the loan need not be paid back when the programme was finished. This arrangement led to the same result as offering a scholarship to the person. The donor could not donate the money direct to the student because in
Canada such an arrangement would not lead to a tax reduction. The prime objective of the donor was getting a receipt from the administration for tax deduction purposes showing that the money had been received by the university as a loan to students. This format allowed the money to be received by the person designated and produced a receipt for better tax arrangements. The Chinese are known for using any alternative means to achieve the same result. The loan was only a means and the donor did not expect repayment. The outcome was the same as granting a scholarship. As scholarship donation was hindered by the system, the Chinese donor went around the barrier to get things done without defeating his original purpose... Chinese create different possibilities and make the alternative flexible enough to achieve the same result and to be compatible with the requirements of the administrative systems. Quite often, Canadians find it difficult to understand us. They consider an issue has come to an end when the administrative ruling disapproves an action. However, the Chinese find another way round, and another, until no more hurdles bar the way.

Some people in either culture may not see the above arrangements as perfectly in order. It is not my purpose to debate the ethical issue. However, the Chinese generally accept this approach to dealing with a conflict through circumventing rather than confronting as a better alternative. This alternative creates harmony and avoids conflict while still achieving the original goals. Creating space for all parties to reach their own objectives by placating the people involved and smoothing over the system’s restrictions is the Chinese mind map for conflict resolution. This meta-narrative or mental construct about conflict resolution is vividly explained by an image one participant suggested:

Circumventing or going around the issue to avoid the conflict is my usual way of tackling a conflict. This way of managing conflict may well be illustrated from our common Chinese experience in managing our way through in the city. From my experience of getting through the road with heavy traffic in Hong Kong, China and Taiwan, commuters and vehicles get their way through the busy traffic in a chaotic but successful fashion. They cross over through the spaces between the drivers, bicycle riders and the commuters by each party adjusting to the other by speed and direction variations. It is made possible not by traffic light but by vehicles slowing down slightly and the commuters walking a bit faster. A space is thus created for each other’s crossing the very heavy-traffic roads. The same applies when I crossed the roads fully packed with bicycles ridden by the Chinese in Peking and Taiwan. The cross-over is not regulated by the traffic lights but is made possible by the bicycle riders and the commuters. Here, in Canada, we rely on traffic lights. The light system is a set of regulating machines. It is not a system of human beings adjusting to each other. Similarly in organizations here there is little space for human
flexibility. In solving problem situations, such as encountering a traffic light which stops them from proceeding, Chinese find another light which allows them to cross over. In organizations, we find a route which does not have people to block us. We avoid confronting people and think in the way of "possibility" creation. Canadians, as I observe, think in a linear manner in a "go" or "no go" fashion. Hence, the Chinese may wrongly consider Canadians as stubborn and stupid at work. Working from that [Western] perspective, Canadians avoid human partiality and nepotism through a system of impersonal rules. Such practices attempt to eliminate subjectivity and personal affinity at work. However, it affects things being achieved with flexibility as preferred by the Chinese.

The above metaphor brings out a mental representation of how the Chinese perceive and manage conflict differently. There should not be any value judgement upon which approach is better. It is only a difference in people's collective programming in a particular culture about what to do when conflicts arise. What are the differences, if any, in conflict management styles between the Canadians and the Chinese? Before turning to the data, I examine other researchers' results for comparison with my set of data would be helpful in illustrating the point in later discussions.

Thomas (1976) identified five basic conflict-management styles in a grid representing, varying combinations of "concern for self" and "concern for others" in a conflict situation, shown in Figure 4.

![Conflict Management Styles Grid](image)

*Figure: 4 Conflict Management Styles
*Modified from Thomas (1976, p. 900)

The avoiding-style person has minimum concern for self and others, resulting in withdrawing or suppressing the conflict. The opposite is the collaborative style. A collaborative-style person has a maximum concern for both self and others, resulting in seeking openness, trust, authenticity and
win-win problem solving. High concern for self but low concern for others brings about a competitive style. This person seeks to achieve his or her goals despite the impact on the other party: the domination of one party leads to win-loss positions in a conflict situation. Opposite to the competitive style is one person seeking to appease the opponent and placing others’ interest over self-interest. This is an accommodating style that leads to self-sacrifice. The middle of the road, having no clear winner or loser, is the compromising style. This conflict style leads to opponents’ settling differences by each side giving up part of its objective. My data show that participants in this study have a mental picture of a style preferred by Chinese and another preferred by Canadians in conflict situations. I extract the excerpts related to conflict managing comparison. (The bold type represents the approach they perceive to be taken by Canadians and the italics that taken by Chinese.)

Here in Canada, there has been the mentality of an opposition party. They have been on the side of the opposition party. ...the opposition mentality is to keep stepping on and destroying others. The Chinese do not like to be an opposition party. ...the Chinese has a mentality that when I am in power and I have let you off the hook this time, I shall expect you to let me off the hook when you are in power. ...I see that there is no reciprocation of the same type among the Canadians, as compared with the Chinese.

In Hong Kong, if I feel we deal with conflicts differently between boss and subordinates in these two cultures. I will not normally point that out openly. I have to avoid treading on the toes of others. For instance, Canadians at work will query why it was allowed that one person did something but not him or her. People here will make a noise about disparity treatments. In Hong Kong, we may avoid unequal treatment as well. If we have such an unequal treatment, we avoid pointing that out openly. Here in Canada, if our colleagues feel that the boss is not fair and has been treating a person better than the others, they will easily make a fuss of it... the employees' perception of their own rights can be voiced out with less inhibition. In Hong Kong, what we do is to speak ill or severely criticize the boss among the colleagues [in the lower level] but not so easily take the issue out to have direct confrontation. For instance, we are colleagues in the same organization and the boss accords different treatment to a similar request. Here, Canadians will speak out and will not take the unequal treatment from the boss. In Hong Kong, we shall not be so vocal of our rights at work and create a conflict with the boss unless it becomes totally intolerable. In Hong Kong, we tolerate “big and small eyes”. The most we can do is to criticize them behind their back.
But, in Hong Kong, the overall consideration given to the boss is more. In taking an action, we consider it from the perspective of the boss. Are we creating difficulty for my boss? If so, should I give way? Here, it is different. If there is a problem related to the boss, it is his or her problem. They [Canadians] may not feel a need to accommodate each other. "I take care of my problem and you take care of yours" is their style. In Hong Kong, we allow space for my issue and that of the others to be smoothly resolved. ...as an employee, we shall accommodate or settle our disputes first before even raising them with the boss.

The way of seeing performance is different between Chinese and Canadians. For instance, we differ in management expectations. I expect people to work in such a way. However, here they have a right to do things in their own way. I cannot prescribe to my Canadian subordinates the method of doing things. If the Canadians consider such a particular way of doing things is appropriate, they do it their way. So, I conflict with them in work situations.

We resolve the issue by compromising and reconciliation in the mid of the whole process. We end the matter by letting people off. Here, people go through the motion until it is totally correct. Nevertheless, in some organizations they do not wish others to misunderstand or to condone matters such as harassment. All take a zero-tolerance attitude in certain matters, unlike the Chinese who are more readily to accept mid way solutions or ambiguity.

From the phrases and words used to describe the conflict-management differences, one can detect a pattern. Most if not all of the descriptions of how the Chinese participants perceive the Canadian style of conflict management contain elements of competition. The one exception that falls vaguely into the avoiding style is "I take care of my problem and you take care of yours". Most of the descriptions by the Chinese of their own style in managing conflicts show the behaviour of avoiding conflict. I also found a few instances of accommodating and compromising. (A table tabulating the styles of conflict management, representing the words in bold and italics, appears in Appendix 25.) However, the Chinese are not totally competition-free. They compete behind the scenes in a such a way to avoid face to face conflict. They may "speak ill or criticize the boss" severely between colleagues or "criticize behind their back". Generalising that the Chinese avoid or compromise around conflict can be dangerous. The participants elected not to confront conflicts openly. Readers may not classify some of the above incidents as competitive, being people from a culture featured by high-competition styles. However, from a Chinese point of view, an action such
as arguing or asserting a point of view openly with the boss may be interpreted as competing. Canadians do not value “shutting up”, respect for the other and work harmony. They may consider not asserting their point as being passive and weak.

As I pointed out earlier, Chinese are not competition-free but are only avoiding face-to-face confrontation. The dynamics behind the avoidance of conflict go back to the face issue, a highly delicate matter in Chinese culture. Y.T. Lin (1977) found that the influence of face in social interaction is universal but is particularly significant to the Chinese. Face can be interpreted as the kind of respect or reputation achieved by a person or awarded by others (Pun, 1991). It stands for the kind of prestige that others ascribe. Face saving and face exchange may be done at a cost absurd to onlookers outside Chinese culture. Redding and Ng (1982) investigated the perception of face and its operation among middle-level Chinese executives in Hong Kong. Their data revealed that (a) the role of face in organizational relationships is strongly affirmed; (b) the justification for face related-behaviour normally revolves around group or interpersonal harmony; and (c) hierarchical perceptions of the social order influence face transactions. Participants confessed that face affected them in their decision-making and interpersonal relationships. They claimed that the face element affects them less in Canada; however, in Hong Kong, they gave it considerable weight in decision-making:

In dealing with conflicts, I feel it embarrassing to express our disagreements openly because we know each other. Here [Canada], it is a different game. They may let you know openly.... Face giving means that if a particular person asks me to do something, I have to do it. It is the person that counts. I feel obliged to do something for him or her, otherwise that person will feel offended. In Canada, few problems of that kind would arise. In Hong Kong, a respected person in the community made certain demands, such as sending someone from his organization to apply for a job or get enrolled for a course. However, the applicant’s qualification or academic result was not strong enough. When that [respected] person had written a letter to strongly recommend the candidate, I felt embarrassed not to accept that application. Here [Canada], we seldom discussed or were bothered by this problem. I do not hear of similar incidents as problems here. In Hong Kong, we have to figure out carefully whom to send to make an explanation. We were careful the person who made the recommendation should not feel offended. I have not faced the same problem in Canada in five years since coming here. In Hong Kong, we are very sensitive to and apprehensive of offending certain persons because of not giving them face. When the person has such face and asks for a favour, our response should match with his or her
expectation - this is face giving. When his face is so big and he makes a demand, a negative answer is letting his face down. He would be angry with us. Face is a very powerful resource of him. But in Canada, we can be equally aware of a similar recommendation letter. We recognise the person’s “pull” in getting someone at a high position to write a letter of recommendation. We discuss what we should do and take precautions in our actions to avoid being picked up in any mistake. Canadians are more afraid of being sued rather than offending the authority.

Another participant, a programme coordinator, gave an account of a conflict experience in a Canadian organization. After the conflict, his Canadian colleagues offered him an apology. As a Chinese, he considered that when face is damaged, it cannot easily be restored. He felt it proper for him to be stiff and rigid when the offending party offered an apology. He reacted in a Chinese way that fuelled his colleagues’ anger:

My reaction, typical of the Chinese, was that since you chaps had already stabbed me in my back, what would you expect me to say. My reply to their apology was that “Suppose that I slap you on your face and say sorry afterwards, how would you feel?” My colleagues responded with fury to my refusal to accept their apology. Considering that they were wrong in offering me an apology, they took it back and said that talking with me was not possible. I was shocked. What is wrong with what I said? When you asked me of my feelings, I made open what I felt. As a Chinese you have damaged my face: what would you expect me to do? "The water is spilt and cannot be retrieved again". "The mirror is broken and can hardly be repaired to the previous state". Naturally, that a lodges like a stake in our hearts. For them, a word of apology can mean a lot. They explained that their target of attack was management and not me. They were only furious about me not showing acceptance of their apology, because they were already sorry for what they had done.

Participants expressed amazement that Canadians could take arguments and confrontations impersonally over the conference table. Once the battle has started, the Chinese find it difficult, if not impossible, to “mend the broken mirror”. As Chinese often take conflict more personally, they stop talking to the other party once their face is damaged and the relationship is strained.

They (Canadians) are more used to debating issues and banging on the table to put across their arguments in the conference room. After that, they appear to have no major rift or break in their relations. They can still talk with each other. Whether there are no hard feelings at all, I am not too sure. Perhaps they more easily deal with confrontation. They may be more accustomed to confronting and managing the confrontation. They can confront and solve it openly. Therefore, they fear it less. The Chinese find it difficult to resolve the issue after confrontation and so avoid it.
Maybe Canadians have a "thicker face" and ours are "thinner".

In a confrontation-avoiding culture, people express differences and conflict in a more subtle manner. While describing the Canadians' openness and straightforward manners in arguing with people, the participants lamented their own unassertiveness. Working in the Canadian culture, they feel powerless and ill-equipped to compete with the locals at work. They realise that they should debate and marshal their arguments in the Canadian manner so that their voice can be heard.

One participant expressed her pain and agony in conflict situations. She felt powerless to assert herself in the boardroom with her local counterparts. The participant was highly educated with a Master's degree from England and had held leadership positions in different organizations. Her command of English was good and she spoke the language fluently. When someone with such a background cannot manage to assert herself, one can imagine how other people with less cross-cultural experience and lower education may suffer when they work across the cultural line. This participant, like the others, also felt disempowered because the language of the host culture was not her mother tongue. She vented her grievance as follows:

It is not the Chinese habit to assert our points. Experience tells us that we never have to argue like that at work. In normal circumstances, the boss seldom forces you to become assertive to such an extent. Can you realise how I feel? It is very rare for a Chinese boss to force a subordinate to make conflict open, as it will lead to a situation of losing face. There is no need to make your point so explicit, otherwise it will be awkward for both parties. Here, my Canadian boss told me in his office that I should fight back in meetings if my colleagues were unfair to me again with their arguments. He asked me to voice my dissatisfaction. I really hope I could. On occasions, they bullied me to such an extent and in such an obvious manner that I wish I could have fought back. I felt bad because I wish to assert and I know my right to be more assertive, but I was powerless to do so. [The participant was red in the face; her voice had choked with emotion. She paused for a while and then continued]. I should be more assertive. However, when I come up with the words it may be 30 seconds too late. I have to turn my thoughts to words so that I can attack their comments directly. If my phraseology in an argument are inappropriate, the effect will be different. You should remember that English is my second language. I am still willing to make myself assertive but my timing in returning my arguments may not be right. If I was 30 seconds late in my responses, people had already changed to another topic. Although they had made an inappropriate comment to me, I could not fight back. They had changed to another topic while I was thinking of my reply. When I was able to make a statement in reply, it was already inappropriate and
untimely. Basically, I learned English for business, rather than as a language to fight or debate with people. In this sense, our English is weak and our phraseology is different. We learn to be polite and are trained to understand the feelings of others but not to attack others. We learn not to be offensive nor to fight with each other. Therefore, I confess that I would like to learn to become more assertive in future.

Language is clearly a factor influencing conflict-management style. However, it is not just the lack of language skills but also the world view of seeking harmony that underlies the Chinese tendency to be unassertive and conflict avoiding. Not only have they not been given the appropriate set of language skills, but also their culture has inhibited them from using confrontation to resolve conflict. Though language is one major factor causing their difficulty working in a highly assertive culture, the Chinese meta-narrative of harmony lies at the core of this issue. Seeking harmony is a virtue to be practised in interpersonal transactions. Chinese see asserting as arguing back, a behaviour that connotes lack of respect. They are not trained to argue with others in seeking truth and clarity of thought. The Chinese participants saw arguing as inappropriate and discourteous. Such a world view reflects the mental map directing the Chinese to search for harmony and avoid conflicts. Harmony is maintained at the expense of trading off individual rights, giving up opportunities to advocate and accommodating other people's wishes. People of other cultures may not appreciate such a style of behaviour, but it makes perfect sense to the Chinese. Here is the internal voice of a participant who found himself disoriented by having moved from a culture that values harmony to one that values confrontation:

Canadians really like to argue and debate. They advocate reasoning with others. To them, this is their belief. They trust that this is right behaviour at work. However, in Chinese culture, we see being strong-willed and unyielding in debate as stubborn as a mule. [The participant used Chinese slang to describe this stubbornness: "dead cow skewed the face to one side"]. So, in a Canadian working environment, there are more arguments. What is ideal for the Hong Kong Chinese is working in "a lump of harmony". The boss also expects that. However, here [in Canada] emphasise the exercise of individual right and the advocation of reason. In consequence, this practice leads to many arguments. This way of arguing leads to strained the relations among the colleagues. The relations between the boss and the subordinate seem close, but actually they are detached. Well, they were trained to be assertive when young. In our cultural value, assertiveness is not a good thing. In their cultural value, this is proper and is the norm. You must be assertive. Otherwise, you cannot find a place to stand. They believe in that. In Hong Kong, what is important is that you
need to mix well with others. One should not be afraid of accommodating a bit for others’ wishes. When others accept you and become buddies, you get into their “gang”. Then you can find a place to be among them. Because of the above factors, the workers here tend to be soloists. Not only that one cannot easily have good friends, but each of them has his or her own model of doing things at work. I do things my way and you do things your way. We do not interfere with each other, like “The water in the river does not offend the water in the well” [a Chinese proverb].

Another participant also noted the difference in expressing and tolerating conflict between these two cultures. A Chinese manager found the degree of expressiveness and diversity of opinions in the Canadian workplace difficult to tolerate. However, he found it necessary both to allow Canadian workers to spend time debating their ideas and to try to respect their culture, though from his Chinese viewpoint the Canadians’ level of assertiveness was outrageous. The Chinese, being harmony seekers, find it difficult to manage the “aggressive” Canadian style:

Working with Canadians can “take your breath away”, due to arguing with others. The reason is that the Canadians have many ideas. Each one has his or her own way of thinking. Everyone thinks that his or her idea is the best. They are good speakers in asserting their views but not good listeners to others’ ideas... I simply observed the long hours of meeting, for instance, in formulating a working plan. Everyone has a different way of seeing things and they are so diversified. Since Canadians are so expressive, assertive and persistent in expressing their thoughts, I just have to let them do so. However, in Hong Kong, if you give people a chance to get their view through, they will reciprocate in another occasion. This may not happen in Canada. When you accommodate their wish this time, it does not mean they will note down your kind gesture in their “account book” and reciprocate on the next occasion. They feel their way of thinking is always right. Their definition of assertiveness amounts to our perception of being aggressive. I experience that assertiveness has a cultural yardstick. Canadians talk a lot of their own rights and their own thinking; they consider that as assertive behaviour. However, by our standards, because they are so articulate, so expressive and so persistent, I find them aggressive. A Chinese who works with a Canadian for the first time and has not accommodated to such a style, shall find them generally aggressive.

The traditional Chinese view suggests that conflict causes dysfunctional outcomes, so it should be avoided. However, the contemporary Western view considers that conflict is functional; hence, it should be managed and even utilised. We should not only classify whether people hold a contemporary or traditional view of conflict, but also investigate whether they accept conflict or not from a cultural perspective. The Chinese’s mind map conflicts with the Canadian one. Their meta-
narrative of existence also informs them that people should exist for organizations, rather than organizations existing for people. So any action which disturbs the organization’s stability and prosperity is viewed with disfavour. "Luen"—chaos or loss of order—is often avoided at a high price. It is the role of every member in an organization to stay away from conflict and establish harmony. The Chinese meaning-construction system suggests that conflict equals chaos and that therefore the Chinese should work in "a lump of harmony". As a result, asserting one's view, which disturbs harmony and leads to a verbal battle, is self-censored and suppressed. Canadians may not consider genuinely asserting their views nor questioning established practice as causing chaos. Nevertheless, the Chinese mental constructs do, as one participant observed:

[The incident happened in an ESL language development centre, attended mostly by Chinese, on a Lunar New Year Day.] The Lunar New Year Day is not a holiday in Canada but an important day for the Chinese. On that day, only three Chinese students turned up. In view of this, a Canadian teacher dropped into the centre director's office. He asserted that it was Lunar New Year day and it did not make sense for the students to go to school; as only three students turned up, it made no sense to continue the lesson. Hence, he had already dismissed the class. This "Gwai Lo" ["ghost person"="white westerners"] challenged an insensible practice. Because this is your cultural holiday, it is not logical that a class should go on. He acted logically with a sensible move. However, he may not be aware that the issue is not so simple in a Hong Kong Chinese organization. In allowing no class on that day, the centre has to inform the Board. To avoid creating conflict with the administrative system and upsetting the normal practice, the centre prefers not to cancel classes on the Lunar New Year Day. However, to go round the issue, the students are allowed not to turn up at their choice. When the Chinese teachers [in the centre] saw what was done by the "Gwai Lo" teacher, they asked if they could dismiss their classes as well. The centre director, a Hong Kong Chinese who used the Chinese management style to rule the Chinese, rejected the idea. He asked that what answer he could give to the "authority" if there were inspections by the Ministry of Education. The Chinese teachers found such treatment showed disparity between the "Gwai Lo" and the Chinese. The "Gwai Los" are more assertive. The Chinese failed to assert their right and would not go against the wish or instruction of the authority. It would be better not to strain the relationship with the management because of such a small matter.

Another participant corroborated that account:

In the Operations Department in Hong Kong where I worked, I had experienced unequal treatment incidents. The requests made by Westerners would be dealt with speedily. They were also given different and preferential treatment. People are afraid
of having conflicts with them. They are more articulate and vocal. On the language side, we are not articulate enough to debate with them. Hence, accommodating their requests becomes the way out. This phenomenon is more obvious in organizations with a lot of whites... The Chinese staffs are bullied more by the management yet the non-Chinese staff are treated less so because these Westerners will speak up for their rights. They frequently question why things are done that way. However, the Hong Kong Chinese are not used to questioning. If the Chinese dare to questions, the senior staff will use power to add pressure to stop the query. This is the Hong Kong style of management. But in any case, we are trained not to have trouble with others and not to fight openly as the Westerners do. Our mind is set in that way.

We have examined from the data how these two cultures express and handle conflicts differently. The last set of data on conflict suggests the particular way and wishes of the Chinese on how conflicts can be resolved. It is important to know the key to conflict resolution with the Chinese. They can be stubborn and rigid on occasions when face is damaged. An added problem in resolving conflict with Chinese is that one may not even know conflict exists because often they do not assert their point. Their meta-narrative of conflict informs them that asserting leads to chaos and confrontation. With such self-censorship, how can differences be known or communicated to the other party? The Chinese must have ways to bridge this communication gap. What happens if an issue comes to a deadlock and both parties need to openly resolve the differences? Canadians may go for seeking a court ruling or looking for arbitration. The data suggest that there are certain people, things and settings which can facilitate conciliation among the Chinese. Agreeing to seek these channels signifies willingness and flexibility to resolve conflict. The participants preferred to have their conflicts resolved by means that would circumvent the direct confrontations they had in Canada. The participants discussed some of these conflict-resolution mechanisms and positive actions.

1. Mediate through a third party.

Principle: Use a go-between to protect each other from face-to-face conflict and to re-establish the communication if it is broken.

Chinese resolve confrontation by involving a third party, a senior [in a traditional family or farm], a “big brother” in a Triad society [the “secret lodges”, some of which became the basis of the “Chinese mafia”], or an uncle [in family]. For family counselling, there is a great difference between Easterners and Westerners. The latter treat marriage as matter between two people. However, we Chinese ask whether
there is any senior who can be a middle-person to settle the [marriage or family] deadlock. This is a different means of dealing with confrontation. When there is a stalemate, the Chinese find a third party. We actually avoid the confrontation. Learning to deal with confrontation is very important. Our next generation needs to learn how to face confrontation. Of course, life is not always confronting, but we need to have no fear to face it. Otherwise, we just avoid. This is important for our personal growth.

2. Have tea together.

Principle: Put away differences and do not be too rigid with each other; meet “socially” on neutral ground. (Accepting a cup of tea offered by the other party symbolises accepting the apology. The tea-house is traditionally a place for match-making interviews, settling gang differences, initial business contacts and family leisure. The activities of filling the cup for each other and serving each other with dim-sum provide an ice-breaking function and an informal atmosphere.)

Chinese manage conflict in a tea house rather than in a meeting room [as Canadians do]. They discuss over a cup of tea rather than debate the issue openly in a meeting. When the relationship between both parties is good, they will not make life difficult for each other in meetings, though they disagree. The Westerners prefer his the best administrative means to resolve the conflict, rather than having the issue settled over a cup of tea. When the Chinese encounter administrative hurdles, they go round the problem to meet the administrative requirements yet still achieve the results as intended. They use another name or pretext to achieve the same outcome. Chinese are very good at that. Having tea together is only a pretext for opening the door for negotiation.

3. Get out of the boardroom arena.

Principle: Let’s settle the differences behind closed doors. Do not wash dirty linen in public.

Talking about flexibility, we [the Chinese] have a mutual assumption that we can settle a matter better away from the conference table. This expectation is important. A conference table is only one of the compromise-reaching means, not the sole means. Outside the board room, I expect you can reach an agreement with me because we, from experience, have relationship, “Gan Qing” [feeling and compassion], and favour exchange arrangements. Having considered all the above [factors to be considered in resolving the conflict], I expect that we can iron out differences that way: I decide not to raise the issue for discussion over the table. If I expect the conflict cannot be worked out informally, then I shall make it formal and discuss it over the table. The decision to make the conflict open or not depends on our level of relations. We dare to settle the matter out of the meeting room, by having considered that the elements of our relations allow us to expect flexibility.
If you make life hard for me in front of others, I shall make life equally hard for you. Let's settle our matters in private. Of course, this tendency leads to cliques or small groups, a phenomenon so common among the Chinese.

The participants' preferences for non-confrontational style, informality and behind-the-scenes settlement of differences further confirm the Chinese meta-narrative of conflict. The mediator, who acts as a go-between, protects both parties from losing face when proposals are turned down. This arrangement eliminates embarrassment when the word "no" has to be put across to the other party. Conference table and meeting room are symbols of formality and inflexibility; differences may best be resolved in other settings, such as the tea house. The Chinese have fewer inhibitions about freely speaking their minds in such informal settings. They fear committing and being turned down formally over the conference table; when debates are conducted in a boardroom, there will be a gain or loss of face for each party. To avoid loss of face, the Chinese cannot admit faults in a boardroom situation. Behind-the-scenes settlement is therefore more preferable to them.

The data continuously point to the Chinese meta-narrative seeking harmony and avoiding direct conflict. Sun (1983) points out that the Chinese ontological model is the harmony of the Yin and Yang in the Tai Chi. This model is exactly opposite to the dualistic, confrontational Judaeo-Christianity model represented by the constant struggle between good and evil, God and Satan. The Chinese seek harmony rather than confrontation. Harmony stands for resonance, tolerance and alignment, not just noncompetition, non-dominance and non-confrontation. This harmony-driven Chinese meta-narrative of conflict is helps explain Chinese organizational behaviour.
The Meta-narrative of Power

High Inequality Tolerance vs. Low inequality Tolerance

One basic issue confronting human beings living and working together is how to distribute power. Humans, similar to other creatures, show dominance behaviour. Hofstede (1984, p.66) suggests that human pecking orders are part of the universal level of human mental programming. Society and group vary from each other in working out the issue of dominance to achieve a harmonious level of coexistence. Some societies tolerate more inequality of power and accept inequality through allowing the establishment of formal systems of dominance. Power inequality is seen in the unequal distribution of prestige, wealth and authority. Bohannan (1969) also finds inequality in the distribution of power among societal strata such as caste (in India), estate (in feudal Europe, for example nobility and serf commons) and class (in modern society). Inside organizations, inequality in power distribution is inevitable and different cultures tolerate it to different extents. Such an inequality is reflected in levels of hierarchial structure, formality in the chain of command, and social distance in boss-subordinate relationships. My data suggest a Chinese meta-narrative of high tolerance for unequal power distribution; the participants perceived the Chinese as being different from the Canadians, who have low tolerance in this dimension.

French and Ravens (1959) classified types of power: Coercive power depends on fear; reward power derives from the ability of distributing recompense; expert power derives from special skills or knowledge; legitimate power rests on formal rights associated with a position of authority; and referent power develops out of others' admiration. Organizations, being units of society, can hardly avoid inequality of members' ability and inequality of power. Gasse (1976, p.6) argues that "each culture justifies authority using its major values" and then proceeds to picture a continuum of which the two poles are "monolithism" and "pluralism". At the monolithic pole, cultures are characterized by power held by few people; at the pluralistic pole, competition between groups and leaders is encouraged; control by leaders is limited because members can join several organizations. In any organizations, the members spend their energies not only in service and production but also in power issues. The behaviour patterns of Chinese and Canadian organizations differ because their the tolerance of unequal distribution of power differs.
In the summer of 1995, I was invited to appear on a television programme in Toronto to analyse and comment on 10 cases of business ventures. One of the cases described a Chinese couple who were lawyers from Hong Kong now practising in Canada. In the show, they publicly bemoaned the sharp differences in the status and income awarded to them in Canada compared with Hong Kong. In Chinese culture, power focuses in a group of elites, which include professionals like lawyers, doctors, architects and accountants. The elite status the couple enjoyed as lawyers in Hong Kong far exceeded that which was given them in Canada, a country which tolerates less power inequality. This experience was not unique to them; my research participants had had similar experiences. They considered that tolerance of inequality results from cultural conditioning. A participant who worked in a hospital observed that professionals are treated less as an elite in Canada than in Hong Kong and have less power over their clients.

I observed that nurses in Canada remain very courteous, despite their workload. Some are so professional that they call the patients as customers. Have you ever seen the nurses treating the patients as customers in Hong Kong? There is little class difference between doctors and patients as well. Doctors can be very straight with staff. But in dealing with patients, they display their best courtesy, no matter how low the social level from which the patients come. All the staff are like that. A person who dresses like a beggar and goes for dispensing will be given the same treatment as other people. Professionals here (Canada) are not elites. As professionals they are trained to respect individual rights. People do not tolerate unequal treatment. In Hong Kong, professionals such as doctors have the notion that “I am helping you, so how can you expect me to be courteous?” Why would a professional with high standing serve the patients with such courtesy? Hong Kong is not as good as here in eliminating the class differences.

In Hong Kong the professional elites are superior and the service receivers are inferior. The patients in Hong Kong feel the status differences. In our heart, we ask why should the patients be inferior? We cannot look down upon them because they are sick and poor. We are trained to provide such care. Why should we look down upon them? This is another form of value differences.... [Here in Canada] everyone should be given the same professional courtesy irrespective of wealth or race.... There is greater equality in treatment of people.... In Hong Kong, professionals are seen as powerful experts. People asking for their service is similar to begging a plea for their help. They are bestowing favour on you with their expertise. The culture in Canada is different. Your professionalism is not perceived in such a way. Hence, it results in behavioural differences. Although professional courtesy is taught in every profession, why it cannot be appropriately practised in Hong Kong? Culture leads to
such behavioural differences. In a way, the power distance is shorter here in Canada. If you are willing, you can exercise your individual right. Simple as that. You fear nothing. Everything is laid down by law. If you follow the law, then you have nothing to fear at all. In the Hong Kong society, there is a lot of disparity, such as wealth, knowledge, income etc. Here, if you want to exercise individual rights, you can. Hence the power distance is shorter here. Actually, in Canada we do not talk about power distance. You have your power but I have my own right. You are not in a supreme position because you are a medical consultant. There are other consultants around. The law protects our right. But in Hong Kong, we have to tolerate the professionals' power even when we pay for the professional service. Here, we do not need to tolerate medical professionals elitism, even though we do not need to pay for the service. Hence, it is better in Canada. We feel more equal to each other.

Expert power is respected in Canada. However, professionals are seen as offering a service, rather than bestowing a favour through offering their expertise. Addressing the balance of power is made possible by giving all the people the right to ask, question or even challenge the party in authority. Canadians deal with power in organizations in a totally different way from the Chinese:

For instance, sales persons in Canada who hold the power of information are generally courteous. Even if we raise very stupid questions, they will not laugh at us... They dare not say we are ignorant. These sales people do believe that we really don't know. In Hong Kong, people who offer service will accuse us of being senseless, to keep asking and getting information. They see people doing this as nagging. Such customers are not welcome. Here, I have not experienced people who imply in their words the we are being stupid to question. It is our right to ask and seek information.

The Chinese world view of power is that directives delivered by the authority should not be challenged. Challenge rocks the boat and causes chaos; chaos does not benefit the organization. Challenge may of course take many forms, from the serious form of attacking to the mildest form of questioning the decisions. Questioning is generally accepted, even encouraged, in Canadian culture. The questioning attitude is developed when kids are at home and in school. Canadian families seem like small parliaments in which questions and debates are common. It is odd for Canadians not to question when they doubt decisions and instructions in organizations. The power to ask is seen as a given. But the Chinese would think it wrong to presume to have a right to ask. In Chinese culture, the meta-narrative of power inhibits people from questioning authority.
However, Hong Kong is a society where you do not have the power to ask. In an organization, we do not have the right to ask nor to challenge the directives. Few directors have the perspective their directives should reflect the wishes of the constituents rather than only those of the people in authority. Here, people in organization or society will challenge the people in power. The management is always subjected to answering questions about why they give a particular directive or make a particular decision. Hence, consultation is important. The process reduces the inequality of power distribution. I note that people who held senior positions in Hong Kong now working here will find it hard to adjust to the Canadian organizational culture. In Hong Kong, decision-makings is quick and highly centralised. No consultation is really given similar emphasis. Working with the same model [in Canada] would certainly generate great conflict.

Another participant showed her admiration of Canadian culture, in which she is consulted in the decision-making process. She spoke with satisfaction and pride in relating her experience. However, she found great contrast with the organizations for which she had worked in Hong Kong. There, people generally accepted that power difference was a way of life and should not be challenged.

I look back at my experience in HK. I worked in two or three organizations ... They are more bureaucratic and they have less respect for the individual's opinion. There exist procedures and you just follow them... You have to be aware of your position level in the organization. When you are higher in rank, you can have a say in most things. People who are lower in rank just follow instructions. Like all other people, I was less consulted about my opinions at work as compared to the organizations where I work in Canada... in my department in HK, like every one else, I had to do what the boss said. I was not expected to ask him the rationale behind his instructions. If I asked him the rationale, I would be seen as a troublemaker.

Is tolerance of power inequality a general phenomenon in Hong Kong? Is it limited to some organizations or does it prevail in that culture? The participants felt it in general. Tolerance of inequality was expected not only in organizations but also in family and the society. One participant cited a hot issue that took place in Hong Kong at the time of our interview. He used it to illustrate the omnipotent power possessed by the top officials, who expect members of the public not to question their dictatorial directives. The issue finally ended in a public outcry, due to its political sensitivity. However, it reflected that those in power expected people to accept their high-handed strategies without challenging them. This incident made the participant aware of the tolerance of
power differences in Hong Kong and the respect of human dignity in Canada.

People in Canada have work dignity and employees are treated equally as consumers. As an employee, I have the right to express my opinion on how the service or production should be delivered. In contrast to Hong Kong. For example, Mr. [X], the director of education, instructed that all history textbooks should follow the restrictions he set. All the publishers should therefore follow his directive that no accounts of China’s June 4th massacre [Tiananmen Square, 1989] should be included in the history texts. According to Mr. [X], incidents that happened less than forty years ago should not be included in the history textbooks. Here in Canada, one cannot act in the same manner in an organization. The responsible policy-maker is a trustee and should consult the constituency about what should be done. The school authority should invite parents to give input about public concerns on the curriculum. In my [Canadian] organization, our director cannot give a directive without consulting those being affected if it is so controversial. This is so different in Canada.

We have explored how the participants perceived the differences in inequality tolerance between the two cultures. They further revealed that people in authority in these cultures have different boundaries of power. The function of a power boundary is to ensure that people in authority act within limits. When the boundary is ambiguous, power can easily be extended and abused. Ambiguity breeds inequality. The participants’ experiences suggest that the boundary of power is more clearly defined in Canada; limits are more strongly delineated. The advantage of such an arrangement is that it allows people to know their rights. When a person in authority abuses power, people can exercise their right to challenge. However, when the power boundaries are ambiguous, people cannot easily challenge that the authority has gone beyond the limits. Coupled with the Chinese “avoiding” conflict-management style, this means abuse of organizational power is seldom curbed until it becomes unbearable. When employees cannot take the abuse any longer, they either explode or leave the organization. One participant observed these differences of power boundaries between the Chinese and the Canadians. He attributed the cause to early education in Chinese families, feeling that the concept of power imbued there is then extended to managing organizations.

We [Chinese] do not have a clear boundary on power. For instance, parents have no boundary on their power limits for controlling children. The same notion is unconsciously transferred to the management of organizations and the country. Chinese use the same way of managing our family and managing our country. In a
family, laying clear boundaries in many things, including power, is not possible. In contrast, there is a clear power boundary for authority in Canada. Canadians also know they have individual rights. This morning there was news that in Calgary that a mother punished her daughter by spanking her bottom. The brother sued the mother on behalf of his sister for such a punishment. There is a boundary of the body belonging to me and there is one belonging to my sister; no one, including my mother, has the right to physically punish my sister. To the Chinese, the body and hair are bestowed by the parents. In Hong Kong, the Chinese apply the boundless concept to managing an organization. The same notion applies to ruling a country. There was no power boundary for political leaders in China. For instance, Deng Xiao-Ping has no limits to his power, even though the country is ruled by law and constitution. On June 4 [the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre], people were prohibited by the government from buying a little bottle to drop on the ground to break, it as the words “Xiao-Ping” sound the same as “little bottle”. [Breaking “little bottle” symbolises overthrowing “Xiao-Ping”] The Westerners view the government’s action as ridiculous. Why can’t I break a bottle which I bought for fifty cents? Why should people be arrested for stepping on the broken bottle? China could control this specific behaviour because there was no boundary of power for the authority. The power can get into your family and anywhere. For Westerners, as far as there is no harm done to other people, they have their right to do things their way. This is a human right which people are entitled to.

Can the Chinese change their meta-narrative of power so that they can become intolerant of the inequality? To Canadians, it appears illogical that the Chinese would be so passive in accepting inequalities. Why do so little to change the situation? Canadians encourage the making of personal choices, it being for them a human right to make free choices. I sadly noted that the participants took a helpless attitude toward changing the power inequality their culture had defined for them. One participant considered that Chinese culture censors people’s right to challenge authority and reinforces the tolerance of power inequality, as a trade-off for the goals of harmony and prosperity. However, he observed, some cultures have a different world view; the difference depends on whether the society is knitted together by kinship or contract. Canada, according to his experience, belongs to the latter while China belongs to the former:

We [Chinese] relate to each other by blood linkage. Blood linkage means we have no choice in many things. We cannot change the family in which we were born. We are raised there. Our pecking order and relatives are destined. Our right and identity, whether we like it or not, have to stay there. In this so-called kinship society, everything is a given. Our interpersonal network is defined. For instance, the roles
of our uncles and our relations to them are fixed. The result is that, there is little flexibility for us to exercise our personal choice. Even if we exercise our choice, there is no effect. I cannot say that I do not like my uncle or a particular relative and therefore not invite him to my wedding. I cannot move to another place such as the next village, because family is our place of refuge. We get stuck there. So, our power concept and individual choice are low because we do not have the opportunity to exercise our personal choice. The more personal choice we exercise, the more problems we have. We are often punished for making individual choices. As a result, we make personal choices depending upon how other people see us and upon the nature of the issue. We gradually learn how to live in a collective culture and the special meaning of making personal choices.

In contrast to the Chinese, the Canadian education system emphasises learning how to make personal choices. People in organizations are responsible for the consequences of their own choice. Freedom of choice is an individual’s right. The right to have one’s own space free from interference by others is privacy. Rights and privacy create boundaries to prevent people in authority from interfering with ordinary people’s freedom of choice. Tolerating power to interfere with their freedom and rights is rare among Canadians and relatively common among Chinese. Their cultures programme them differently.

In Canada, we have more privacy and individual rights as compared to Hong Kong. Individual rights and privacy are more respected and valued. In HK, when people saw me in my office, they just walked in. For instance, here my office door has a glass panel. People can see whether I am there. Chinese colleagues who spot that I am there will just walk in and sort out their business right away. The Canadian colleagues normally knock on the door and ask for an appointment for later meeting. They do not expect that me to give them time for their business. HK is different. People just drop in when they think they need you. Privacy is seen differently. There is a difference in perceiving the boundary of power or space in these two places. For the Chinese, the boundary for individuals is more ambiguous. They will not clearly define this boundary. Canadians define the boundary. When the door is closed, this space is mine. The time is mine. I have a right to use it and not be disturbed.

High tolerance of power inequality means high suppression of rights. One’s rights exist only when a line is drawn to signify a boundary to stop intrusion. Within the boundary, there can be freedom for the individual. Such an individualistic notion is a Western one; it is not the meta-narrative of the Chinese. There are, of course, pros and cons in having entrenched rights in an organization, as one participant pointed out:

They (Canadians) value rights. To elaborate the issue of rights, they set out rules of
games and agreements. When they have the rights so laid down, they can do whatever within the boundary and be free from being queried. Every staff member here is individualistic. People care about their own part and not that of the others. They like to say, I don't care. Turf and lines of responsibilities are clear here. They would have many grumbles if they have to take care of work not directly on their turf. But in Hong Kong, reallocation of work is easier. There is more flexibility in reassigning responsibilities.

Working with Canadians in mainstream organizations, the participants experienced disorientation. The Canadians' intolerance to power difference is so high that it overwhelmed the participants. They felt annoyed by their colleagues' mentality of challenging authority and unwillingness to bear with power distance. A participant related an incident that shocked him because his Canadian staff member had such a low level of inequality-tolerance.

A member of my staff in Canada once said that she was not comfortable with our president being a white man who held such power and had the final say in most things. I was shocked to hear that. In Hong Kong, if we said such things in public we might be subject to immediate sacking. If I said such a thing in Hong Kong—that I disliked my boss because he was a British or a Chinese who held such a position as the Director of Administration, the management might have sacked me. But in Canada, if a white said he didn't like a black man in such a power position, he would be subject to being disciplined or even being sacked. But, people here show sympathy to the under-privileged.

The above incident illustrates that power differences leading to inequality will be viewed with mistrust and subject to challenge. The following incident also surprised one participant, though it would not necessarily surprise a Canadian. The president of his organization lined up with him for photocopying. The president's behaviour—to do the photocopying by himself, to line up with other staff, and to walk two blocks to another office—did not match the participant's construct of a boss.

The system of work is different here. The president of our organization, who walked two blocks to our office for photocopying and lined up with other staff members for the machine, is totally incredible to me. This practice would not happen in Hong Kong. This incident makes me feel that the power gap between levels is narrower here as compared to Hong Kong. This is a really a big difference. In Hong Kong, the boss or the president of the organization would have never acted like that. We might think that he was crazy if he went to do photocopying by himself. Second, such things never happened in Hong Kong. The president would never go to the
photocopying room. Even when I went to his office, I did not always have the opportunity to see him. You only see his secretary. I was overwhelmed by the situation that my top big boss, a Canadian, asked whether I wanted a cup of coffee and poured one for me. This treatment rarely happened in Hong Kong. When I worked in the Hong Kong Government, the power gap was even be greater between different levels. My boss had never poured a cup of coffee for me. Can you imagine my Commissioner, who was in my eyes so high in the leadership position, pouring a cup of tea for me? Never!

In conclusion, in Canadian organizations social relationships with others tend to follow the principle of equality. Humanness is seen as a value to be espoused if not fully practised. “We are all human, after all” is the theme in treating each other. Although there is hierarchial structure and power difference for people in different positions in an organization, interpersonal exchanges are conducted horizontally on the presumption that people are equals. Even if the transaction implies power differences, such as an appraisal interview, there is an implicit tendency to establish an atmosphere of equality. Thus, even within a very power-conscious establishments such as the police, a commanding officer may ask a subordinate a personal question, or offer a cup of coffee, before beginning a conversation or conducting an appraisal. The person in authority is not expected to call attention to his rank and exercise his power over a subordinate. “Pulling rank” or “using authority as a crutch” is not seen to be a behaviour trait of a good manager. Management training promotes a feeling of equality and assumes that organizations function most effectively on an interpersonal level of equality. With this mental map, Canadians may have trouble understanding this dimension of Chinese organizational behaviour. They see tolerance of power inequality as submissive, lacking “guts”, weak, and incompetent. Misunderstanding, mismatching, and miscommunication are the natural consequences of these cross-cultural differences. Such phenomena are common whenever people work across cultural lines. Understanding the world views of both cultures is essential for bridging this gap.
The meta-narrative of relationship has a special meaning for the Chinese quite distinct from its meaning for Canadians, as the research participants perceived. This meta-narrative influences the Chinese in their special ways of making decisions and getting work done through others in organizations. Some writers have examined interpersonal relationships amongst the Chinese, though not much in an organizational context. According to Kiu (1988), "relationship" (Guan Xi) is a social phenomenon well-known and deep-rooted in Chinese society. Kiu suggests that this phenomenon contains 12 types of relationship, ranging from blood-related people, clansman, school mates, and co-workers through to acquaintances.

Relationships are established and maintained through various means. Heritage or blood linkage build a special relationship through "ascribing". This relationship is permanent and cannot be denied. Relationship can also be established or reinforced if two people can establish common points between themselves. This is done through "recognising" the relationship proximity between the two parties. For instance, in a social conversation, a man may claim himself as the business contact’s brother-in-law. The fact is that he just happens to bear the same family name as the business contact’s spouse. (This assumed relationship rests on the traditional Chinese belief that all people with the same surname have some degrees of kinship.) Through this means, the person is no longer an "out-group" member or a stranger. He is a member close in proximity in the relationship network. Hence, Chinese like to take time for social conversation as a prelude for business dealings, in order to explore the other party’s background and find out possible points of linkage. If one party wants to build a relationship with a person having no relations at all, “pulling” is done, through a middle-person person and a gift offering. “Drilling” is done through building up relationships with the intended contacts through their significant others. Therefore, a celebrity’s wife or his close relatives will be “courted” by people who wish to “drill” a relationship with the celebrity. “Crowing” is close to “pulling”, but is done through praising other party’s success as an ice-breaking mechanism. “Linking” is done through connecting the present circle of networks to bigger ones for greater power. The above methods give readers some sense of Chinese sophistication in establishing
relationship. It helps readers to better appreciate the disappointment of the research participants who could not use their sophisticated relationship-building skills to work their way through their organization in Canada. This backdrop may also serve as an introduction to Canadian readers who wish to build up work relationships with Chinese business partners.

Relationships pervade every culture. According to the participants, relationship has a special place among the Chinese and can be seen in operation from cradle to grave. Relationship once ascribed is permanent; the duties connected with the roles thus affirmed cannot be denied. A family relationship network provides linking up, protection and mutual benefit. At work, relationship is not just a lubricant for interpersonal dealings. Not having a relationship leads to pitfalls and obstacles; people will create barriers to exclude outsiders from their business, fencing out those who are not within the system. Knowing how to establish a relationship and cultivate opportunities for networking is the key to success. Among the Chinese, a relationship network takes a long time to build because of its complexity and sophistication. As a result, the Chinese expect permanency in their relationships with others. Once settled in a place, a person’s relationship network becomes an asset and the time and effort put into it becomes a significant investment. Using the same world view to interpret the meaning of relationships with Canadians can lead to misunderstandings. The Chinese meta-narrative seeks permanent, long-term relationships. Once they have cultivated a relationship, the Chinese expect it to last and be kept stable. The participants described a relationship not as an event nor as a series of disjointed events, but as lasting and continuous. Once built, it should be maintained and honoured with special effort, which Westerners may interpret as excessive or pretentious. One participant related to me at the very start of the interview his most unforgettable cross-cultural experience:

Teaching in OAC classes Saturday for a secondary school, we have vice-principals who are actually full-time teachers in public schools. On Saturday, they take up the post as vice-principals for continuous education. I had a very good discussion with a vice-principal the other week. I felt that a mutual relationship was built. I felt so shocked when I met him the next week and he treated me almost as a stranger. This is quite shocking for the Chinese. I greeted him yet he did not respond in such an intimate manner. I felt hurt! What's wrong? We, as Chinese, value the relationship built up. I did not attempt to ask him why he didn’t seem to know me at all. We talked and shared well the previous week. How could he be so cool to me this week? Later, when I shared with other Canadians, I came to know Canadians and Chinese
do not honour relationship in the same way. When they [Canadians] are engaged in deep thought or are not in the mood, they are not obliged to greet or share with me in the same manner as before. The Chinese pretended even if they are not in a good mood. This makes me feel that Canadians are more self-centred and individualistic in honouring relationships. This is not good or bad. They attend more to themselves and less to the perspective of others than the Chinese. Quite often the Chinese try to second-guess what the other party thinks. We overdo it and wind up depriving the relationship of genuineness.

The participant expected to be treated differently once having related to a person, because they were now no longer strangers to each other. Honouring the relationship and keeping it stable has to be done even at the expense of seeming pretentious. This expectation is part of the Chinese mind map, which is different from that of Canadians. That the participant felt hurt so easily may be seen as stupid or naive from a Canadian perspective. The above event is not a single nor an isolated one; he perceived similar responses on other occasions. This time, he was conscious of the cross-cultural differences in viewing the relationship. This incident showed that Canadians view relationships as similar to events that are disjointed and discontinuous. Canadians see events as events, but not as instruments for building up a relationship. So, the relationship lasts as long as the event goes on but may not necessarily carry beyond that. Nor can it be “deposited” to be drawn on in times of future need.

The next event related to our neighbour. For some years, a white lady lived next to us. She did not take much notice of me, although I used to greet her when we met. When the snow fell last winter, she knocked on the door and politely asked to borrow a shovel from me. The snow was really heavy that day. I offered to help her shovel the snow, as her car could not get out of the garage on that day. A snow ridge had built in front of her driveway. So I helped her so that she could move her car. She expressed her thanks. To a Chinese, we would feel we owe the other a favour. The next morning, this neighbour behaved as if we did not know each other. I was surprised. She should be in a closer relationship with me. As a Chinese, I expected that our relationship had been built. We should not treat each other as strangers. I felt hurt as I was not being so nicely treated. I was not open nor assertive enough to ask why she treated me like that. The day before, I had shovelled with her; she owed me a favour. I had such experiences both in the work place and in daily life. Canadians treat relationship differently from us. We see it as more continuous. They take it that on that day when she asked for my help and I agreed to help in shovelling the snow, the event was finished when she said thank you. The whole incident is completed and afterwards we do not owe each other any future obligations. To us, this is far
from having "Ren Qing" [literally: "people and compassion", figuratively: "human obligation"].

The participant’s interpretation was that Canadians are piecemeal and short-term in their handling of interpersonal relationships. He used the term "Ren Qing" (human compassion), a deep-rooted paradigm influencing the interpersonal game play of the Chinese, to account for the difference. Kam (1988) points out "Ren Qing" is the reciprocation behaviour of the Chinese. To build a relationship, there should be an exchange of corresponding behaviour to make this unit of social transaction a reciprocated one. Without the corresponding exchange, the non-returning party impairs the relationship and can be criticised as discourteous. Non-return further implies a lack of compassion for the other person. Mauss (1954) suggests that the "reciprocation" concept has universality and is a main element in the moral rule of all cultures. L.S. Yang (1957) reported that "reciprocation" is the foundation of the Chinese society. Their findings are congruent with the participants’ world view.

Canadians treat a relationship between two people as piecemeal, non-exchanging. Our relation between each other is long term and symbiotic. Ren Qing, to us, can be stretched. Today, when you have helped me, although I have expressed my gratitude verbally, I still owe you a favour. So, the relations we built for each other are Qing (compassion) oriented. Without Qing to be exchanged, there is no relationship. My interpretation is that Canadians consider the other party was responding voluntarily to my request for assistance. When the matter was over, they showed appreciation by saying thank you. The transaction is over at that point. There is no owing of anything to any party. So, back to the normal daily routine; when they are not in the mood, then they are not obliged to return me a special greeting. This is not supposed to hurt you nor should you construe it like that. However, there is a slight difference of expectation among the Chinese. Relationship is long-term and continuous until it ends. Relationship is maintained, whether only for courtesy or harmony reasons. The maintenance behaviour may be perceived as lacking authenticity. We may be pretending slightly, as we do not wish to show the breaking up of a relationship.

On both occasions, the participant felt disappointed that there was no reciprocation of his good will to build the relationship. In the first incident, the Canadian lady was in a difficult situation and he voluntarily offered to shovel the snow for her. In a way, neighbours are duty-bound to help each other, and it is only natural in the Western world view not to demand anything more than a verbal expression of gratitude. There should be no owing any gratitude to each other when the event
is a fulfilment of a neighbour's duty. From this perspective, viewing a favour as a separate event is logical. When help is offered and gratitude is expressed, the transaction is over. Similarly, when the vice-principal was not in a good mood, he did not have the same obligation as a Chinese would--to act pretentiously to maintain the relationship. Canadians value the fulfilment of duties but do not follow the Chinese-favour exchange formula. These two incidents and his reflections showed that the participant has a different meta-narrative from Canadians in interpreting how relations should be maintained.

Hu (1949) made a similar observation. He pointed out that Ren Qing is something more than what the Westerners consider as gratitude. To a Westerner, gratitude refers to a "debt" waiting to be paid. When the payment is made, the person has a clear conscience. However, once the Ren Qing is communicated to another, even though the "debt" is paid the knot of relationship and compassion cannot be broken. So, treating the neighbour as if no closer relationship has been built is interpreted as lacking Ren Qing. It is not just the repayment of gratitude that counts, but also the honouring of the continuous relationship. With this Chinese meta-narrative in mind, Canadian teachers and educators may find it easier to understand why Chinese feel so indebted to their teachers or their masters. They see these people as significant others in their life who have helped them in gaining knowledge. So teachers have a special role in the heart of their students. The relationship continues after their study and in some cases lasts for the whole life.

I doubted (Pun, 1990) that a Western learner-manager would ever equate the role of a teacher or a university professor with that of his father. However, the Chinese still value the meaning behind the saying "One day be the teacher, the whole life be the father", though they do not strictly adhere to it in this contemporary age. The passion behind the event is more than that of the real payment of the gratitude. The passion for remembering those who have offered you help is emphasized: favours are kept in a special, intangible account for paying back. Therefore, not returning "Bao"--favours given to you by other people, especially your significant others--shows you lack the "Ren Qing flavour". People with such a character are despised by society. Commenting that a person has no Ren Qing will cause others to exercise great caution in relations with him or her. This intangible account system and the concept of banking favour for future exchange are unique to the Chinese. Canadians do not use the same meta-narrative in viewing and maintaining relationship. A couple
of participants elaborated:

The "pulling" of relations in Canada is less and the rate of success for it is low in Canadian culture. Face-giving has a different meaning for Canadians. Their interpretation is so different from us.... The "Ren Qing" or "Hao". reciprocation of favour concept is different. "Ren Qing" leads to reciprocation. In Hong Kong, when I have done some favour for you, you will give back something in return. Yet when you have done something to assist your Canadian colleagues, they rarely give you any help or favour in return. They do not feel awkward, as the Chinese do in saying that they are too busy to help in return when you request their assistance. To a Chinese, this response is very rude. The refusal to reciprocate when favour has been deposited in the relationship reflects the lack of Ren Qing. Well, the refusal to honour the payback is seen as doing the wrong thing and forgetting the donor.

Hong Kong is a relationship-based society and Canada a contract-based society. My experience is that these two societies differ. We create a contract if you borrow money from me. If you owe me the money, I shall demand your fulfilment of the contract. The Chinese will say it is embarrassing to ask for a contract and for the return of the loan as we are friends. Canadians feel it OK to ask. [In Canada] we make a deal. For instance, I make a choice to come and you make a choice to interview me. We can see this agreement as a deal. There is no need for embarrassment for accepting or refusing your request. Both parties should be happy with the arrangement, as I can make a choice of not coming and refuse the invitation. We always have the choice before getting into a relationship. In the Chinese culture, we do not have a choice about getting into the relationship. We are already in a given relationship and need to meet each other's needs. This is an obligation. Choice means nothing. In a contract or Western society, choice is everything. Choice exists before relationship.

As the participants pointed out, reciprocating and showing gratitude plays a vital role in the daily interpersonal transactions of the Chinese. Reciprocation means more than repayment of gratitude. It is a social transaction. This behaviour has an expectation of others honouring the return, although the honouring is not compulsory. The exchange of behaviour can take place between individuals, groups and organisations. This meta-narrative programmes the beliefs and conditions the behavioural patterns of the Chinese. Tension develops where Chinese work across the cultural line, when they fail to predict whether Canadians will honour reciprocation. When people in the Canadian work environment feel no obligation to reciprocate a favour, Chinese perceive this as a lack of human touch or even as hostile behaviour. One of the participants used the metaphor "pig belly" to describe this phenomenon. It means that the surface is smooth but when the object is
turned inside out, the contents are disgusting. Figuratively, it implies his uncertainty in his relationship with Canadians, who may unexpectedly turn hostile. So, participants interpret their relationships with the Canadian counterparts at work as temporary, short term, disjointed and unstable.

In Hong Kong, everything gets done through the human touch, relations and pat on the shoulder. Here, the Canadians are unpredictable and can turn hostile easily. Our saying of “Turning a pig’s belly inside out gets you shit” best describes them. When you take into account what they have done to you, they are not obliged to reciprocate. They do not use the same rules of the game. They do not have our value of righteousness for righteousness and obligation for obligation. Just as I said. I offer them my favour. They do not necessarily return theirs. They do not take stock in their interpersonal account. This is their culture. If I give them favour, they will be grateful. However, they do not expect us to show that favour in the first place. Similarly, we should not expect them to return the favour.

Also, if your Canadian colleagues offer to help you, I suggest that you should not accept it without caution. You do not know the local rules of the game. The relationship is business-like and seldom reciprocal. In Hong Kong, it may be transactional if you are new in an organization. We reciprocate with each other. Here in Canada is different...so, it becomes inevitable that I do not help you and you do not need to help me. This is the same among themselves. As a result, friendship and compassion among colleagues are as thin as ice.

The first incident reflects the feeling of insecurity at not being able to predict the response of the Canadian counterpart. The Chinese rule—to keep on depositing favours in the hope that they can be banked for future use—does not work here. The second narrative reflects insular, cautious views of interpersonal transactions. With this meta-narrative, Chinese view reciprocation at work in Canada as more like short-term barter. Because the Chinese participant expected a long-term relationship and an intangible account system of favour-exchange, he lamented his disappointment and described the relationship is “as thin as ice”. People who have little knowledge of Chinese culture find the system of reciprocation and Ren Qing too complicated. The system is both very deeply ingrained and too elaborate to understand. I was curious for the reasons behind the participants’ ensuring that the Chinese relationship-game rule was closely followed. I asked for their experience on the consequences of reciprocating a favour. One participant highlighted his considerations:
People attend to relationship for a variety of reasons. The Chinese care more about the relationships consequences or problems arising out of not giving face. The outcome of relationship is attended to. Canadians will not consider the reciprocation formula as the Chinese do. That is, if I do not help them out this time, they will see me as not giving them face. They are unlikely to retaliate. Being a skilful Chinese, I help you out not because I care. I consider the relationship’s consequences. I look into your background and the power base you have. The Chinese see and calculate the result of the implications, to decide whether they should bypass the system or not. They react dissimilarly to different people, not necessarily because they have a better feeling for any particular person. They will bypass the system for you if you have a special background, influence or powerful relative. Chinese are concerned more about situations and consequences than personal feelings. In each situation I wonder: If I do it this time in such a manner, will the circumstances and the whole scenario change if I help the person? Chinese people look at the immediate future and are calculative in our relationships with people.

Even for the Chinese, the delicacy of maintaining relationships and the complexity of honouring them are burdens. On one hand, the participants showed disappointments about the short-term and disjointed relationships with the Canadians in their work places: on the other, they appreciated the simplicity and straightforward relationships in Canada. For instance, when being asked what he appreciated most in Canadian culture, one participant confessed that he loved the simple and honest relationships with Canadian colleagues. However, he was also aware that, being a Chinese, he is unable to get out of the relationship network. He is in a state of dilemma. Experience tells him that spotting this delicate but often neglected subtlety is important for understanding Chinese behaviour. By the way, this participant had spent 20 years in contemporary Chinese historical research; he also cited historical examples to support his argument.

I find the complexity of relationship at work simpler here. It is more straightforward. Chinese do not wish to break relations. To a certain extent, this is a simple working relation. I was involved much in the political side, so I appreciate the simplicity here. In HK, people do not express things openly and fully. They play out-of-the-conference-room politics before and after the event. There are more difficulties in predicting and second-guessing among the Chinese. We need to guess the extent and intensity of relations between the parties. These intrigues give rise to challenges in China research. For instance, we need to look at who had special links or relations with the leaders such as Deng Xiao-Ping 20 or 30 years ago. Did they work together in the same battalion, or were they friendly to each other? Western researchers find that irrelevant to study but it is important for us. When a favour is given, the whole policy has to be changed. [ In other words, the Chinese leaders’ personal
relationships decades ago are still influencing their actions, even at the policy level. It may not be rational but is obligatory. I feel that the complexity is less in Canada. I feel that this type of stress is less here.

The Chinese meta-narrative on relationship is sophisticated and its expression in Chinese culture is over-elaborated. It is not a simple notion, but embraces the constructs of human compassion, reciprocation and an intangible account system for favour deposits. The core structure of this meta-narrative is the expectation of permanent, stable, continuous and favour-returning relationships. This worldview is different from that of the Canadians, who take relationships more as events, disjointed and short-term. Chinese are disappointed when they hold onto their traditional values and do not loosen their mental constructs to shift this meta-narrative towards the Canadian version. Despite this meta-narrative’s being deep-rooted, it is luckily susceptible to shifting. Some participants found the straightforward and open relationships in Canada reduce stress and are more pleasing. Such reprogramming of the mind may take a long time and involve pain, as some participants experienced. However, facing this dilemma in a different culture benefits those who work across cultural lines.
Luthans (1989) argues that communication, though one of the most frequently discussed dynamics in the entire field of organizational behaviour, is seldom clearly understood. Management knows the importance of effective communication for the attainment of organizational goals. However, inadequate communication remains one of the biggest barriers to organizational effectiveness and the root of most organizational problems. Estimates on the time used for communication range as high as three-fourths of an active human being’s waking life, and an even higher proportion of a typical manager’s time. Luthans, Hodggetts, & Rosenkrantz (1988) conducted a study that directly observed a wide cross-section of “real managers” in their day-to-day behaviour. The findings indicated that they devoted about one-third of their activity to routine communication: exchanging routine information and processing paper-work. Communication made up the biggest relative contribution of effective manager. My participants reported problems arising from cross-cultural differences in communication as the most frequently occurring problems they encountered.

Communication is a process of sharing meaning between persons through an exchange of symbols. It enables each person to elicit in his or her own mind a meaning similar to that in the mind of the other (Wilcox, 1977). It is by means of communication activities that one person influences another. To achieve influences and results, the parties involved need to rely on a shared understanding of the symbols. The interpretation of symbols is social and depends upon the perspective of the message receiver. The process of communication is incomplete when the message sender cannot elicit in his or her own mind a meaning similar to that in the mind of the message receiver. The data show that not only the content but also the process of communication causes misunderstanding. What affects the process is not the preferred way of communication but the meta-narrative which shapes people’s perceptions and interpretations.

Canadians commonly labelled Chinese as conservative, reserved and unexpressive, as listeners rather than talkers. However, the participants view Canadians as talkers rather than listeners. Canadians are more expressive, frank and straightforward. These attributes are symptoms, rather than causes, of a culture’s unique communication pattern. To understand people’s behaviour,
we need to examine the mappings in their mind. The participants’ lived experience allows us to extract the meta-narrative of communication that underpins the cross-cultural differences. The Canadians’ meta-narrative in this dimension can be referred to as “tight-blue”, the Chinese as “spacious grey”. Tight refers to seeking precision in expressing the message, a principle of communication that Canadians value. The Chinese consider that precision may not be always desirable, because it limits the space for change. The precision principle does not fit the Chinese game rules for relationship maintenance, which is based upon human compassion and favour exchange. Blue stands for openness, a metaphor taken from the blue sky connoting clarity and transparency. The meta-narrative for the Chinese in this dimension is spacious grey. Their meaning-making scheme is that communication should offer space for both parties to change position. Being too clear and open rigidifies the parties’ positions, preventing change that does not cause losing face. Precision and clarity lead to inflexibility. Allowing some grey areas, in the Chinese meta-narrative, offers a cushion for protection from conflict. It protects the relationship and allows the parties in the communication freedom of manoeuvre. The participants were very conscious of the differences in this dimension.

Local Canadians are open and frank. They are not accustomed to guessing or reading the other’s mind or motive. You shouldn’t second guess them. If we do not understand their thinking, they expect us to ask. So, we should not second guess each other like we do the Chinese who express only part of what they think. We should quickly clarify with them. Why should they act in such a manner? This open and direct approach seeks to reduce misunderstanding and increase precision.

We [Chinese] are trained to be smooth, worldly wise, inoffensive, and courteous. Even more special to the Hong Kong Chinese in these years, we are not willing to expose ourselves. We do not want people [strangers] to easily know our background. Therefore, this style of communication creates more mutual guessing phenomena. So, you guess my thoughts and I speculate on your motive. You grope at my background and I grope at yours. I try not to show you my hidden card and you also try not to expose your bottom line. In Hong Kong, there is are fewer problems in playing such a game, as we are all Chinese. Essentially, we have something similar in character. Yet, we having come here, the locals do not have the same game plan. If we display this set of behaviour, we make them suspicious of what we are doing when we take a cautious attitude in our dealings with them. [They ask] Why are you so indirect and so implicit in your expressions [in Chinese: half swallowing and half spitting your words]? Why are you so unclear? They may initially have doubts about our standard of English. When we communicate more, they find that our command
of English is not bad. They begin to suspect why we are like that. They began to realize that they do not understand us. They will not be aware that we cover up or hide some of our things.

Their [the Canadians'] idea is that when we have a conversation, we should let them know if we do not understand. They will let us know when they do not accept our view. When they do not accept our view, they will say they don't like it. Actually, there is nothing wrong in us expressing ourselves clearly whether we like their ideas or not. So, in contacting mainstream people [Canadians], our approach of second-guessing them or expecting them to speculate on our meaning is a wrong. Actually, they will not imagine the other half of what we said, as their culture does not have such games.... In organization and at work, they won't and do not like to speculate. Their practice is to get things open and lay the issue on the table.

Few if any current researchers have touched on the Chinese phenomenon of guessing and speculating in communication. This phenomenon is often described as indirection or passivity. If fact, what leads the Chinese to become indirect and passive? The findings suggest that the process of guessing and speculating does. This process serves the social function of protecting the conversing parties from any direct clash of interest and opinion. It also prevents the exposition of any incompatible stances that may lead to deadlock. Guessing allows time and opportunity for each other to discover some mutually acceptable stances. The Chinese mind set suggests that being too open and straightforward may frighten the other party and get one locked up in uncompromising positions. With these considerations, it makes perfect sense for communication to stay as grey and spacious as possible. In a culture which features the meta-narrative of high tolerance to power inequality, this skill is important for survival in an organization. However, such an approach does not work in the Canadian culture. One participant's experience is a good illustration:

In our work place, there are other Chinese workers; some are older than I. The younger ones have a smaller problem, as some of them have grown up in Canada. You can see that they can communicate and integrate with the Canadians. Those who are the same age as me use the same Hong Kong approach—not expressing themselves and not letting others to know their background. In doing every task, they tend to be protective, having the fear that they may be challenged by others. So, they appear to be covering up and evasive.... Back to the two colleagues using the Hong Kong approach of communication, characterized by being protective and defensive. They are evasive and unclear in giving answers to the questions put to them by the boss and their colleagues. I saw the Canadian colleagues had obviously mistaken that the Chinese colleagues did not know what they had asked. Therefore, they elaborated
their questions again. The answers given by my Chinese colleagues were initially evasive. They tried to speculate on the intention of the message sender. If the message sender queried them, they could be in a better defending position to handle the query by not giving a direct answer in the first place. However, in most circumstance, the questions were not meant to query. The Canadians just want to make clear through questions that people do not make silly mistakes. They just want to make sure that we have done the things required. Or that we have followed the work procedure by checking through questions to make sure that we are on the right track. I spotted that Canadians spent plenty of time to get the communication clear. Particularly, my other two [Chinese] colleagues' English is not so good. So, I saw that if we want to establish cultural harmony, communication is already a stumbling block. So, I suggest that we should get rid of the habit of speculating.

There is an English expression “calling a spade a spade”. This expression does not fit Chinese communication behaviour. Canadians not only are bewildered by Chinese second-guessing but also are perplexed by the apparent Chinese tendency to say one thing but mean another, to say “yes” but mean “no”. Instead of saying “no”, Chinese prefer to say “yes”. The bewilderment comes from whether they actually mean “yes” when they give an affirmative answer. In fact, “yes” does not always mean an affirmative answer, but rather a tentative answer. Unlike the Canadians, Chinese do not choose to call a spade a spade or a negative answer a straight no. They allow a grey area to ensure the interpersonal relationship is not put at risk. They find uttering openly and precisely the word “no” negligent of the other party’s feelings and on occasion rude. This is particularly true in the case of communicating with people who hold office and power:

On the other hand, there are incidents in dealing with the Westerners which can clearly illustrate the situation of cross-cultural differences in communication. When the Canadians do not like something or are not in favour of any suggestion, they will clearly state that openly to the other person. They respect what we do not favour and respect our expression of rationale for the argument or disagreement. But the Chinese keep saying yes [ho] to all the things the other party expresses and give a positive response to all the ideas the other suggests. In fact, deep down in their heart, they [the Chinese] have an opinion on what is good and what is bad. But they express a positive response to deal with you [and the relationship issue] first. When the Chinese say "yes", this response is used to handle the situation and is the surface of a harmonious relation. It does not mean they truly accept the position or really mean yes. The meaning of “yes” is vastly different between the Chinese and the Westerner.

The Western approach to dealing with the above situation may be to seek clarification on
what Chinese really mean. The Canadian way of seeking clarity and precision is through questioning. The Western perspective presupposes that effective communication consists of stating a clear stand and calling a spade a spade to achieve precision. Going around points and beating about the bush will either confuse or frustrate Westerners. It is the rationality that counts, not the relationship. Unfortunately, the Chinese interpret the situation in a totally different manner. They may even consider questioning to seek clarity seeking as intrusive and unfriendly. The Chinese interpret common words and phrases, such as "why" or "what do you mean", differently. They are mentally programmed to hold the spacious grey communication meta-narrative. They prefer a more subtle and crafty way of exchanging differences and feelings. A participant revealed his feelings when being asked for clarification:

When being asked why..., I may react strongly and spontaneously, in an uptight and defensive manner. When we as Chinese hear the word "why", we consider ourselves being interrogated and can easily become defensive. The Canadians are fond of using the word "why", as they are frank to each other. When they face something they cannot understand, they keep asking you why. They will not speculate in the first place. They just ask you with a single word, "why". Sometimes, they can be so personal as to ask a frank question like "Don't you like me" and "Do you like me?" It is another form of why or a form of very straightforward question. They are so plain and open.

They [Canadians] do not beat around the bush and will put across their point in a straightforward manner. Chinese will go around the point and will not be so direct as they are. For example, if I want to tell you that you are wrong, I do not need to point that out directly. By talking about other things, you can detect that I am implying you have done things wrong. But, pointing things and errors out directly is among us blunt and discourteous. Canadians are more open in expressing disagreements. This is the advantage of cross-cultural differences. My experience is that Chinese do not express their dissatisfaction face to face. We will find other channels to get the message across. We will express our dissatisfaction through friends or the people around us. These are "crafty" ways which may be harmful and hurting. We may suggest people to "counsel" or "advise" the other person. Actually, this (indirect) way of getting the message across may be more problematic and harmful. The Canadians have a system for evaluating and stock-taking for the boss. They may point out a few incidents to ask for your explanation. The Chinese seldom confront these issues directly. The Chinese accord great importance to face-to-face relationships. The Chinese fear the breaking up of the immediate harmony.

Canadians expect people to speak up and verbalise their thoughts. Their starting point of
communication is to express ideas and thoughts so others can respond. The expressed thought is not final and the other party holds the responsibility of voicing disagreements if they have any. Hence, verbalising thoughts and being expressive are encouraged. To the Chinese, "a word once uttered cannot be drawn back, even by a team of four horses". This adage reflects the Chinese mental programme of expressing ideas with caution. They will not easily make any statement unless it is well thought out. Canadians speak while they think; Chinese only speak after they have thought. Once they make a statement, it is conclusive. Therefore, the participants observed that the frequency of speaking up is high in a Canadian group. The first two of the following quotations exemplify this idea. The thoughts expressed by the Chinese are not subject to being debated openly. Their "well thought out" ideas are not to be contested. Canadians see Chinese as unexpressive: however, they are more conscious of the consequence of the statements they made, as the last two stories show. Canadians may see Chinese as quiet and unassertive, while the Chinese may see the Canadians as over-expressive and argumentative.

As for the Canadians, they speak while they think or may also speak before they think. The Chinese are less verbal. The Chinese communication style starts with thinking or from the brain. We are reminded by our family to be careful with our speech. When a statement is made, it is conclusive. Canadians are different. What they say is not final. They are talking about what is in their mind. The beginning part of what they have said can be convincing. But, the person may not have finished verbalising his whole thinking process. Their speech may be fascinating. Yet, it is spoken from their thoughts without having carefully considered all the implications in the first place. In contrast, the Chinese always place things in their heart. When a statement is made, it is conclusive and has less leeway to change.

Their frequency of expressiveness is higher than the Chinese. They have more to say. We [Chinese] normally speak after we think. We do not wish to make mistakes. The Chinese do not wish to say things wrong and bear the consequence. If we say erroneous things, we will be seen as "verbally illogical". When I am in meeting, I speak up only when I have a point. Our frequency of speaking up may not be high, but when we make the point, it is supposed to be well taken, as we have thought it through. But in our work, we need to be insistent. Both parties may equally be insisting on their views. But expressive frequency is lower among the Chinese. As Chinese, if we have not thought through, we will not speak up. We are not straightforward. "Somebody said..." is a usual phrase to suggest "this is my idea", in an indirect way.

In Hong Kong, if I make a suggestion but finally my idea cannot achieve the
proposed intent, it will be very "Wea" [slang: odd, face-losing and embarrassing]. Hence, we dare not propose anything without serious consideration of our ability to control the outcome. Here [in Canada], when people make a suggestion to do something but finally it turns out to be futile, it is acceptable. People won't care much. For instance, I was involved, before changing to this job, in many self-initiated assignments. The boss did not define what you were supposed to do. There was a group of community workers who were interested in family violence issues and wanted to do something about it. They considered design displays and other activities on this area. This group of people formed a group to act on it. The project went on but it finally turned out to have only a few people interested. It eventually faded out. The outcome didn’t matter at all to the people. People wasted their time. However, no one criticized that they had wasted the time on such fruitless attempts. There is less consequence attached to your action as compared to Hong Kong.

Chinese are less fluent or eloquent in expressing their views. To us, it is better to hide weakness rather than to expose it. Frequently, we may express their ideas but certainly will not get involved in doing things that we are not sure of. We shall not commit ourselves until we have tried it before. Chinese will propose an idea only when we firmly believe that it is free from faults. The proposal we make is one often considered by us as really substantial and capable of bringing about success. So, our initiative in proposing ideas is low as compared to the Canadians. The locals just care less and say whatever is in their mind. However, how much they can foot the bill is doubtful. Their follow-up work is weak. They talk about it but lack action. Chinese should try to verbalise their views.

The unique, Chinese spacious grey meta-narrative of communication gives rise to a problem crucial to organizational survival. Lack of open communication reduces feedback, which is supposed to put data back into the system for corrective actions. The Western model of managerial training in communication emphasizes the learning of feedback skills. Feedback as taught in Western communication theory, focuses on behaviour. Facts are to be given as soon as possible and in specific terms. This model makes sense in a culture with the tight blue meta-narrative. The Chinese think on a different wavelength from Canadians. When the Chinese ask for feedback, they do not actually mean the same as the Canadians do. An incident reported by a well known North American Chinese, Amy Tan, in her book *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), is very illustrative. The vignette involves a hostess who makes humble and disparaging remarks about the best dishes she has served. In Chinese culture, a hostess’s boasting about her own cooking skills is arrogant. Although a Chinese hostess makes humble remarks and asks for feedback on the quality of the
dishes, she does not expect real criticism, but expects others to reciprocate her humble remarks with praises. In *The Joy Luck Club*, a North American character, Rich, made the serious mistake of taking his mother-in-law’s humble remarks about her cooking as an invitation for feedback to make improvements. Rich’s suggestion—adding soy sauce to the dish—and his later actually adding it to the food, implied that the food was not delicious enough. Rich’s action was rude from a Chinese point of view. The proper response would be to comfort the cook, saying that the dish is perfect. Actually, the humble remarks were only a leading gambit to invoke praise. In Chinese culture, communication is often subtle and indirect, particularly in such sensitive situations as in giving feedback. The participants’ narratives show that Chinese are sensitive about giving feedback because they consider it as directed at the person rather than at the issue.

At work, in giving opinion and comments, the Chinese are more reserved and sensitive. For instance, on one occasion [in Hong Kong] marking examination papers, I found that a colleague of mine was too trivial and detailed in scoring. I spoke to her and suggested adjustments. Later, this Chinese colleague of mine told me that she was not happy with my suggestion. Her idea was that once the stuff had been put on paper, it was not supposed to change [once a statement is made, it is conclusive]. But a government memo states that when there are suggestions, they should be raised and discussed. My colleague had accepted my suggestions but was not happy. When I worked in the Canadian test centre, I found that my feedback can be more freely given. Once, I told a Canadian lady that her marketing plan would not work, as she did not have a school background. At that time, we sold achievement tests to schools. I said the level of people she contacted would not buy the idea. I found that the Canadians are more receptive to ideas, in that they separate people from suggestions. In contrast, the Chinese lady, who had years of experience, asked me to give ideas. When I gave ideas and offered my feedback, she construed that I was not satisfied with her performance. My feedback-giving was interpreted as my having put question mark on her as a person and not just on her ineffective performance. She felt unhappy although he still performed the work I had requested. She had done the work I asked, yet felt badly. Canadians are different, in that if they do not agree, they will not perform or carry out the task as requested. They divide people from work more readily.

The spacious grey communication syndrome is exaggerated when the Chinese work in Canada. Working across the cultural line causes them to be more cautious and apprehensive. Naturally, when people become defensive, they become more reserved and less open in their communication. The Chinese apprehension of communicating openly is further intensified by the
issue of English language proficiency. The participants pointed out that language and knowledge of the Canadian culture are the main barriers to their communication effectiveness. Two participants, despite being social science Ph.D.s who got their degrees in England and the US, found their language skills not strong enough to overcome this barrier. Five other participants, holders of Master degrees done in English, also found language a disadvantage for them in marshalling their arguments at work. The remaining participants, who have held leadership positions, had to produce reports in impeccable English. They equally found that language proficiency was their barrier to communication in the workplace. Only one participant, who had been working in Canada for 7 years, suggested that she had fewer problems in asserting her views. However, she recognised that the problem of language is still there. Some illuminating reflections from the participants illuminated how this communication barrier caused further “spacious grey syndrome” in working across the cultural line.

Our major disadvantage is in having social conversations with the Canadians. I can carry on our discussion for a long time when I have a formal conversation with them. When I went to the University of Toronto, I had many topics to discuss, as we shared scholarly subjects. However, I came to a difficult point when we shared social talks. When they mentioned the names of some celebrities in English, I did not recognize them. I had to ask who these people were. When I checked back, the communication was not smooth. It is difficult to be an in-group member.... I felt that having tea together was most difficult. At 4.00 p.m. we had tea-time in the British tradition. We had casual chats. The problem was that I could not understand the content of the social chats they were exchanging. The people they mentioned were unfamiliar to me. There was no space for me to chime in. I did not know about their ball games and the only thing that I could talk about with them was world news, with which I am familiar. I invited them to comment on the news headlines. That is the only area we know about their world. What's going on in Canada was what I could talk about. Sometimes, when we talked about music I could follow. When they laughed, you really did not know what they laughed at. The cultural differences in slang and humour set us far apart. They could burst into laughing at a hand gesture. I could not. I was seen to be reserved.

Engaging in social conversation is difficult for Chinese when they work across the cultural line. This problem is not unique to Chinese but to all people whose first language is not English. The inability to chime in, understand the jokes, know the names of the celebrities, speak spontaneously during discussions is common not only to the Chinese but also all new immigrants. However,
coupled with the Chinese characteristics of thorough thinking before expressing and hiding their differences, the language problem makes the Chinese appear more grey and reserved. Not only the content of the conversation, but also its unspoken rules, cause further hindrances to people from one culture understanding another. One participant described his disorientation about what the Canadians may consider as serious or casual occasions:

In working with the Canadians, I may not be aware of some unspoken rules. In Hong Kong, when I work with others, I do not need to be told in details. I know what should be done with brief information. In Canada, I do not have a full picture of how they communicate, share information or understand each other's expectations so quickly. A piece of news may be known to them quickly, but I was not aware of it. It is not that they exclude me. There are things going on which I may not be able to be aware of.... I find the major difficulty in working in another culture is our inability to get into their unspoken procedures. There are many ways of doing things which are unspoken. It is universal. Canadians understand why they do things that way. Canadians will equally find understanding the unspoken ways difficult in Hong Kong. It is difficult for me to know what are the things which they take as serious and what are the things that they take as casual. Sometimes, I make mistakes. There are things which I do not consider important but they take them very seriously.

Not only are the social conversation and the unspoken procedures difficult for the Chinese to pick up, but also some common words the Canadians use sound strange to them. One participant experienced difficulties in making himself understood by the Canadians, though he considered he was using "proper" English to communicate with his colleagues at work. He lamented that, when his weakness could be so exposed, he tended to go back to his cultural group. It was more safe and comfortable for him to share with members who spoke the same language.

However, the greatest difference cross-culturally is found in the language. In Hong Kong I was a Chief Executive Officer. I can confess that my standard of English should not be bad at all. I had many [English] expatriate friends to communicate with and had no problem at all in communication. Having come here [Canada], I found that my English is inadequate. In addition, I lack the knowledge of their cultural background. Their choices of words and phrases to express their ideas are different from mine. For instance, I should not have used the term "leave". They did not understand what I said. They use the word "vacation" instead. They take "vacation" or have "holiday" and not take "leave". When I said I had my sick leave, they could not understand me. They said it was my "sick day" and not "sick leave", a term we commonly use in Hong Kong. But to us, a sick day refers to a day on which a person feels sick, rather than a day he or she was off because they did not feel well. In Canada, when I talk to the personnel people, sick day means my sick
leave--the days that I am entitled to have "leave" because I am sick. Another example is that, when I mention the word "lift" in a building, they don't understand what I refer to. They use the word "elevator" instead. Don't talk to them of "football" as they their perception of the word is "American Football". It is not the same game which is played purely with our foot. The Hong Kong football game is called "soccer" in Canada. [The participant ended this part of the conversation blushing with embarrassment. He shook his head, seeming to wonder that he as a Chief Executive Officer could be so ignorant.]

Content is only one part of communication. According to Rosenblatt, Cheatham & Watt (1982), Aristotle thought that communication is related to the speaker, the speech and the audience. These 3 factors served as a basic framework for other communication theories. Modern communication theories, however, have elaborated from Aristotle's model. His 3-factor model has been made more complex and expanded into a variety of variables. Lasswell's model (1948), considered comprehensive, is composed of source variables, message variables, receiver variables, context variables, channel variables and effect variables. Berlo (1960) attended further to the process of encoding, decoding and exchanging messages between the source and respondent. A message is not an object that has an independent existence. Its existence is in the source, and in the encoded form perceived and decoded by the receiver. The message is in the person and not in the words or pictures or behaviour. People are mentally programmed to encode, decode and exchange messages according to their cultural narrative. Unless the respondent understands the meaning-making scheme, the problem of communication is merely tackled at a superficial level. The Chinese meta-narrative, being spacious grey rather than tight blue, serves as an additional aid to understanding the communication process from a cross-cultural perspective, as between Canadians and Chinese.

To conclude, I briefly summarise what I have found so far that explains the difference of world views between Chinese and Canadians. Through studying the lived experience of Chinese who have worked in organizations with Chinese and Canadians, I have found that the participants are mentally programmed to see their world in a different way from Canadians. So far, I have pointed out 7 meta-narratives that influence the Chinese's perceptions of organizational behaviour. These meta-narratives suggest that the Chinese are conditioned by their culture to believe that:

People should exist for organizations.
High achievement and seriousness at work should be valued.
Work should be taken as a commitment and not a contract.
Harmony should be preserved in the workplace.
Inequality of power should be tolerated.
Relationships amongst people should be made and preserved.
Communication should be spacious grey.

These meta-narratives, templates affecting their world view, structure their interpretations of their reality. Their phenomenological world is therefore different from Canadians'. They feel that organizational behaviour in Canada differs from theirs. The participants perceive that Canadians believe that:

Organization should exist for people.
Optimism and a carefree attitude at work should be valued.
People should bind to their work in contractual relationship.
Confrontation should be accepted.
Inequality of power should not be tolerated.
Relationships amongst people should be normally transitional.
Communication should be made as clear and specific as possible.

These differences in “ought to” organizational behaviours bring about the differences in modus operandi at work discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 8

Perceptions of Cross-cultural Differences in Modus Operandi at Work

Modus operandi at work is the manner of operating and cooperating in an organizational setting. Borrowing from Arnold's and Feldman's (1986) concept of organization as a system of interdependent parts that interact with one another, one can conceptualize four major interdependent parts in a system of production: the people, technology, tasks and structure. Within an organization, production becomes possible through people employing technology to perform the tasks. These fragmented and disconnected tasks can be linked through a structure designed by the organizational players. The process of production systematically transforms the inputs to output. The people, technology, tasks and structure—the four interdependent parts forming a system—exist within a wider environment. The cultural environment is a major force shaping the manner of operating and working together. People in the same culture share similar beliefs, assumptions and expectations. They have a characteristic way of perceiving the organization's roles, values and norms. Modus operandi incompatible with the existing culture are likely to be rejected.

The manner of operating and cooperating in organizations in Canada strikes the Chinese participants as greatly different. They find differences in the patterns of behaviour, assumptions and expectations between Canadians and Chinese. The data reveal patterns of differences in planning, cooperating, leading and controlling. The participants became conscious of these differences only after they had worked across the cultural line. Also, they were unaware of their unique ways of operating as Chinese until they had worked in a different cultural environment. This phenomenon is analogous to a fish in a new pond becoming aware of the type of water it used to have. This consciousness-raising process expanded their perspectives and knowledge.
(1) Perceptions of cross-cultural differences in
Modus Operandi at Work: The Planning Dimension

Planning in organizations involves activities to define individual and collective goals, establish strategies and make decisions on what to do or what not to do. The process of planning requires thinking in abstractions. As I discussed in the literature review, the use of abstract categories and linear logic is characteristic of the Western mind. However, such behaviour does not appear characteristic of the Chinese in planning. Hence, Redding (1980b) argues that behaviour in Chinese organizations does not normally feature formalized planning. Perhaps Redding represents the Western view of what planning is; my participants viewed and interpreted planning behaviour differently from Westerners. Contrary to Redding’s belief, they considered organizations of Hong Kong Chinese to be as planning-heavy as Canadian organizations. Admittedly, this is their subjective perception, but they did not accept the notion that Chinese organizations do not feature formalized planning. They only saw that Chinese plan differently from the Canadians.

First of all, the participants argued that their way of planning is vision-directed, rather than physical-resources-directed. With a vision and a knowledge of what they wish to achieve, they go ahead with less concern about the resources. They admitted that Chinese do not guide themselves by detailed calculation of resources or by a large amount of objective data. Their intuition and subjective vision serve as the starting point for planning. They do not neglect the resources concept, but pay more attention than Canadians do to the relationship network rather than to the physical resources. The Chinese strive to create a future scenario as a form of plan for realization, but are less procedure-bound. Being more prepared to accept that the future cannot be fully controlled, they more readily accept ambiguity and flexibility. As long as they know in what direction they are heading, they need not formulate fixed procedures, which tend to create inflexibility. Hence, they manage en route as they progress in a known direction. The participants perceived Canadians as more procedure- and resources-driven than the Chinese. The Canadians tend to trust the objective data more than people’s opinion.

The participants’ approach to planning appears to coincide with Lindblom’s (1979) notion of the “science of muddling through”. Like H. Simon (1976), the Nobel prize winner, Lindblom is sceptical of the purely rational approach to decision-making. Rational planning assumes that the
objective of an organization can be specified uniquely and unambiguously in advance and that the whole process of planning can be rigorously systematized. This planning notion believes in rationality, limitless information, quantitative techniques and measurements. It de-emphasizes intuition, incremental evolution of solutions and the principle of muddling through. The participants however, favoured the notion of planning more through intuition and incrementalism than through rationality.

The Canadians, like other Westerners, divide things into units in daily work situations. For instance, they divide time into different units, work into different shifts.... Then they set an objective and instrumentally reason how to achieve the targets. They then simply calculate the amount of money to achieve the objectives. If they do not have the money, they halt the project. They calculate clearly how much they can spend and project how much capital they can raise. The Canadians are very detailed and can divide each unit [such as time and money] clearly. For us, we plan in relation to the extent of what we can see in reality. We look at the step ahead of us and move on. We examine the next step after we have taken that immediate step before us. We dare not fix the steps [in sequence] or the programme procedures for the whole year. Each step is taken on the basis of the circumstances and the situational variations. We take the principle of the golden mean, so that we can defend our positions. We shield the left side when the attack is from the left and shield the right side when the attack comes from the right. However, our steps are not unconnected. Interestingly enough, we do have long-term objectives, in the form of a large vision.

The Chinese envision the large scenario [in planning] as the starting point and leave the details to be resolved at a later stage. The Westerners work out the details or the small parts first, before they dare to deal with the vision. The Canadians, like other Westerners, divide subjectivity from objectivity. To the Westerners, vision is subjective. Unlike the Chinese, Canadians do not consider a vision coming through subjectivity and intuition as reliable. But, to me [Chinese] when I think or visualize the matter, I feel that I can achieve it despite the lack of resources. Hence, I do not favour planning according to the availability of resources as the starting point. I look at the vision or an idea, the effect of publicity or support, and the strength of our relationship network. If I want to strive for achievements, I reach out to establish relationships. I go out to make connections and make visits to influential persons. If they show their support, money may come.... Our resources are based more on relationships, rather than just financial support. The Westerners take financial resources as the starting point, rather than the people network. Hence, among us [Chinese], our belief in planning is that when our relationship network improves, people together come to a large shared vision. Through these relationships, I obtain the resources to launch my first step. For this reason, for our planning, we do not
have a very clear plan for a year. However, we screen the whole situation and decide under what circumstances we should work out what relations or responses. If it works, we jump over a hurdle and then we manage another set of relations [for another other set of actions]. We keep seeing the changes of the circumstances and relations. We consider which set of relations needs to be changed. When one success is achieved, we can manage better in the next step.

Second, as I have pointed out in the literature review, Stewart (1985), Nakamura (1964) and Granet (1950) all support the notions that attention to concrete objects is a distinctive feature of the Chinese way of thinking. Concrete image and vision prevail over universal propositions and abstraction. There is a tendency to illustrate profound ideas with visions and stories rather than formulas or definitions. Northrop (1946) asserted that Oriental culture insists on the immediate apprehension of the world. Thus, intuition, perception, sensing and experiencing become features of Chinese thinking. Gulick (1962) finds Westerners fundamentally theoretical and Easterners intuitive. The latter tend to find knowledge from wider experience and vision. When Western managers think about an organizational problem, they characteristically analyse it with abstract concepts such as productivity, morale, or leadership style. These concepts are linked in a logical, sequential set of connections and are used to formulate a theoretical answer to the problem. Redding (1980b) suggested that Chinese managers tend to resort instead to ideas that are more concrete. My data generally support the argument that the Chinese tend to think and conceive their plans in concrete terms. The participants offered incidents illustrative of Redding’s proposition.

From my experience, the Chinese make decisions on the basis of insight and the advice of their staff officers or advisors. The Westerners, including the Canadians, do so based upon a series of reports, market research, and a lot of people involved in the investigation. The results are discussed by a group. The best alternative is thus identified. The decision is based partly on the result of group discussions and the display of objective facts. The Chinese working group also calls for reports, but the boss gains an insight and conceives a model of how to have it implemented. We look for a broad model and a vision, which serve as strong motivators to attract and influence people. The Lieutenant Governor of [A] in Canada, Dr. [X], [originally a Hong Kong Chinese] prefers such a concrete and tangible way of thinking. [This participant had a close working relationship with The Hon. Dr. [X] in Hong Kong and Canada]. His Chinese way of thinking is perceived by people as showing that he possesses Oriental wisdom. He likes broad and tangible models which can embrace contemporary phenomenon that he observed. He asked for concrete terms to embrace very complicated concepts. Terms such as “post-Tang modernism”, “one country,
two systems” and “the Chinese way of socialism”, are broad but concrete to describe very complicated phenomena. By such concrete descriptions, the Chinese feel that they are in control of the abstract notions. In fact the abstract concepts may not be mastered at all by these terms. Whatever we do, we may claim that these actions are covered by the model created. This mode of thinking is not limited to people like Dr. [X]. For instance, the leaders in China keep saying that any thing deviating from [classical Marxist] socialism in China is Chinese socialism. The important fact is that they have not defined what Chinese socialism is. This is circular thinking. The Chinese do not like definition, as it limits their flexibility. Hence, they do not like definition because they cannot play by ear if they define the situation in advance. The Westerners have to do it step by step as they have already defined it in the first place. Hence, they have to be clear in procedure. For the Chinese, the word “definition” is not a real one. Their definition is only a term of insight to let me think about something really sparkling. It does not contribute to actual defining. The Chinese seek flexibility and do not see definition as important. To describe the concept of “flexibility to change course and proceed step by step”, a slogan “grope the boulders along the way as you wade through the river” is used—an image and analogy to explain a vague concept. Hence, by expressing the complicated concept with something concrete, people are led to feel with satisfaction that they have grasped some very complicated concept... Whenever I present things in a pictorial form by analogy, the Chinese can easily capture what I say. For instance, the saying “a monk opens an umbrella” denotes “no hair and no sky” which means “no law and no control”. The Westerners use less of such thinking or mode of communication.

In addition, there are behaviours that the participants perceived as more characteristic of the Canadians in formalized planning. They see the Canadians rely more on figures and less on qualitative data for planning. Thus, Canadians tend to plan in an abstract and disjointed manner. Though Redding (1980b) considered that formal planning does not characterize Chinese organizations, the participants similarly did not consider it a feature of Canadian ones. Not that Canadians do not plan. But the Chinese do not see planning should necessarily involve abstract thinking, such as conceptualizing the system and cogitating the abstract functions of an organization. They perceive planning as visualizing the future in terms of a whole picture or a scenario. They may not perceive planning exists unless the future can be described in concrete terms such as a picture, a metaphor or an image. On the other hand, Canadians may not consider the Chinese way of planning as proper. The language people use reflects their way of thinking. In the examples above, the participant highlighted the Chinese characteristics of circular thinking, imprecise nomenclatures, broad terms and undefined concepts. The language reflects the Chinese way of thinking, which from
a Western point of view is far from being specific enough for planning purposes. Chinese perceive what constitutes planning differently from Canadians. Hence, it is inevitable that both Chinese and Westerners view the other party as not having real formal planning.

Third, the data reveal that one of the major differences between Chinese and Canadians in the planning dimension centres around consultation and participation. Planning is the process of deciding what to do and what not to do. The degree to which group members participate in decision-making can be at any point of a continuum ranging from no consultation to full consultation. At one extreme, the person or group in power makes the decision and asks for no contribution or feedback from workers. At the other extreme, a plan or a decision is made after full participation where all the people affected not only are consulted but also decide themselves. Somewhere in the middle of the continuum is the stereotypical Western idea, where there is full consultation but the management still makes the decision, taking the consultation into account. There is also pseudo-participation, where consultation is not fully sought or is sought but then ignored. It appears that Canada is towards the extreme where consultation is seen as fundamental, but the Chinese see the process as a luxury. There is no lack of examples showing the importance accorded to consultation in Canada; however, it is a process frequently overlooked, if not deliberately avoided, in the Chinese working environment.

Consultation process is important in Canada. Decision-making is more democratic. Of course, the final decision rests with the boss. But, at least you have to give an explanation to your staff on the rationale for turning down their suggestions, to keep the work team happy. In Hong Kong, you are not required to give them a reason for your decisions. It is not their business to question the rationale of the boss' decision. Here it is more consultative.

When I worked in Hong Kong, I was a big shot. When I put forth one thing, no one dared to put forth another. But here [Canada], before making a decision, I have to allow a long period to ask people. If possible, the need for a new decision should be initiated by them. Here we talk about empowering principles. We need to empower others to decide matters relating to them and empower them to solve their own problem. This is true in the private sector here. The labour side has a place to speak their mind and their wish. They have a say in the production process and how staff cuts will be effected. For staff cuts in Hong Kong, the management does not require consultation; they can decide who should not be there and have no need at all to talk with the union. However, consultation is so important in Canada.
Despite most participants feeling strongly that this is a major aspect of cultural difference, two participants shared a slightly different perspective. These two did not see consultation as a major feature of the planning process in Canada. The data, in particular the repertory grid, show that these two participants shared similar characteristics. Both had been executives in Hong Kong, and associated themselves far more than the others with "Chinese boss" and least of all with "Chinese subordinate". They still held the perspective of being Chinese bosses and had not, since working in Canada, accepted that they were no longer in a senior management position. As Chinese bosses in Hong Kong, they held the role of decision-making for the group and had to consider the views of their subordinates. In this position, they were more consulted by the others about decision-making. In Canada, they were both working in positions which did not require them to consult subordinates. Their organizations are unionized and they are less involved in the consultative process in planning. Hence, they did not perceive like the other participants that consultation is a characteristic of Canadians. Despite minor variations, the remaining participants perceived the consultative feature as a very big difference.

Pointing out that consultation is characteristic of organizational behaviour in Canada does not mean that there is no consultation in Hong Kong. According to the participants, consultation among the Chinese takes a different form. It is expert-driven and professionally oriented. Chinese consider that experts can make better decisions than the people affected can. Hence, the consultation group is composed largely of professionals and experts. People affected by the decision may be involved but under-represented. In addition, the Chinese see consultation more as putting up a show than as genuinely collecting and listening to the views of the people being affected. Basically, Canadians consider consultation essential and necessary for a plan to be accepted. In contrast, being consulted is an honour and a luxury in the Chinese work environment.

The Hong Kong style of consultation is so different. The Hong Kong model is to appoint a group of so-called experts, including people with titles, Ph.D.s and celebrities. Here, [A Canadian social aid centre] when ministers visit us, the staff members and professionals play a second fiddle. The consumers of our services are primary targets to be met and consulted. In such a way, I feel a greater degree of sincerity in serving the consumers. Unlike Hong Kong, where the so-called consultation is more like putting up a show. Here, it really means business to get people consulted. They really require such a process in making decisions. If there is
no such consultation process and management makes decisions the same way as we
did in Hong Kong, it would be a great problem. For instance, in Hong Kong, we
decided the training needs of the staff by first getting to know the management
expectations of what the staff needed to be trained in, before asking the staff
members. Such a practice would be a great bomb here. I have landed in hot water by
practising the Hong Kong model in Canada. If we only consult the management or
put the management's expectation first, it will be problematic. Here, the
management has less say as compared to Hong Kong. An organization and its
management exist for its staff members and its customers. Therefore, the decision-
making has to be bottom-up and not top-down. If you make many decisions and have
not gone through the process, people can rebel against you and tell you to go to hell.
In this regard, people from Hong Kong may not have the same perspective to make
themselves effective here.

Consulting is treated differently here. In Hong Kong being consulted is an honour.
It is an honour for a subordinate to be consulted by the boss. Whether the boss will
take their advice or not is not in question. If the advice is accepted, that is good.
Here, when you consult me, you have to seriously consider my opinion or suggestion.
I may come back and ask you which part of your program reflects your incorporating
my suggestion. Here, it is considered more natural that the staff should be consulted.

The participants were surprised by the prevalence of consultation in Canada. On one hand,
they condemned the fact that organizations in Hong Kong did not take consultation seriously. On
the other hand, they were ambivalent about whether consultation was really practical and necessary.
Their reservation stemmed from their view of the price people have to pay for the democratic
process of decision-making and consultative planning. They doubted whether the expense of time
and resources in the process was worthwhile. They considered efficiency and speed more important
than the fundamental right of being consulted. In addition, the diversified opinions and "chaos"
generated by debates during the consultation process are precisely what the Chinese wish to avoid.
Hence, they prefer letting the "wise people" decide for them. As a result, decisions are made by one
person at the top, or by an elite group whose power is supposed to be unchallengeable.

The Canadians do not treat outcomes with the same importance as the Chinese.
Input into the decision-making process is considered most important. It is acceptable
even if the final outcome is not what was initially expected. In consulting so many
people, there is no way one can please everybody—when everyone has a say in the
process of decision-making. It is possible that they can accept such chaos but I
cannot speak for them. You cannot find an outcome which pleases everyone. But you
can have a process to involve everyone. This is what the Canadians do. The Chinese
will not involve everyone, as the more people get involved in the process the more diversified views will emerge. Debates over diversified views cause conflict. The situation becomes difficult to control. Hence, not involving people for consultation is better. The decision outcomes produced in Hong Kong do not please everybody but consultation is not prevalent in Hong Kong. In Canada, it is the reverse. Decision making is very decentralised. The decentralisation goes to such an extent that the upper level is not sure of what the lower level is doing. The lower level is not sure why the upper level has such a policy. The upward and downward communication is not direct and there are many "filters". The speed of communication is slower compared to Hong Kong.

I think the involvement of staff in planning is the primary difference. I had this experience. Once upon a time, a fund provider called and suggested that they were interested in our service. My first reaction was feeling great, as I had something to show to the management: I got others' support. Of course, I was pleased to tell the boss that I succeeded in getting external support. His first reaction was not to be so happy about the money as I expected. He was more concerned about whether the staff members were pleased to get the funds for the service. His response was to ask whether I had discussed this financial provision with my workers. Were my staff members feeling comfortable to take up the project? The consultative model had to take place. The issue for consultation was whether the new service would add pressure to the staff members and be accepted by them. When more work had to be done, there could be conflict and subsequent effects on the staffs' feelings. Involving staff members in the planning and letting them have a say is very important to the Canadians. Frequently in similar situations, I was asked whether the suggestions by the fund provider had been discussed with the staff members.... Whenever a major decision is made, a royal commission has to be formed to collect the view of the public. All the constituents have to be met and consulted. It can happen that after a long time no decision can be made. This is the price of democracy. The Canadians feel the process of consultation is very important. Sometimes, it doesn't matter whether a decision is made or not, but it means a lot to them to have the process consultation. Sometimes, no decision has been made at all, because there is no one decision that pleases everybody. However, input from people is very valuable from their point of view.

In conclusion, planning is a modus operandi at work which differs between the Chinese and Canadians. Looking at planning from a Western perspective, authors such as Redding (1980b) considered that formalised planning requires abstraction. It involves sequencing of steps in a linear manner towards a predefined objective. They claimed that Chinese, being neither abstract nor sequential in thinking, do not do formal planning. This proposition does not match the participants'
experience that Chinese do plan, but in a different way from their Canadian counterparts. Chinese use intuition to form visions, which provide a direction in which to search their way ahead. They may not fully calculate the available physical resources as Canadians do. However, they will examine their relationship network, which is more important than mere physical resources, to ensure their plans are supported. With a clear direction in mind, Chinese grope their way in a fashion similar to that described by Lindblom (1979) as the science of muddling through. Metaphorical use of concrete objects, in the form of vision or images, is a distinctive feature of the Chinese way of thinking; they try to illustrate their ideas and plans by visions and images. Universal propositions, abstraction and formulas may not appeal to them as planning. Because of this, they consider that Canadians do not give much attention to planning. The most fundamental difference between these two cultures in planning relates to the degree of consultation and participation. Canadians see the process of consultation as fundamental, but the Chinese see it as a luxury. Efficiency and speedy output are what the Chinese look for. They entrust decisions to experts and professionals, rather than to those affected by the decision. Consultation is seen more as putting up a show rather than as a genuine process for collective planning. With such different outlooks, no wonder organizational behaviour differs so greatly between these two cultures.
( II ) Perceptions of cross-cultural differences in
Modus Operandi at Work: The Cooperation Dimension

Cooperation refers to the modus operandi of working together to achieve common goals. The participants used the term with a wider meaning than its general use of people working together in a team in which they know each other. Their notion of cooperation also included people working jointly in situations where they do not know each other. Apart from members cooperating with each other in an organization, the participants considered that cooperation also takes place between buyers and suppliers, as well as service providers and customers. Business transactions would be difficult unless people inside and outside the organization worked in cooperation. These people may not know each other personally. Furthermore, they may not have face-to-face contact in the process of cooperation. Cooperation also includes how tasks are sequenced and trust is built.

The data revealed that the Chinese perceive what constitutes cooperation differently from the Canadians. Their dissimilarities in viewing this dimension lead to differences of modus operandi in many areas of work. Holding the Chinese world view, the participants considered the Canadian style of cooperation incompatible with theirs. Chinese culture at work gives priorities to efficiency and output at the expenses of human feelings and dignity. Though the participants disliked such practices, they considered that the Canadian work environment goes to the opposite extreme. They felt that the current modus operandi at work in Canada does not lead to genuine cooperation, but rather to over-democratized inefficiency. It is fair for Canadians to disagree with the participants’ view. However, truth and reality vary according to people’s different world views, perceptions and interpretations. Their minds hold the “ought to” behaviours that can lead to cooperation. These mind maps predispose them to interpret differently whether the people they work with are cooperative. The dimensions of cooperation are culturally biased.

In recent years, business in Canada has strongly emphasized team work in order to develop cohesive work groups and to improved quality, productivity and participation. Organizations all over North America are introducing the notion of self-directed work groups and promoting team-based management concepts. Wellins, Byham and Wilson (1991) considered the coming of empowered teams a workplace revolution. Team development has become the flavour of the month, offering more hopes of promoting cooperation and hence for raising productivity in this highly individualistic
culture. Critics and unions consider it a ploy to remove the middle-management layer for economic reasons and to offset the power both of individual workers and of unions. Team management concepts are being imported to organizations in Hong Kong. Can the values embedded in this management approach be made compatible with the Chinese culture? Improbable, in the light of the participants’ perceptions on how teamwork can be achieved. The participants were exposed to team-oriented work systems in Canada. Their lived experience also offers food for thought about whether team cooperation in the Western mode can be transplanted to working environments with predominantly Chinese staff members.

Before examining the Chinese perceptions of work behaviour that constitutes cooperation, I shall set out a common understanding of what a team is: a small number of people with complementary skills and roles who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach, for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. This is a Western way of defining a term, with abstract concepts. I was offered a definition of a different sort by a participant. He used of metaphors and mental pictures rather than concepts to illustrate his thoughts. His way of definition is characteristic of Chinese concrete thinking. He defines a team as “a gang with brotherhood to perform a shared task”.

A gang is a small number of people banding together, sometimes in a lawless manner. The gang idea triggered the image of “Triad” societies and pictures of closely knitted cliques in my Chinese mind. A gang expects a high degree of cohesiveness and loyalty, plus flexibility for changing responsibilities and complementing other members’ roles. Gangs emphasize “brotherhood”, which connotes a value on members’ willingness to sacrifice for each other. This value is shaped by the meta-narratives “work for commitment” and “people exist for organizations” discussed earlier. Members have an obligation, though unwritten and implicit, to share the burden and bear each other’s trouble in adversity. To the Chinese, a clear delineation of duties belonging to you or me is not cooperation. Obviously, they interpret cooperation differently from Canadians.

As the participants pointed out, Canadians clearly delineate their duties while cooperating with each other. The clear demarcation of responsibilities prevents people stepping onto others’ turf. However, the Chinese work team tends to follow the “spacious grey” meta-narrative of communication, discussed in the previous chapter. Within this spacious and grey area, flexibility
and exchange of duties are allowed. As a result, the more cohesive the group, the less the demarcation of duties among its members. Just as in a family business, all people are responsible for seeing the jobs are done. There is no job description to define who should do what in a family. In the Chinese work environment, people are encouraged to learn how to perform duties outside their own area of responsibility. The participants were surprised when they saw that Canadians at work had to seek permission for learning to perform other people’s duties. In a Chinese team, reshuffling of duties is at the discretion of the leader, who takes into consideration the needs, strength and weaknesses of the team members. Participants were surprised that Canadians follow so closely the principle of equal opportunity for all. It makes it difficult to treat individuals specially for the good of the team in allocating jobs. To a Chinese, a team member’s competitiveness and contribution to success determine job allocation, not equality. The participants also find that the flexibility among the Chinese is lubricated by interpersonal touches, which they describe as “patting on the shoulder”, “mutual understanding” and “being compassionate”. When they do not find such elements in the Canadian work teams, they claim that cooperation is weak.

For team work, Hong Kong is always working as a gang with brotherhood. Here, [in Canada] the way of practice is different. Take an example of making a film. Each individual group, union or association sets out its tasks. People are compartmentalised in lighting, makeup or clothing. You cannot cross the boundary. You do your part and he does his. Canadians keep emphasizing the importance of team work, but my colleagues here do not talk about righteousness, sacrifice and relations for others. How can we say that is team work? It is just a jargon only. Here in Canada, it is the system that produces cooperation. Teamwork here means one person follows the work of others to do the next job when one part has been finished. Actually, it is the system that makes people cooperate. There is no unspoken agreement among each other. In Hong Kong, there is always unspoken agreement. My subordinates will say to me that “Sir, I know that soon or later some of your tasks will fall onto me. Give that to me now.” We had a tacit understanding and unstated agreement on working as a team. Here, the way of contracting and understanding is not like that. Because the system operates so that, by a certain point of time, it becomes one's turn to take over the job. A job here is so linearly divided. You take the thing up from here.... Actually, they have divided the time and the task into seven or eight parts. ‘A’ is responsible for this and ‘B’ for that. The team work is done in such a way rather than through “patting the shoulder of others” and taking initiative to complement each other in the Hong Kong style. I have not seen that here. The larger the size of the organization, the less I see it can happen. I rarely see “mutual understanding”, “won’t mind doing more than the other”, “doing work for
others considering their physical weaknesses such as age", "my team member helped me last time, I should reciprocate": "I am helping my team member this time. He or she will help me next time" and so on, which show we have brotherhood. There is no such model of practice here. I feel that the above must exist in real team work. 'Being willing to sacrifice, have a sense of righteousness for each other and mutual understanding', these are only lip services [here].... without the Pak Pok Tau [patting the shoulder] system to enable work to be done, locally [in Canada] an operational system is developed. Essentially, an individual is a part within a large machine. You do one part and I do the other. If one part does not work, it will bog down the other part. So, management uses a procedural approach to coordinate them. The merit and demerit are judged by different people. But I personally do not like this system of work.

But in dealing with the budget, they [our Canadian colleagues] cannot force a person to perform this task. The person has to apply for doing another part of the job. But curiously enough—and different from Hong Kong—when a person wants to learn the duties of another position, the other colleagues will query why the person should learn this area of work. Each looks after his own part of the job and does not let others step across their boundary. There are union positions and pressure. In HK, we attend to the strength of the person and select people who can perform well. We look for more flexibility, so that when one is on leave the other should be able to take over their duties. Here, they advertise the post, which is specific. When the person is not doing well and wants to reshuffle their duties, it is not so flexible. It can be more specific to a particular organisation. In HK, we will be sacked if we are not willing to take over the duties of colleagues of the same grade.

In the Chinese world view, a high degree of cooperation also means that many tasks are done simultaneously and not one after the other. A Chinese team may not fully appreciate the idea of one thing at a time in sequencing work. Having many balls flying in the air or allowing many tasks to be handled at the same time may equate to chaos and lack of order from the Western point of view. In Canada, sales people will not handle two customers at one time or fulfil another request from the same customer before dealing with the previous one. To the Chinese, a salesperson needs to cooperate with the customer and not to follow a sequential order. They manage to have order in the chaos, a phenomenon Canadians see as confusing. During the earlier discussions of the communication meta-narrative, I used a participant’s metaphor of “commuters, cyclists and drivers who make space for each other to cross the road” to illustrate how the Chinese create order inside confusion. That example corroborates the Chinese preferences for making many things happen at
one time. With this mental map of cooperation, they are not inclined to tolerate things being done in a linear manner. Doing one thing after the other, and not allowing other things to happen in between, they see as far from being cooperative. This cultural difference can also be attributed to the differences in how time is perceived.

As discussed in the literature review, time is a fundamental issue that all cultures must tackle. The perception of how it should be spent or utilised shows basic differences between the East and the West. Westerners think of time as a continuous straight line divided into portions subject to precise measurement. This linear time concept gives rises to deadlines, scheduling and order. The Chinese associate time with events rather than absolutes. The Western linear view of time is "monochronic", the Eastern view of time is "polychronic". The implication is that the former focuses on one thing to be completed at a time: cooperation occurs through linear sequencing. The polychronic concept favours multiple actions at one time. The participants saw that many events can happen concurrently and that linear sequencing is not an optimal way of operation. Chinese find it difficult to understand why a Western salesperson insists on doing one thing after the other and not many things at one time. Rigidly following the order and steps in a linear manner, with little flexibility to jump ahead or reverse the sequence quickly, makes the Chinese uncomfortable. They easily grow frustrated with adherence to the sequence, which they view as inefficiency and lack of cooperation.

For instance, I have lately seen the budget-cutting in our organization due to the lack of funds. The cut leads to disconnecting the staff's telephone lines. This action isn't acceptable, as I have many direct calls from overseas. They [Canadians] do not know how to handle the case individually [while concurrently solving the problems of the whole team]. When there is a disconnection, the telephone company puts on a voice mail to say that the line is no longer in service. I said that this was not proper. Particularly, as Chinese, when telephone calls are made to me from Hong Kong or China, they might make guesses about what has happened. They wonder: "Has the organization closed down? Has he been sacked?" They have too many such guesses. This is not a proper way to save money. I asked them to connect the line again, which was a simple job. However, the department knew how to do the disconnection but not the reconnection. The reverse process could not be figured out. They [Canadians] had difficulties in doing two things at one time. No connection could be made until after all disconnections were done. This is typical. I then asked the secretary who followed up this matter for me and it turned out to be getting back to the original person. It took until yesterday morning, and that was a whole week after
my immediate call for help to reconnect the line. This will surely not be the case in Hong Kong. This task is supposed to be done in a day. The efficiency to adjust to change [of having multiple action at one time and reversing the linear steps] is low here [in Canada]. It will be easier if you inform them [Canadian workers] early that you do not want to disconnect the line. Reversing the process is particularly difficult for them when they are performing another set of actions. This is a typical example. Similarly, if you purchase a money order, it will be easy if you make changes before they type it. From now on, I have to witness what they [Canadian workers] have typed and make corrections right away before they go onto another action. I ask them to change it right away if there is a typing mistake. But if they have made a mistake and find it after they print, they will have many difficulties in reversing the process. Going back is difficult. They have to make many consultations with the superior officer and it takes two or three visits to different departments for consultation. They feel at a loss of how they can manage the change. Finally, they have to go to the overwriting officer to seek approval for doing the job again. In Hong Kong, sorting out exceptions and changes was quick. Canadians may find it difficult to start a change in the middle of a process if there is an exception. This is a difference in problem-solving skill and efficiency. This is a shock to me at work.

The participant further compared his experience between Hong Kong and Canada in the sequencing of work. Canadians are more cooperative than the Chinese in lining up and tolerating leisurely work. However, the Chinese do not interpret such actions as cooperation.

Historically, Canada is a slow-paced country. People can deal with problems in a leisurely manner and there is less stress as compared to Hong Kong. There can be mistakes made and correction can be done by a slow method. It was OK, for instance, in correcting the name of a money order with few customer. Previously, there was no time constraint. They could use a slow or a clumsy way of working the things out. They are not required to jump steps nor be creative to solve problems. They can use a traditional way to solve the problem. In HK, you have to jump steps. You can of course use the traditional way of following every step in a linear manner but your job or position will be taken away if you are that inflexible. Previously HK could be like that. For instance, in solving a mathematics problem, one can take steps in adding, then subtracting and then multiply in sequence etc. The result can be produced in this way without jumping steps. In HK, they group the similar things such as doing all the adding at one time and doing the minus together and jump the steps to produce the quickest results. HK people have to be quick and flexible in their minds at doing things together. People in Canada are kind and they will not be harsh to me. They smile and take each other kindly. They accept each other's speed and ways of doing things. They are cooperative in lining up, but this is not the Chinese way of seeing cooperation. In HK or Asian countries, we have fingers pointed at us and are criticised for not being efficient. People are waiting to take
over your job and you will be out if you make mistakes.

One of the essential elements of cooperation is trust. Trust refers to confidence in a person or in the system as credible and reliable. It is the acceptance of something as true or reliable without seeking to verify it. At an extreme, it is a matter of faith in the people working together in the system that provides service. Trust requires the placing of confidence not only in things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. It is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of things we cannot see and even to believe that we can rely on them before we understand how they work. As discussed earlier in the literature review, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) suggest that the extent to which people view human beings as good in nature differs from one culture to another. Different cultures believe people to be good or evil or mixed. According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, views about the nature of people contribute to a dimension of cultural difference. Cultures that believe human nature is evil have little trust in people. My participants found the degree of trust placed upon people to be notably higher in Canada, in systems and in interpersonal dealings. They were surprised by the high degree of trust Canadians place in people. This extent of trust they even perceived as naive, contributing to abuses in the system and inefficiency at work. This interpretation may not be right at all, but their perception is coloured by how the Chinese view the nature of human beings. They are skeptical of others' motives and less trusting of others.

Another cultural value is that, Canadians value trust a great deal. They believe in us and they expect us to believe them. In general situations, they trust us. They believe in what we say. So, I suggest that we should not speculate. We cause them to feel at a loss why we do not believe their words. They expect us to tell the truth and believe virtually all the things we say. Their culture is like an honor system. This is special. Hence, if we make Canadians suspect that we do not trust them or have doubt about them, they feel greatly insulted. Hence, we should never suspect them. I experienced this situation at work. I had also seen local Canadians get angry because of that. At the outset, two parties were on friendly terms. Suddenly, the Canadian suspected that the other party did not trust him. The Canadian suddenly turned very angry and asked "don't you trust me?" I think you have heard this expression. This is an important expression to them. It is something serious to them. We may have touched on their soft spot. When they trust us, they expect us to trust them. Hence, the best policy is not to spoil the trust issue with them. Tell them openly if we are not OK and we should not cover that up. If we think that they have done things which have offended us, tell them right to their face. They won't mind. However, we should not suspect them. Otherwise, we may have touched their taboo. Trust is an important word to
In Hong Kong, if we do not know the other people at work, we take a sceptical attitude and guess whether they may lay a trap for us. In situations such as business dealings, people selling things to us, or stranger approaches us in the street to ask for road direction or tells us our coat got dirty etc., we adopt a suspecting attitude. Here [Canada], we should not behave like that. Here, we should assume the other party will not deceive us or make a lie. As a simple example, last week, I got a flyer saying that it would cost $27 to clean my windows. There is no telephone number nor name of company or the person responsible. The person later knocked on my door to solicit the service. I got the service on the price quoted in the flyer and I considered it reasonable. I also needed the service. I had considered this a deal. With the Hong Kong approach to reasoning, I would suspect whether it was misleading or deceiving. Also, I should suspect whether it is a means to get contact with an intention to break in. Thirdly, I should doubt whether the person was insured. If the person got injured or injured somebody at work, how could I make this cleaner or his company responsible? How could I hold him accountable if he does not have an office? Will I be sued about the injuries he caused? But, I think I should not think this way. So, I tried to contact the company. As a result, a very professional man came. He is an Irish-Canadian who wished to gain some extra bucks. He did quite a good job. We should not start with a Hong Kong style suspicious attitude towards the locals and their business.

From an organizational behaviour perspective, trust and people’s view of human nature as good or evil affect the practices of delegation and empowerment. Handy (1985) points out that the essence of the delegation problem lies in the trust-control dilemma: In any managerial situation, the sum of trust and control is always constant; the more the control, the less the trust, and vice versa. The trust is the extent to which the subordinate feels that the manager has trust in him. The control is the extent of control that the manager has over the work of the subordinate. Control costs money, but trust is risky. This polarity gives rise to another aspect of the dilemma. To monitor, check or control the work of the subordinate requires the supervisor’s time, along with the effort of those who compile figures and records for use in the control procedure. It is a managerial decision to determine to what extent trust can be placed and what degree of control is required. The participants observed that trust contributes to cross-cultural differences at work in various areas:

(a) freedom for making decisions:

Chinese bosses are more bossy. Possibly bosses are more like that in Hong Kong. It
can also be the character of the Chinese. They gave me such an impression because they kept coming back to check my work and had less trust in me than my Canadian boss. Canada is laissez-faire. My boss has not checked my work since I have been working here, except he may have to audit the accounts. I do take the initiative to approach him about any problem I foresee. Otherwise, he gives me complete freedom and trust. I am given respect. What is best is that he respects my decision. Even if people bypass me to approach him direct, he asks them to come to see me direct. He told people that they were welcome to discuss the issue with him but he said that he would talk to me. He respects my decision, as I am in charge of the program. But in Hong Kong it is different. People will go to those who are in power and bypass you.... I also notice, although Canadian supervisors often commented with reservations on the work of their subordinates, they still give a free hand to their followers. The freedom given may result in involving the boss to remedy the damages.

(b) monitoring work progress and (c) requirements for documentation:

For some work here, the degree of accountability is very low and the trust is high. When Canadians give me an assignment, they give complete trust. Even when people have not done the assignment well, they do not trace very much of the responsibility. In HK, the system is not so much a trust. The set-up is full of monitoring between different groups and levels of hierarchy. There are merits to that. For instance, in managing an account, there is always a supervisor to initial it, so that my result is verified. If there is any problem, we have that taken up mutually. There is a degree of accountability. Here, it is different. When something is done, there is not even a record or a filing system to store the information about whether something has been done at all. The paper has been thrown away and nobody knows who took the action. It may be me who has done something, but nobody knows what action have I taken. For myself, I retain a copy of what I have done, to prove that I have taken action. I become more self-conscious of what is accountability but as my Canadian colleagues, an action is taken but no record is retained. In HK, there were many forms on which I had to check boxes to show that I have finished the work. The other party signed on the other boxes if their parts were done. Here, we are not required to put a tick for the record nor to initial a file to indicate that things are read or done. Here people do not care whether some other people have done the stuff. The reason for such a practice is that this is a trust system based on the assumption that everybody is honest and fulfils their work expectations.... with no counter-checking to ensure that the right things have happened, I feel very uncomfortable.

Another example of documentation, we [in Hong Kong] used to have a transfer summary when we were on leave to tell what were the outstanding tasks. When other people took over the job, they would be clear on what needs to be done. But, this is not so, this is not so in Canada. When you are away, you are away. When they
[Canadians] are on leave, they often just leave without any handing-over summary or takeover summary. In Hong Kong, we were bound to have clear documentation on issues to follow up or take over. Even when people left the job or were on vacation, the posts were still functional. This is how we see cooperation. Possibly in Hong Kong we do not trust others so much as the Canadians do.

In conclusion, the participants perceived cooperation to be achieved differently in Canadian and Chinese organizations. There are various dimensions which are dissimilar. For instance, the modus operandi of working together as a team, organising the work, sequencing the activities and showing trust has cross-cultural differences. Probably, their two cultures' world views of commitment, loyalty, orientation to time, trust and the nature of human beings cause the differences in the modus operandi of cooperation. Not understanding and appreciating these differences will probably bring about conflict at work. People in their own culture may see the behaviour of people in another as obscure and mysterious. Such mysteries cannot be decoded at the surface level. Knowing and appreciating each other's way of thinking may increase the chances of real cooperation between people from the two very different cultures.
III. Perceptions of cross-cultural differences in Modus Operandi at Work: The Leadership Dimension

Leadership, a word taken from the common vocabulary, has been incorporated into the technical vocabulary of a scientific discipline without being precisely defined. As a consequence, it still carries extraneous connotations that create ambiguity of meaning (Janda, 1960). This word was relatively recently added to the English language. It has been in use only for about 200 years, although the term leader, from which it was derived, appeared as early as A.D. 1300 (Stogdill, 1974). The term leadership means different things to different people. For instance, "leader" in Chinese is composed of two characters, "collar and sleeves", parts of the clothing which when gripped by others are subject to being controlled. These are the places where our neck and hands extend for doing our tasks. When people attend formal functions, these two parts of the clothing have to be in order so that a proper and tidy image can be maintained. With so many different interpretations of this term, it is important, therefore, to lay a backdrop for the following discussion of the meanings and implications of the data by briefly examining what leadership is.

Reviewing the leadership literature, Stogdill (1974) concluded that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Researchers usually define leadership according to their individual perspective and the aspect of the phenomenon that most interests them. Thus, finding a definition may not be as helpful as examining the various dimensions of leadership. I attempted to extract from the data the Chinese perspective on leadership. I found it different from the concept leadership in the West. Stogdill suggested dimensions of leadership that provide a useful framework for inquiry into the Chinese perspective. He considered that leadership is composed of the following dimensions:

a. A function of group process.
b. Personality or effects of personality.
c. The art of inducing compliance.
d. The exercise of influence.
e. A form of persuasion.
f. A set of acts or behaviours.
g. A power relationship.
h. An instrument of goal achievement.
i. An effect of interaction.
j. A differentiated role.
In line with the above dimensions, leadership is commonly associated with the role that leads to goal achievement. To this end, it involves interaction and influence that somehow change the structure or behaviour of members, groups, organizations, or communities (Lassey & Sashkin, 1983). Strength of personality and the ability to induce compliance and to persuade people are critical variables in the effectiveness of leaders. Leadership is pragmatically defined more from the perspective of function. People performing a specific set of functions to fulfill a leadership role are leaders, regardless of their formal status in the group. However, though Stogdill's and Lassey and Sashkin's works tend to be functionally oriented, they yet fall short of viewing leadership as culturally specific. Leadership and its effectiveness should be seen as phenomena that vary according to time, location, belief, value and perception.

Handy (1985) examines leadership and raises the question of whether leadership is the creature of culture. He quotes from Hofstede (1984) to support his arguments. Hofstede cited the following examples: Machiavelli, writing in Italy in the early 16th century, described a concept of leadership akin to manipulation, based on the assumption that leaders have, and should have, much more power than their followers. Thomas More, writing in England at the same time, described a Utopia based on consensus, where power is ideally distributed. Leadership theories in the 16th century were, therefore, heavily culture-biased. They are still so, as Hofstede (1984) argued. His research suggests that Italy still is more comfortable with power inequality. So are France, Mexico and Brazil. Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Israel and New Zealand, on the other hand, prefer much smaller power inequality and so seek a consensus type of leadership. Britain, the United States, Canada and the Netherlands are in the middle, which might explain the more ambivalent contingency-type theories which emanate from these countries.

Hofstede (1984) also argues that leadership is also about followership. A person can only be a leader with a style with which the followers feel comfortable. What works in Scandinavia may well look weak and "wet" in Mexico. My data support this argument. The participants perceived a leader as effective or in an appropriate role only if the followers felt comfortable with the manner of leading. What is effective in as a leader in one culture may not be effective at all in another.
culture. The participants concurred. They experienced a new, different kind of leadership in Canada from that of the Hong Kong Chinese with which they felt comfortable. We may infer that what works effectively in the Canadian culture may look odd and ineffective in Chinese culture. The participants, holding a Chinese world view, considered a different set of dimensions as being important for effective leadership. These dimensions can be broadly classified as follows:

A. The possession of moral character along with the capability to lead by example.
B. The compatibility of image with the level of responsibility and role expectation.
C. The display of compassion to inspire work, commitment and loyalty.
D. Followers are more touched by the compassion than the eloquence of the leader.
E. The leader digests information from members and makes decisions for them.

One general conclusion that surfaces from the leadership literature is that effective leaders do not use any single style; they adjust their style to the situation (Robbins, 1991). National culture is an important situational variable determining which leadership style will be most effective. Leaders cannot choose their style at will; they are constrained by the cultural conditions that their subordinates expect. Let us examine Chinese subordinates’ expectations towards their leaders in greater detail.

A. The Attribute of Moral Character.

As discussed in the literature review, Pun (1991) brings out the “Noble Person” concept as a social dimension of the Chinese. In a shame culture, to be a socially respected person one has to develop an impeccable and unblemished moral character. "Noble Person" (Junzi) is an ideal moral character, used as a role model. This is an attribute required of a Chinese leader. The implication of this notion for leadership in Chinese culture is an added dimension; a leader should act like a "Junzi", an ideal person with noble character, to command the followers’ respect. This additional dimension the participants called "moral character". It is not found among the dimensions of leadership in the Western studies. The participants demanded such character from a leader. One participant claimed that President Clinton and Prince Charles, in spite of their positions, do not inspire as leaders. They are seen as far from impeccable in their private lives. A second participant similarly suggested that if a business man has no integrity in his family life or daily life, people cannot expect him to be honest in his business. This assumption rests on shaky ground, because
there may not be a logical relationship between the integrity of one’s family life and of one’s business. However, both participants admitted that Canadians, like other Westerners, separate ability from one’s character. They, as Chinese, cannot find these two dimensions divisible. The first participant was a director of a research centre and also a very well-respected Chinese leader in Canada.

We, as Chinese, expect a leader to be a saint. That is, he needs to have a moral character as a person. If he has the moral character, even if the work is not perfect, I follow him. The moral character of a leader is important. Bill Clinton is not liked by the Chinese and cannot establish his image as a leader in the eyes of the Chinese because he has affairs outside his marriage. His wife is stronger than he is and the leadership is with the wife. Bill Clinton's image is not compatible with the Chinese model of being a respectable leader. The same applies to Prince Charles. Chinese, like me, look down upon him. The Chinese take moral character as a very important part of leadership. The Westerners see differently in things related to leadership from the Chinese. Of course, scandal is likewise a problem with any leaders and can lead to their falling. However, it is still a matter of privacy. [In Canada] a person can still be accepted, rather than being despised, because he or she is capable. Ability and character can be separated. From what I observe, the Chinese mix these two and cannot divide them. My capability is not separated from my moral character. It takes a long time to establish a person’s image of being sound in moral character and to make other people accede to him. Hence, acceding to a leader is not based upon his skills but upon his character. Skills are only instrumental. The Chinese loyalty is directed to the person who is one’s boss. Westerners may not be so, and may possibly have loyalty to the organization. I am committed to the organization because they pay me. When I do not find the organization is good, I leave. I will not sacrifice my life for the organization. Yet, for the Chinese I am willing to take a lower salary because I work for a particular person. Loyalty is generated from my admiration of his moral character, his vision, and his favour to me. The Westener sets up an effective administrative structure to deal with people. The Chinese has to set up, in the first place, persuasive power of the person’s moral character to inspire others to accede to him or her.

Chinese people stress that leaders should have good morality. In the Westener world, whatever your boss does after work, morally good or bad, proper family life or not, will not directly affect his work. For instance, I have a boss whose present wife knows that he has a girl friend. Also, he keeps changing his girl friends every few months. Actually, there is little relation between his role as a manager in the realty office, his family background, and the number of girl friends. We are not accustomed to that. The Chinese expect that a leader should teach by example. He has to be clean in his conduct before he can work effectively as a leader. I and other
Chinese mix that together. The moral character of a boss and his ability are linked together. To take loyalty and honesty as an example: If my family life or daily life is not honest, how can I be honest in my business? We as Chinese see leadership that way. The Westerners divide the private life and work life more clearly. They do not expect the leader to be morally sound. Yet this is a general expectation of the Chinese. Of course, there is the same expectation for some professions here, such as teaching. But for general work, this does not operate as such in Canada.

B. Possession of a leadership image compatible with role expectation.

In organizational life, one has to make woefully uninformed judgements about others. The facts do not always have a chance to speak for themselves. As a result, one must seek bases for judgements. Commonly, the image and impression we hold of the other person form the basis for our judgements. The image and impression are created through how the other person presents themselves to us. Goffman (1959) created the term the "presentation of self", the basis on which we try to manufacture our images and form a picture of others. In recent years, impression management as a subject has gained attention from organizational behaviour researchers (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). The image presented by a leader can be compatible or contradictory with his or her position and status. The image is formed from a leader's speech, dress, manner, symbols and rituals. Ritti and Funkhouser (1987) suggested that impression management is important in shaping relations among superiors and subordinates. The same is true for leaders and followers. People everywhere dress, speak, and act in ways that they believe convey important facts about themselves. Presentation of self means leaders provide an image that can promote (or reduce) their effectiveness, credibility and influence.

The participants found the expected image of a leader differed between the two cultures. They felt disoriented when they saw the Canadian leaders doing things incompatible with their image of a leader. Such an image is, of course, culturally conditioned. The image they held is that leaders should be saved from doing the nitty-gritty work and running errands. They should have a group of helpers and followers to assist them. They should be formal and serious in manner and should not act informally or playfully like kids. They should concentrate on activities such as monitoring progress, controlling the work group, supervising the followers, developing their people... In many ways, the participants perceived Canadian leaders as incompatible with the image
they held of a leader. Such perceptions make them feel puzzled and undermine their respect toward their leaders in the workplace.

In Hong Kong, some types of things are considered nitty-gritty and not suitable for the leaders to do. There are things that a boss or manager in Hong Kong will not do. For instance, locking the doors and windows is something a Chinese manager will not do. Canadian managers consider it an important thing for security reasons. In Hong Kong things which are inappropriate to the manager's status will be delegated. The caretakers and guards take care of the security, not the managers. Their views of priority are so different. Our view of the leader or the boss is their role in monitoring, control and supervision. Help me to develop, clarify my doubts and help me in solving my problems at work, this is what a Chinese expects from the boss. We often wonder why our Canadian bosses do things which are inappropriate for their status as a leader. These things included distributing tickets to individuals and presenting them personally to the staff. Some bosses here also distribute pay cheques personally, perhaps it is an issue of confidentiality, as the pay for each person is different. Your pay will be different from the person who sits beside you.

Hong Kong has greater horizontal division of work by profession and vertical division by task and by grade. The vertical ladder is shorter here. Hence, some basic functional job have no one to offer us the background support. We have to be all-embracing and take on all tasks by ourselves. Even at a senior-level position, Canadian bosses may not have a secretary or an assistant. For clerical or secretarial staff, they do not normally support one person. It is a pool system which helps others the whole office. So, the executives have to use word processing machines themselves. They may have to deliver some documents after work, because they cannot get others to do the supporting job. The good thing is that they can save some money. The disadvantage is that if the office leaders have to do the errand-running job, they are not lowly paid for such tasks. Officers in charge or managers here do not distinguish themselves as leaders by the nature of their tasks and the image they give to their followers as compared to Hong Kong... But you cannot easily mingle into their culture. For instance, my boss, he acts like a kid. When they talked about baseball and the Blue Jays, they got crazy with that.

In a nutshell, the image the Chinese hold of a leader is someone who is a "nurturing" but a "critical" parent in Transactional Analysis terminology (Berne, 1961). The "creative child" and "adult" approach of the Canadian presents an incompatible image. To be effective in working across the cultural line, leaders may wish to reconsider their image in order to make it compatible with the followers' expectations.
C. Possession of "compassion" for the followers.

The early studies of leadership examined leadership traits. However, the trait theory of leadership yields contradictory results. Trying to identifying those qualities that bring about successful leaders has not contributed to fruitful outcomes. There are too many qualities that contradict each other, and the research has also neglected situational factors. Fiedler (1967) puts forth a contingency model of leadership; this theory is recognised as a major contribution to understanding leadership effectiveness. It suggests that a group's effectiveness depends upon a proper match between the leader's style of interacting with subordinates and the degree to which the situation gives to the leader control and influence. Fiedler identified three contingency dimensions that define the key situational factors determining leadership effectiveness: leader-member relation, task structure, and position power.

Leader-member relation is the degree of confidence, trust and respect subordinates have in their leaders. According to the participants, their leader-member relationship depends upon an added dimension, known as "Qing" (roughly translated, "compassion"). This word embraces affection, compassion, obligation and a sort of feeling. However, all these descriptions may not be totally illustrative of its meaning. The term is difficult to define, as it is a subjective experience. As one participant said, he can feel its presence. In behavioural terms, as far as I could gather, the participants experienced "Qing" when genuine mutual sharing behaviour took place in which sincerity was exchanged. One participant described it: "When people are sincere to me and share what is intimate in their heart with me, they have "Qing". The participants expect the taking away of "privacy" which acts as a barrier to feeling "intimate" with the leader. "Qing", although intangible, can be registered. The subordinate is obliged to reciprocate the leader's graceful acts such as blessing, care, protection, forgiving and guidance. "Qing" is also long-lasting rather than short-lived. It can be further understood by referring to the relationship meta-narrative of "Permanency vs. Transitional" described earlier. Some participants specifically suggested that they would be committed to a leader who had the "compassion".

I experience the leadership of the Chinese when they (leaders) are open to have tea with me and to become more buddy-buddy so as to build up our relationship. Thus, I shall buy what they say when I feel there is compassion between us. The Western bosses have meals with me but remain rather detached. My feeling is we are not
totally tuned in for the meal. My director invited me to have a meal with him. He had a friendly smile on his face but I did not feel that real life was there. He showed understanding about things I said but I realized that he did not really understand me. Even with things I felt provided insight, he did not really seem being moved. This reflected a wide gap between us. Western bosses tend to display their leadership through their smartness. They can be very friendly but do not display the compassion. The Chinese start with "Qing" which is compassion. With "Qing" followers can sacrifice totally for the leaders. Chinese will commit for a cause which they feel worthy. When "Qing" is established, the motivation forces come. When people are sincere to me and tell what is intimate in their heart to me, they have "Qing". The Canadian bosses are more detached and they have a privacy which is a space that we cannot easily touch upon.

Chinese seem to respond well to charismatic leaders who show consideration and concern to them. Followers are moved more by their love and care given from the leaders than their eloquence. "Qing" strengthens their relationship and binds them to long term relationships.

The ability to touch the heart of people and having compassion in what a person says accounts for leadership. When such touching is achieved, the people will follow the leader. Whether the person is really capable at work is another matter.... For instance, Chow En Loi (the premier of China at the time of Mao Tze Tung). He was a leader who had "Qing". The leader and followers had a relationship which was built upon "Qing" and not upon democratic election. Hu Yao-Bang [one of the most popular leaders in China before the Tienanmen incident] was accepted by the people as he had rescued the people, and had granted blessings to his people. He showed a high level of compassion. He gave blessings and offered grace to his people. There were no such things as grace-giving in the Western organizational culture. Among the Chinese, when a leader gets some benefits, he will offer grace to his followers by sharing with his people. Or when I am in danger on this occasion, he saved me from perils. Thus his followers will be so grateful and will be completely overwhelmed by his blessing. When we have received the grace or favour, we are psychologically obliged to reciprocate.

One of the participants gave a good explanation why there is no "Qing" in the leader-member relationship in Canada. He observed the basic orientation of ruling by the system and law in Canada. This orientation relies more on impersonal rules and procedures than on human touch and compassion. This difference in the modus operandi of leading gives rise to impersonal leader-member relationship.

Here in Canada, they use the ruling through law and system. In Hong Kong, we control not just by law but also by the human touch. You convince people by your
moral character. It may be an approach for ruling. Here [in Canada], the approach of ruling by law is more prevalent; consideration given to human elements is rare. Hence, I boldly conclude that we may not find this place having a good deal of compassion. Such a human touch does not exist between boss and subordinate nor among colleagues. Nor does it exist between employee and employer. Basically, industrial relations and union are a legal approach. They create such a system to protect the workers. The management uses job descriptions, contracts and similar means to force people to perform.

The Chinese rank elements such as a leader’s moral character and compassion equally with smartness and capability, if not more important. As the participants perceived in Canada, the followers give high priority to a leader’s skills and competence to perform the task. Whether the leader has compassion or moral character is irrelevant for inspiring followership. The Chinese will rarely accede to a highly capable leader if he or she lacks “Qing”, a quality which they find important for commanding respect.

D. Chinese followers are touched more by compassion than by the eloquence of the leader.

Leaders in Canada and in the West generally are normally expected to be a competent presenters on stage if not eloquent public speakers. The ability to win arguments is essential to people who have to lead and influence others. As discussed in the meta-narrative of communication, the participants found working in a Canadian work environment made them feel powerless to compete with the locals when debates and marshalling of arguments were required. This inability to assert themselves breeds conflicts and cause painful experiences. Eloquence is not a common element of competence for the Chinese. Canadian leaders excel over Chinese leaders in public speaking and in managing public space. In their presentations, Canadian leaders can wrap their arguments beautifully and convincingly. The participants found Canadian leaders made them feel powerless to rebut arguments in debates. Such leaders can also make people view a problem differently and positively by means of their eloquence. The competence to assert, debate, confront, marshal arguments and handle public fora are strong among Canadian leaders but not among the Chinese. Eloquence is not a trait normally demanded of a Chinese leader. They are not trained for such skills, a competence that the Canadians are encouraged to develop if they wish to be leaders. Though the Chinese appreciate such skills, they only take them as a competence secondary to moral character and the human touch.
The Westerners accord priority to job performance, smartness, administrative skill, effectiveness at work, and fluency in speech. These attributes are essential to a leader. Being skilled at speech is given importance in Canada and the Western world. The Chinese may not take being eloquent... Being a leader in Western society would be difficult if one is not good at public speaking. It is because in the Western world there is a public forum or an open society. In the Chinese communities, we have not developed a public community for leaders to be held accountable to their people. So, the need to have convincing power through public speaking is not so much demanded as in the West. The public community is a public sphere in which a space is specially given for open judgement. For instance, a leader's performance is under the assessment of the public. Among the Chinese, there is no accountability to public assessment.

When I have dealings with a Canadian boss, I can rarely win my arguments. Despite all the complaints or problems, the Canadian leaders I met can put the issues in beautiful words and can show much understanding. The solutions sound neat but far from substantial. However, they can get by through communication power. The skills to win an argument among the Canadian bosses and leaders are first class. It may be vice versa: because he is convincing, therefore he is a boss irrespective of his competence. This is very typical in education systems. I met many superintendents in education. Their thinking may not be thorough and they may not have much teaching experience. They may not know or be willing to admit the cause of the problem. Nevertheless, I cannot win over them in my arguments. When I had a meeting at their office, they just overrode my ideas in a convincing manner. Nevertheless, after the meeting, I did not find the problem had been solved. This is typical of Canadian leaders who can manage people and get away with the problem. People in this culture may look for people with these qualities as leaders. This leadership requirement places the Chinese in a disadvantageous position. We do not have good language skills as they do. Even if we are strong in that skill, we may not have the sensitivity of the interpersonal mood or atmosphere. We do not have such training. Our training is to get it done rather than talking about it, wrapping it with words or presenting our arguments in a pleasant manner.

E. Leader integrates members' information from members makes decisions for them.

As I discussed under the planning dimension, one major difference between the Chinese and the Canadians centres around the issue of consultation and participation in decision-making. In Canada, consultation is fundamental. However, the Chinese see such a process as a luxury. This does not mean there is no consultation among the Chinese. Consultations are made with experts rather than with all the people affected by the decision. It is an honour for the subordinates to be consulted. The leader accepts reports and goes over the objective data. Members express their view
and preferences. A decision is not normally made by a majority vote, a method preferred in the Canadian culture. Among the Chinese, the leader is responsible for making a decision that reflects the wishes and the genuine needs of the group members. Leaders are considered effective if they can look after the interests of the followers and reflect their wishes. Leaders hold the prerogative to do what they think is good for the group. They have the final say in the decision.

Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) propose a behavioural theory to describe a leader's behaviour. They place a leader's behaviour along a continuum with two extreme ends, autocratic and democratic. At one extreme the leader makes the decision, tells his or her subordinates, and expects them to carry it out. At the other extreme, the leader fully shares his or her decision-making power with subordinates, allowing each member of the group to carry an equal voice. This practice leads to one person, one vote. Canadians are more subordinate-centred, the Chinese more boss-centred. The leadership-style difference is compatible with the conflict meta-narrative of "Harmonising vs. Confronting". In Chinese culture, leaders at work perform the role of a harmoniser of conflicts and diversities. In Canadian culture, leaders at the conference table spark debates and confront diversity of opinion to win majority votes. The characteristics of a Chinese leader's role in decision making can be understood in greater depth from the participants' reflections.

In making decisions, the Chinese expect the boss or leader to make the final say. I seldom see a committee of Chinese make effective decisions through gaining majority votes. In Hong Kong, we sit on a committee, we incline to have a consensus. For instance, the leader or the committee chairperson may say "I heard and sense that the general view of the committee is that.... I, as the chairperson, consider the decision should be like that. Do you have objections?" We do expect the leader to behave differently here [in Canada]. In the decision-making process, the committee members do not try to achieve a consensus. They show their positions and make their preferences clear through voting. The decision rests with the party holding the majority vote. It is clearer here that way.

For leading the staff, my boss prefers us to take a facilitator's rather than a leader's role. Eventually, the views of staff supersede that of a manager. Sometimes, I feel quite helpless. Perhaps, we see things differently. We talk about leadership and control. We hardly control or lead when all people have their right and their say. When we practise the consultation model and seek the views of all the parties, if finally we do not take in their views, we will be in trouble as a manager.... In Hong Kong, the big boss has the say in everything. We have difficulty challenging him unless we are prepared to quit the job. Here, the leader is challenged all the time. Ha
ha! Oh, I realised that being the boss here is difficult. We need to attend to so many conflicting wishes and competing. At the same time, we need to balance all these views and make people feel good. We need to be sensitive to their needs and cultural differences. For any statement we make, there can be many different interpretations. It is tough work.... In Canada, individual variation is given plenty of flexibility. When you do not want to change, no leader will easily impose upon you. In HK, when the information technology department commands that there is a need to change, all people using the software will change to the new version recently purchased. Here you cannot command people to change.... In HK, there are six million people but there is only one education department for a single policy to be applied. Here, people can have individual characteristics [of the school system] for each city and demand that uniqueness be maintained. Each board creates differences from others. In Hong Kong, seeking uniformity is easy but it is so difficult to achieve here. In Canada, people are unwilling to take the points of others and not insist their own individuality. Here, seeking a uniform approach is difficult, and leading is more difficult.

Leadership is a phenomenon which varies according to the perceptions of people in different cultures. Having surveyed several perspectives, I looked into the specific dimensions in which the participants perceived leadership to be practised differently in their culture. I have identified and discussed five dimensions of difference. To achieve effectiveness in leading across the cultural line, people in management and influencing positions need to know how to decode their followers' mind maps. Certain images, behaviour and modus operandi are perceived as important for effective leaders. However, such mind maps are culturally specific.
(IV) Perceptions of cross-cultural differences in Modus Operandi at Work: The Controlling Dimension

Organizations are created for people to jointly attain organizational goals more effectively. Efficiency is achieved through division of labour and integration of effort. People share work and responsibilities according to their specialties. By specialisation, people can provide expertise to particular functions of an organization. To coordinate and oversee efforts and contributions from different parts of an organization requires a hierarchical structure with different levels of authority. Though specialization and hierarchy enhance efficiency, they bring problems of cooperation and control. I discussed earlier the modus operandi of cooperation. When organizational members may use their own discretion and exercise their own judgements, the situation requires control. The degree of control is manifested in the specificity of the rules and regulations telling individuals what they must or must not do. Control also reflects how precisely management prescribes members' behaviours and response. Another indicator of control orientation in an organization is the complexity of the feedback mechanism to check that the rules are being observed. Control can also be seen as a set of monitoring activities to ensure that plans are being accomplished as scheduled and that any significant deviations are corrected at the earliest detection point.

Control carries a strong sense of restricting, shaping and predicting. In the West, it has negative connotations: this modus operandi is disdained by organizations that value democracy and human dignity. Every activity has a price. Control costs money, but unconstrained freedom may be more costly. This polarity gives rise to a dilemma for management: to determine the extent to which freedom should be allowed or control should be imposed. Whether control should be tight or loose depends on many factors: culture is one of the primary considerations. Culture shapes the way people view human nature as good or evil and subsequently affects their trust level. The greater the trust among the members, the less is the control mechanism. In the modus operandi of cooperation and leadership, organizational behaviour in Chinese culture has a strong control orientation: for example, closely monitoring work progress, tracing responsibilities through documentation and centralising the decision-making.

The meta-narrative of existence and the literature review both suggested that the source of control varies according to culture. A "shame" culture derives control from external sanctions
imposed by other members, a "guilt" culture from the person's internalized conviction of sin. The sense of insecurity, discussed in the achievement meta-narrative, reinforces the Chinese's struggle to gain control of their future. This orientation emerges in behaviours such as over-indulging in work and achievement-consciousness. This world view contrasts significantly with that of Canadians, whom the participants perceived as optimistic and carefree. The Canadian world view features low control orientation and freedom for individuals. The participants' lived experience showed them that the term control carries a negative connotation in Canada. In contrast, to them control was a natural prerequisite for order in an organization. Control carries a different meaning and some degrees of sensitivity when it is exercised in the Canadian culture. The participants even suggested that in their work across the cultural line even the word "control" is a touchy issue. They perceived Canadians as defying the notion of controlling others.

Never mention the word control here in Canada. People are very sensitive to it. They call control as policing. Control means policing to them. The term control is very negative. As an employee, if my work was not up to standard, you should help me to overcome. I need you as a member at the management level to support me. Work as team means you have to support me. I need the management to support but not to police me. For instance, I have assigned a task to somebody. I am not supposed to take it back to take corrective action or to reassign it to another person. If I do so for whatever reason, they perceive that I showed disrespect. Committing such mistakes put me into embarrassing situations.

The participants perceived Canadians not only as resistant to being controlled at work, but also as having a different orientation towards performance and management expectation. In the Chinese meta-narratives, organizational goals should have priority over individual enjoyment. Freedom of individual choice is limited. Chinese take deadlines and achievements seriously. They are cautious in making a promise and putting forward suggestions, fearing they may fail to deliver what they have promised. Control, not participation, is easier in Chinese culture. The participants perceived that exercising managerial control is very difficult in Canada.

Our view of performance is different from the Canadians'. For instance, we differ in management expectations. I [as a manager] expect them to work in such-and-such a way. However, they [the Canadian staff] have a right to do things in their own way. We cannot dictate their method of doing things. If they consider a way of doing things is good, they can perform the work their way. So, I conflict in my work situation. As an illustration, their perception of time is different from that in Hong
Kong. Nothing is really urgent to them. When I expect them to complete an assignment in a day, they may hand it in after a week. This is a source of conflict. In the mind of Hong Kong people, efficiency and deadline are so important. Their [Canadians'] definition of good is different. Relaxation is more important than work. Working happily together is already considered as achieving the work goal. Exercising managerial control in Canadian organizations is difficult.

This participant claimed that exercising control was difficult. Another found the system in Canada is not built to control nor to monitor performance. He believed that better performance and fewer mistakes could be achieved with an appraisal system in place. In his own organization, there was no annual performance appraisal after probation. (Other participants also said this system gets little emphasis.) He made a significant point: Canadians accept that people do make mistakes and they are forgiving; the Chinese have a different mental map. They consider that people at work should not make mistakes and should be held accountable for their mistakes. The system is built to detect these mistakes and trace the line of responsibility.

Hong Kong is a lot clearer in performance measures and more demanding about accountability. During job appraisal time, bosses establish a clear base to assess people. They are in the authority to collect evidence to measure us and can tell us how we are measured. Continuous appraisals do not seem to be emphasised after we have passed the probation in Canada. The appraisal in my organization is not annual. In Hong Kong, we know how we stand and we strive for better on the basis of the feedback from the appraisal system. We can see in Canada the people with longer service or seniority, whose "output" curve goes down because few people supervise or control them. No one gives them appraisal and guidance. I feel that the people with longer service care less about their job. Their performance turns worse, because there is no monitoring. It may be the Canadian philosophy that once a person has learnt to become independent, they are independent forever. They may have a high level of trust in people. The mentality here is that people do make mistakes. Hence, it is no big deal if mistakes are being made at work. There is little accountability to be held for mistakes made. You cannot easily find the person responsible for the wrong-doings. If a person makes a mistake, he or she can get away with it by writing it in the file as an administrative error. In HK, in Chinese organizations, you cannot get away with it by saying that you do not know, you are not aware, or you have made a mistake. The higher the position the person holds, the less possible is his being forgiven for mistakes made. For instance, a person has wrongly issued a cheque twice. He cannot say that he does not know and is not aware of it. If the matter is directly connected with his responsibility, there is no excuse for him to make such a mistake twice and disclaim his responsibility. But it happens in my workplace here with no consequence. There is either no monitoring, or the staff are
totally on their own, without control. They may feel good about having so much freedom, but the system here is so open to abuse.

As this participant pointed out, appraisal receives not much attention in Canada. Closely monitoring the fulfilment of responsibility is not emphasized. With low requirements for documentation and the Canadian attribute of forgiving mistakes, people who have made errors at work can hardly be held accountable. Leaders' authority in Canada is generally less than that of leaders in Chinese culture. Combining all the these phenomena, Canadians perceive control as a very low priority in the work environment. The participants attributed the prevalence of abuse in the system to the lack of control.

To exercise control, organizations devise performance-appraisal systems to measure teams' or individual members' output. Appraisals are intended to hold people responsible for the work they do. People in authority control the members' performance by reward and punishment on the basis of the information from the appraisal system. These people are in turn held accountable for the output of the staff reporting to them. Responsibility, authority, accountability and control are interrelated. Responsibility is an obligation to perform and accountability is the obligation to give an explanation. Authority refers to the rights inherent in one's position to give orders and expect the orders to be obeyed. People are obliged to perform and answer as ordered. The participants perceived employees in Canada as very loosely controlled: They are rarely obliged to explain the mistakes made or to perform their duties in the prescribed manners. The system is not set up for monitoring nor for ensuring employees' behaviour is predictable. Managers have less authority to demand their orders be obeyed than they would in Hong Kong. With the limited power to control people, the participants considered exercising managerial control to be difficult in the Canadian culture. Instead of control, Canadians rely on trust and honour. This modus operandi caused disorientation and insecurity to the participants, who were used to the strong control orientation in the Chinese culture. One participant expressed her reactions to the freedom given to her at work:

As an example of low control [in Canada], I can quote my experience of dealing with cash, something sensitive to handle individually. In organising a seminar or a conference, I just ask people to throw their money into a box, without finally counting the number of people having attended. I do not need to match the amount with the number of people attending. There is no counting but they just take it that
the right amount has been received. Possibly, in the Chinese culture, our perspective is different. Canada is a simple society. They claim that crime rate is on the increase, but not compared to Hong Kong. We [Chinese] have become too complicated. We have already completed the stage of simplicity. So, we have to impose so many counter-checking measures. Canadians do not expect controls to be exercised tightly.... As for control, when an assignment is given to you for completion, there is not much consequence. For instance, if I need to contact the parents to come to a meeting. Eventually, I may wish to contact all parents as my target. Yet I know that contacting all of them is not possible. However, there is no one who sets a target, such as 200 or 400 to be contacted. It may be acceptable that I have just contacted 10. It is enough that I just try. There is no one who sets a control to indicate that this is an acceptable achievement. I do not see that happen here. It is always left up to myself. Eventually, I feel that I can hardly measure my output. Finally, I do not want to continue that job. Because, there is no one to set up the standard for you, I may have set it too high for myself. There is not much feedback. Finally, people find me doing the job well but in absolute terms I do not find myself contributive.

From the meta-narratives, the modus operandi in other dimensions, and the data in this section, one can conclude that not only the system but also the meaning of control is interpreted differently by people from these two cultures. Culture conditions the way people see the need, the means, and the level of control in organization. Integrating the key variables affecting the control dimension, can help one come to a more comprehensive understanding of this modus operandi. These variables appear in the table in Figure 5 and as a model in Figure 6.

From the dimension of control emerge 3 basic sets of competing values in these two cultures. The first set rests on people vs. organization. from the meta-narrative of existence—people exist for organization or organization exists for people. In Chinese culture, the interest of the people should, at a time of conflict, yield to the overall well-being of the team and the organization. An individual is expected to sacrifice for the organization. Canadians have a more individualistic orientation: Because organizations exist for people, the well-being of individuals should be given as much if not more concern than output. This dichotomy of world views also affects the participants’ willingness to submit to control. When an organization is given central place, it has the right to dominate people, resulting in a high control orientation. When people and their rights are highly regarded, the organization’s control orientation is low.

The second set is freedom vs. restriction. The participants experienced that Canadian culture
gives organization members much freedom to determine their ways of doing things as long as they can meet the objectives and act within the parameters of their work; they suffer few restrictions. There is space for self-expression. In Chinese culture, the appropriate modus operandi at work is carefully conform to the boss's restrictions, rules and expectations. There are more monitoring activities and mechanisms to check performance, both formal or informal. The formal ones include documenting progress, and the informal ones include verbal reports from informants whom the boss believes. Non-conformity is not tolerated. Commonly, Chinese prefer flexibility in areas such as planning and communicating, but they adhere to the boss's restrictions and conform to the authorities' directives. Chinese superiors restrict nonconforming behaviour and impose tight discipline upon the subordinates.

The third set relates to process vs. outcome. This dichotomy is drawn from the planning dimension. Planning and control are very closely connected. Without planning, there is little room for control, because one cannot know whether the direction of effort is right for achieving the organization's goals. The participants indicated that more time and effort is given in Canada than in Hong Kong to the process of consulting so as to work out a formalized plan. Planning in the West starts with considering the availability of resources and financial support in order to decide whether the plan is feasible or not. Chinese planning behaviour tends to start with building an image of the overall picture and the outcomes. Planning continues on the basis of the outcome at each stage of the implementation. The Chinese examine the availability of people who can help and the opportunities more than the figures and the limitations. In this dichotomy, the output orientation focuses on directing and the short term, but tends to be more concrete and goal-attainment based. The process orientation stresses internalization and the long term, but tends to be more abstract and system-based.

These 3 variables combined form 8 cells or sub-sets of the Control Model. For instance, combining people, freedom and process creates one cell (PePrFr). Combining organization, output and restriction forms another (OrOuRe). Figure 5 identifies and describes the 8 possible cells formed by combining the 3 sets of dichotomous variables.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension 1</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dimension 2</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dimension 3</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dimensions / Cell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>People exist for organization</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Space for self expression</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Consultation, System driven Emphasizes the means of control</td>
<td>OrFrPr 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Conform &amp; make sacrifices for the good of the whole organization</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Tolerate individual deviation</td>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Commanding Output driven Emphasizes ends as control</td>
<td>OrFrOu 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Concerns for Organization</td>
<td>Restriction</td>
<td>Monitoring Demand conformity</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Consultation, System driven Emphasizes the means of control</td>
<td>OrRePr 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Restriction</td>
<td>Restriction</td>
<td>Seeks uniformity</td>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Commanding Output driven</td>
<td>OrReOu 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Organization exists for people - Individualistic Seek one's own right</td>
<td>Restriction</td>
<td>Monitoring Demand conformity</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Consultation, System driven Emphasizes ends as control</td>
<td>PeRePr 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Concerns for People</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Space for self expression</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Consultation, System driven Emphasizes ends as control</td>
<td>PeFrPr 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Tolerate individual deviation</td>
<td>Output</td>
<td>Commanding Output driven</td>
<td>PeFrOu 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chinese **Canadian

Figure 5: Eight Subsets of the Control Mode

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Figure 6 represents the combinations formed in the table as a three-dimensional model. One can see that Chinese fall into the planes of organization, restrictions and output. These 3 planes meet at vertex 4. Canadians, on the other hand, fall into the planes of people, process and freedom. These 3 planes meet at vertex 7.

![Three-dimensional Model of Control](image)

**Figure 6: Three-dimensional Model of Control**

From Figure 5, when dimension 1 is combined with dimension 2, 4 quadrants of control mechanism are formed. Cells 7 and 8 are subsumed under the Laissez-Faire Style quadrant. Cells 3 and 4 are subsumed under the Commanding Style quadrant. Cells 1 and 2 are subsumed under the Benevolent Style Quadrant. Finally, Cells 5 and 6 are subsumed under the Self-Accountable Style quadrant. These quadrants are represented by the diagram in Figure 7. These cells are the same.
points as the vertexes in Figure 6.

The Laissez-Faire style of control displays a primary concern for people and tolerates individual deviation. The Commanding Style shows a primary concern for organization and demands conformity. The Benevolent Style represents freedom given for the sake of the organization. The Self-Accountable Style expects individuals to exercise self-control for their own good.

Figure 7 illustrates another cross-cultural difference at work between these two cultures. Cell 7 represents the Canadian style of control. Laissez-Faire. As my participants perceived, concern is
given to the staff members and individual needs. The organization accepts non-conformity and allows individual deviation. Individuals can have their own freedom and the right to seek their own interests. The participants saw such a style as lacking discipline and offering too much freedom. They feared the interests and output of the organization would be adversely affected. They preferred a style at an opposite extreme, the Commanding Style (Cell 4). In this style, people exist for the organization, rather than vice versa. Deviance from the norm is less tolerated. Social pressure and external control are features of ‘shame culture’, as discussed earlier. Individual member’s output for tangible gains is the measurement of one’s value in the organization. This style reflects the meta-narrative of achievement. It is consistent with the other Chinese meta-narratives and the Chinese modus operandi in other dimensions.
Chapter 9

Perceptions of Cross-cultural Differences in the Characteristics of Role-holders in Organization

In the previous two chapters, data come from the in-depth interviews. They are distilled through the thematization process following the phenomenological hermeneutic approach discussed in the research methodology chapter. The findings and subsequent analysis therefore appear in descriptive form with minimal use of numerical indices. The data in this chapter come from the participants' going through the repertory grid. The data collected are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. They are analysed manually in the first place to help me see the participants' world through their "glasses". Computer analysis is then used for more sophisticated analysis. The analysis yielded more numerical indices and diagrams with comparatively less descriptive write-up than the earlier chapters. Having immersed in the descriptive data and lengthy analysis in the qualitative mode, the readers should prepare for a shift to accept a major contrast between this chapter and the previous ones. The nature of data, approach of analysis and method of presentation are written in different mode. However, the data source, focus of the research, and the mode of inquiry being naturalistic remain unchanged. The repertory grid asked specific questions on the participants' perceptions of cross-cultural differences in the characteristics of the role-holders in organization. Why are "roles" in organizations so essential to be studied?

Organizations can be seen as systems of roles and relationships. One of the many ways of analysing organizational behaviour examines the roles and relationships among the members and the interplay of their dynamics in organizations. As Shakespeare wrote, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (As You Like It, 2.vii, 1. 139. Harrison, 1952). Using this metaphor, all organizational members are actors, each playing a role. All role-holders are expected to display attributes and behavioural patterns congruent with that role. People act according to their role expectations and conform to how others believe they should act in a given situation. How one behaves is determined largely by one's role as defined by the context and the culture in which one is acting. Hence, understanding role behaviour dramatically helps in interpreting and predicting organizational behaviour.
Roles for organizational players are defined on paper in job descriptions. Role positions are related by dotted lines in an organizational chart to demonstrate accountability and reporting relationships. However, these arrangements may not objectively regulate the relationships among the members. Deng Xiao-Ping, who is very old and holds no position in the formal organizational chart of the Chinese government, has more power than any other man in China. The secretary to a chief executive officer, who is physically close to the power source, is often more powerful than managers who rank higher in the charted hierarchy. These secretaries often receive courtesy and respect out of disproportion to their rank. People act according to their perception of reality rather than what charts on paper. Examining perceptions of cross-cultural differences in the characteristics of role-holders, I used the repertory grid to explore the participants' constructs. I further utilized the grid method for triangulation.

The characteristics of role-holders are behavioural patterns and attributes unique to cross-sectional groups of people in organizations. I broadly classified role-holders into 3 main groups: boss, peer and subordinate. These 3 groups further subdivide into Canadians and Chinese. The research participant was designated as "myself" for exploring his or her own phenomenological world or "self concept". The participants could identify themselves with particular roles and cultures. They offered their descriptive analysis of experience through the repertory grid.

**Extracting the findings from the Repertory Grid**

The research design and methodology chapter has provided details of how to use the repertory grid and how it can be applied in this study. This chapter highlights the findings and discusses the computer analysis using the Focus software programme (Shaw, 1980). Several sets of data documented in the Appendices facilitate the explanations and discussion.

(A) Focused grids for each participant, containing constructs elicited, assigned values and tree diagrams, appear in Appendices 2A to 11A. For ease of reference, unfocused grids for each participant are in Appendices 2B to 11B and the figures for focus calculations in Appendices 2C to 11C.

(B) A cumulative table putting all constructs and values together into a single grid is in Appendix 12A (Display All). This table is not focused and contains no tree diagrams. It is simply
a grid in small print with 7 elements and 100 constructs from all the participants. The number of constructs and lines in a tree diagram would be too many and too confusing to read. This table is mainly for quick reference, providing an overall picture of all the grids.

(C) To make the overloaded diagram from Appendix 12A comprehensible, the tree diagram for the 7 elements common to all participants, extracted from the focused cumulative grid, appears as Appendix 12B (Focus All). The tree diagram of the elements is enlarged in Appendix 13.

(D) I extracted constructs that share commonality from all the grids, by using the sociogrids programme in the Focus software. The programme analysed each set of repertory grids and based similarity on the ordering of the elements. A mode grid thus extracted from the group—its number of constructs comparable to the number of constructs in individual grids—is in Appendix 14 (Mode Grid).

(E) A percentage of association table appears in Appendix 15 (PAT). The percentages show how closely the participants associated themselves with other role-holders. Each percentage can be compared with others, with the mode and with the extremes. The matching scores are drawn from the matrix of elements for each of the 10 participants and from the group as a whole.

(F) In the design of the grid table in Appendix 1 (Grid Form) to be completed in the interview, a triad was preset in each row, the 3 cells asterisked in each row from (A) to (I). The participants had to identify the singleton from the triad and describe why it differed from the pair. Extracting the same row from each grid, I formed a new grid containing all constructs with a similar comparative base. There are 10 research participants and a total of 9 asterisked rows in each grid form. Data in the same asterisked row from all the participants are extracted to form 9 grid tables in Appendices 16A to 24A (Focus: A to I).

**Analysis and Discussions**

*An Overall View of the 10 grids*

Browsing through all the 10 focused grids from Appendix 2A to 11A, we can detect the ordering pattern of the elements at the bottom of the grids. The Focus programme rearranges the order of the elements and the values assigned so that elements sharing greater similarities are placed as neighbours. We can see from the tree diagrams at the bottom of the grid that 7 out of 10
participants share the same ordering pattern of the elements. All the Chinese elements are placed on one side and the Canadian elements are placed on the other. The arrangements of these elements suggest that the participants construe the Chinese (people of their own culture) as “neighbour”. Similarly, the pattern indicates that the participants construe the Canadian elements as sharing “neighbourhood” in the ways they behave in organizations. They do not perceive the overall difference or similarity on the basis of the roles. If that is the case, elements of the same role, such as bosses for the two cultures, should have appeared as pairs rather than as elements of the same culture as neighbours. The three participants who do not strictly follow the pattern of the majority differ only because their pattern is not as pure as the others. One element may have entered the group of elements sharing neighbourhood. However, there is no indication that their construction contradicts the rest of the group’s.

A Cumulative grid for Examination

Appendix 12B (Focused All), a cumulative grid, puts all 10 grids together to form a single grid. The 7 elements common to all participants form a tree diagram useful for examination. The tree diagram appears on the right-hand side in this composite grid. For ease of reference, this tree diagram appears enlarged with the link percentages added in Appendix 13. When all the grids are combined, the elements form 2 major clusters. The Chinese subordinate, Chinese boss, Chinese peer and Myself form one cluster. The Canada boss, Canada peer and Canada subordinate form another cluster. We can infer from this pattern that the participants construe themselves as more like their Chinese peers and different from Canadians, especially Canada subordinates. They identify themselves less with the Chinese subordinate than with other roles in the Chinese cluster. They also perceive Canada subordinate as similar to a Canada peer. They construe the Canada boss as slightly different from the other roles in the Canadian cluster.

Construing “Myself” relative to Others

We can also look at how an individual participant views himself or herself as similar or different from the other participants through the table containing the percentage of association (Appendix 15). The table shows how closely a participant associated himself or herself with other
organizational role-holders in terms of similarity and dissimilarity. It also offers bases for comparison of the views among participants and the general view of the group.

The matching scores were drawn from the matrix of elements matching scores for each of the 10 participants and from the group as a whole. Diamond (1991) used this computation method and suggested that it provided a sensitive indication of the degree to which the participants’ perspectives are similar or different. The first row of the table indicates the mode for the participants, offering an overall view of the group pattern. The subsequent rows are the percentage of association for individual participants.

The first row indicates that the participants associate themselves highly with the Chinese peer (82 per cent) but little with Canada subordinates (43 per cent). We can infer that the Chinese participants identify least with the behavioural patterns and attributes of the Canada subordinates. The percentage of association is higher with Chinese rather than Canadians, despite the rank. The participants perceived cross-cultural differences in the characteristics of role-holders, irrespective of rank.

Examining the table vertically, one can see that participant SL associates himself more with the Canada boss, while KA and IS do not. CC considers himself more like a Chinese boss and HL construed himself in the same manner. Participant IS considers himself more like a Canada subordinate than the others, while KA finds herself having the least association with the attributes and behavioural patterns of Canada subordinates. Participant IS shows a special quality of sympathising with people in low-power positions (the interpretation he gave when he studied his grid).

As CC sees himself more as a Chinese boss, KK sees herself more as a Chinese subordinate. Equally consistent, CC associates himself least with Chinese subordinate. He has the second lowest association with Canada subordinate. Clearly, CC feels more comfortable as a Chinese boss and least comfortable with taking up the role of a Canada subordinate. Ten months after the interview, CC decided to return to Hong Kong. Equally revealing, HL has the second highest association of himself with a Chinese boss. He, like CC, had a low association of himself with a Chinese subordinate. Both CC and HL had been in senior positions in their respective fields in Hong Kong and enjoyed being in the role of a Chinese boss. Like CC, HL had also returned to Hong Kong for
another job; however, he decided to return to Canada after having spent 5 months back in the Chinese work environment.

A similar thing happened to KA, the participant next after CC and HL in the percentage of association of “Myself” with Chinese Boss. She had also returned to Hong Kong for work; she returned to Canada after her three months of service in Hong Kong. These three participants shared the highest percentage of association with “Myself” and Chinese boss. Whether their returns to Hong Kong were coincidences or whether the grid could reveal their intentions is worth further research. People still associating themselves with a Chinese boss after several years working in Canada may suggest that their constructs are too tight to allow paradigm shifts and that they resist changes. Their general level of discomfort in working across the cultural line lasts longer than that of those who are loose in their constructs and accept changes.

**Characteristics of the Role-holders**

The participants obviously perceived the characteristics of role-holders as different cross-culturally. However, this does not answer how or in what dimension they were similar or different. The answer can be sought from the constructs in the left- and right-hand columns of the grids.

The participants did not perceive people of the same level from different cultures as similar in their organizational behaviour characteristics. Instead, they saw the role-holders as similar by virtue of their cultural similarity. One could argue from this evidence that culture sets people holding similar roles apart. However, what are the dimensions of the difference? To be more specific, in what attributes and behavioural patterns do the Canada boss and Chinese boss differ? What sets the peers and subordinates in these two different cultures apart? In what way did the participants see themselves being similar or different from each of these roles?

Appendix 16A (Focus: A) is a table containing the extractions of row A from individual grids. In brief, row A asks the participants to extract the singleton from the triad Canada boss, Chinese boss and Myself. The participants give words or phrases which best describe the characteristics of the pair (in the left-hand column) and of the singleton (in the right-hand column). Thus, the focus is on comparing and contrasting the Chinese boss, Canada boss and the participants. The constructs thus formed help to illustrate the particular attributes of “the boss” and of “myself”.

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The participants construe Chinese boss and Canada boss differently from each other in many dimensions (Appendix 16A). Notably, Chinese boss is seen to be:

Dictatorial: not risk-taking in expressing thoughts & feelings; bears different cultural value from the Canada boss; easy to communicate opinions to and can be sure that our message gets across; high commitment and positive attitude at work; share similar approach in tackling a problem; let ambiguity, relationship and unclarity at work prevail; value materialistic and task achievements and being relational.

Canada bosses are construed as different in many dimensions. They are perceived to be:

More open in accepting other’s opinion; explicit and direct in expressing thoughts and feelings, dare to speak out first—so what; racially different: difficult to communicate with, can hardly be sure whether they will be pleased and therefore have to be treated with caution; low work commitment; different culture and different approach to problem solving; seeks clarity in division of work: value intrinsic, quality of work life and process oriented at work: and not relational oriented.

These two sets of constructs suggest that the participants construed Chinese bosses as typically “Benevolent Commanders” and the Canada bosses as “Consultative Facilitators”. However, Chinese boss and Canada boss share a common dimension, in that they worry and are conscious of financial resources. They share similar funding concerns. Otherwise, they are similar in very few ways. The participants see themselves sharing more similar constructs with the Chinese rather than the Canada boss. They also construe the Canada boss as explicit and direct in expressing thoughts and feelings, daring to speak up, more open in accepting other’s opinions, and having a different approach to solving problems. Forming a cluster, these constructs are characteristic of a “Canada boss”. However, “not risking expression, similar cultural values, easy to communicate with, high commitment and positive attitude at work, similar approaches in problem solving” cluster as characteristics both of a Chinese boss and of the participants. These dimensions bear similar properties. They are communicatively and culturally related.

Though Chinese boss and Canada boss differ in many dimensions, so do the Canada subordinates and the Chinese subordinates. In fact, the characteristics of these two sets of role-holders very much contrast with each other. The tree diagram for the elements in Appendix 18A (Focus: C) has put the two subordinates on the opposite ends. Given the triading amongst the
Chinese subordinates, the Canada subordinates and Myself, the participants see themselves as being close to the Chinese subordinates and differing greatly from the Canada subordinates. The Chinese subordinates are seen to be:

- Less assertive for individual right; achieve and over-achieving and attention to do well; compromise and eliminate conflict; receptive to ideas and not "mouth back";
- Loyal to stay longer, not job hopping, committed, ready to take instruction from boss;
- More flexible to change and even alter or revise final decision; and loyalty focused towards the boss.

The Canada subordinates contrast from the Chinese subordinates in the following dimensions:

- Ready to fight and confront; cannot expect them to be thorough and excellent; may promise but not deliver; argue and assert own right and more difficult to be supervised; have more questions before taking instructions and take boss as counterpart but not a superior; less flexible to change or modify a decision after formal closing; more assertive and arguing; as well as holding the Canadian view for feminist and in advocacy.

These two sets of constructs suggest that the participants construed the Chinese subordinates as typically "Quiet Achievers" and the Canada subordinates as "Outspoken Fighters". The participants see themselves as being similar in values and world view to the Chinese subordinates but not the Canada subordinates. We may infer that, though they work in Canada as subordinates, they find incompatibilities in taking up such roles and in identifying with the Canadian ways of behaving as subordinates in an organization. Their constructs of the Canada subordinates described the latters' behavioural pattern as arrogant and conceited. Canadians' readiness to fight for their rights and reluctance to submit to authority made the participants feel that supervising them at work is difficult. Equally true, a pattern emerges from the participants' constructs of the Chinese subordinates. They are submissive and loyal to authority. In many ways, the participants identify with such values and world views. The participants prefer to work in an environment and organizational culture congruent with these values. The behaviour of their counterparts in Canada—to assert, confront and defend individual rights—makes them uncomfortable.

Peers are people who have no rank differences from the participants at work. The participants triaded Chinese peer, Canada peer and Myself in row B. Extracting from row B of each grid forms the new grid in Appendix 17A (Focus: B). The participants see themselves as almost exactly like Chinese peers, with only very slight differences, regarding loyalty to organization and
thoroughness at work. They view themselves holding the same world view and attributes as the Chinese peer, but as contrasting with their Canada peers. The following constructs of the Chinese peer can also be taken as a description of themselves. The Chinese peers, like the participants, are:

- listening, silent, and reserve; easy to compromise and accommodating; loyalty to organization, thorough and timely in complying work; diligent, more organized and achievement oriented; considerate to others; predictable and rationale being understandable; considerate to organisation's interest and shut up for the interest of the overall situation; topics of conversation - language and common areas of concern; culture and language to make communication easier and better; as well as similar topic of interest.

The Canada peers, though they share the same levels of jobs and are equal in rank at work, the participants construed as different from themselves and from the Chinese peers. The constructs they hold regarding the Canada peers are as follows:

- Assertive, expressive, vocal: demand & fully exercise their right; self-oriented; less concern for others or for organization; loose, not so achievement-oriented; less looking from other's perspective and more self centred; unpredictable, surprising decisions, hard to know how they think; more fights for demands and you sort out for my problem attitude; language barrier and different life concerns; different culture and language leading to blocks and barriers: as well as the need to find topic for conversation and therefore not spontaneous in conversation.

These two sets of constructs suggest that the participants construed the Chinese peers as typically "Tamed Workhorses" and the Canada peers as "Employee-benefit Seekers". Not only does the grid table in Appendix 17A (Focus: B) show a very high matching between the participants and the Chinese Peers, but also the same pattern emerges from the tree diagram for elements of the composite grid in Appendix 13 (TCGE). The participants and the Chinese peer are in the same cluster. These two elements are the most closely matched, at an 80% level.

1: Effectiveness of the Role-holders

Did the participants perceive these role-holders in organizations as effective at all? Before reaching a conclusion, it is important to consider what effectiveness is. This term was not defined for the participants, because I felt that people in different cultures would subscribe to different criteria of effectiveness. Hence, this is the participants' subjective interpretation. Researchers generally believe that businesses and industries in different parts of the world would attach the same
weight to criteria such as profits as opposed to criteria such as employee satisfaction. A study in India conducted by the Foundation for Organization Research (Sunderarajan, 1985) surveyed several hundred managers at various levels in the public, private, joint and government sectors, as well as members of professional organizations. The study found that the whole sample ranked morale, team work, and job satisfaction as the most important indicators of effectiveness. Even the managers in the private sector did not consider profit as an important factor, ranking it fifth. This selection of criteria for effectiveness is not true for other cultures such as the United States. Thus, organizations in different cultures might formulate totally different criteria for assessing effectiveness.

Sekaran and Sunderarajan (1990) suggest that realistic and meaningful research on organizational effectiveness can progress only when we begin to understand the operation of the concept from the organization’s standpoint. Organizations establish their criteria for effectiveness on the basis of the dominant values operating in the culture. Sekaran and Sunderarajan further believe that the key to effectiveness is to design appropriate organizational systems. These systems should be congruent with the organization members’ cultural values and appropriate to their concept of how they want to be integrated into the organization. Thus, organizational effectiveness is achieved by establishing the right criteria and the appropriate structures, congruent with the norms and values of the organization’s and its members’ culture.

Argyris (1967) and Merchant (1985) both stressed the importance of integrating the individuals’ and the organization’s goals. The integration of individuals into the organization is achieved through “goal congruence”. Coming to grips with culture-specific definitions of effectiveness and understanding how goal congruence can be achieved may shed light on how to work across the cultural line more effectively.

The participants provided all the constructs in the repertory grid except one, the construct of “most effective vs. least effective”, which I put at the very end of the exercise. Participants offered their ratings on the base of their lived experience and explained their phenomenological world on this dimension. Obviously, it is a subjective view of their assessment of effectiveness of the organizational role-holders and their ratings are based upon their culturally specific criteria. The outcomes are tabulated in Appendix 76.

In Appendix 26, there appear three distinct bands. The 40-score band includes the Chinese
Boss. Myself and the Chinese peer: the 30-score band includes the Canada Boss. Chinese Subordinate and the Canada Peer: the 20-score band includes the Canada Subordinate. In the 6-point system, the average score given to Canada subordinates does not construe them as effective at all. The participants perceived this group to be far from acceptable in terms of their culturally-specific criteria for effectiveness. The Chinese boss they perceived as effective: the Canada boss they saw as very near the 40-score band. These statistics do not define who is actually effective, but the ratings provide an indicator and a general outline of the participants' construct of effectiveness. The participants' criteria of effectiveness and ineffectiveness can be found respectively in the constructs of the Chinese boss and the Canada subordinate. These constructs also suggest attributes and behaviour representing effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

**Triangulation**

The research strategy for this inquiry involved a "triangulation" of methods (Denzin. 1970, 1978). It involved two methods to collect data, namely the in-depth interview and repertory grid. The former produced meta-narratives and perceptions from thematization processes. The latter produced constructs that allowed the quantification of the qualitative data. One of the functions of the Focus software program to draw the commonalities from different grids. This is known as the sociogrids technique. It maps one grid onto another one or more, up to five. Mapping 1 grid onto five other grids requires a greater level of commonality for an item to be selected as a mode construct. This method produced the mode grid in Appendix 14A (mg0592).

This grid represents the commonality shared by the group: the number of constructs in the grid is manageable for analysis. The results are now matched with the results produced from the thematization process. If the two sets of results do not contradict each other, the study can claim greater reliability. The first step is examining the constructs one by one to explore whether each is consistent with the meta-narratives and the modus operandi identified by the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach. For ease of reference, a table of comparison is presented in Appendix 27.

I carefully compared the constructs obtained from this grid with the meta-narratives and the themes identified for the modus operandi in the workplace. I dug deeper into the full meanings of the constructs by tracing back to the phenomena described by individual participants. The results from the repertory-grid method were indeed consistent with the results from the thematization.
method. The findings met the triangulation criteria set earlier. The two sets of data did not contradict each other: they revealed that the world views collected by both methods were consistent. The outcome of the triangulation shows that the results of this study have a reasonable degree of reliability.

In the process of comparison, another pattern emerged. The theme related to cooperation was singled out as something that caused the participants the most concern in working across the cultural line.

In brief, not knowing the Canadian game rules, they found that their own unspoken rules, reactions and values caused problems in cooperation. This aspect needs addressing for people working across the cultural line. The statements from the interviews expressed equal concern about this. The importance of this modus operandi was obvious in terms of the emotional content, the quality of incidents and the quantity of data. The findings from the mode grid corroborate this picture. The triangulation process helped to confirm a point of serious concern with practical implications for people at work, worthy of its focus in the recommendations in the concluding chapter.

The ordering of the elements in Appendix 14A (Mg0592), shows that the participants commonly see the Canadians as a group of "neighbours" and the Chinese as another group similar to themselves. They did not classify the elements as similar by virtue of their roles. Again, in the tree diagram are two major clusters, the Chinese and the Canadians. The qualitative data from the interviews suggested the same views. The meta-narratives and the modus operandi at work are based upon cultural differences, not on the level of position people hold.

Another step taken in the triangulation of data was to examine the characteristics unique to the role-holders described earlier. I examined the attributes and behavioural patterns unique to each role-holder against the meta-narratives and the modus operandi identified through qualitative inquiry interviews. Despite the data being collected through different techniques, the degree of consistence is surprisingly high. For instance, the participants’ constructs of Chinese subordinates are consistent with the Chinese meta-narratives, whereas their constructs of Canada subordinates are consistent with the Canadian meta-narratives as the participants perceived them. I checked any incompatible views against the context in which these views were raised. The results show no contradiction.
between these two sets of data. All the constructs given in Appendices 16A to 24A (Focus: A to I) were checked against the meta-narratives and modus operandi. The results showed no inconsistency.

Denzin (1978) suggests four basic types of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. Janesick (1994) added a fifth type to Denzin's list, interdisciplinary triangulation. He suggested that:

Interdisciplinary triangulation will help to lift us up out of the dominant trench of psychology. In education, at least, psychology has dominated the discourse altogether. Not only is the dominance seen in the quantitative areas, but in fact a good deal of the discourse in qualitative research is heavily influenced by underlying psychometric view of the world. The prevailing myths about aggregating numbers and, more tragically, aggregating individuals into sets of numbers have moved us away from our understanding of lived experience. By history using other disciplines, such as art, sociology, history, dance, architecture and anthropology to inform our research processes, we may broaden our understanding of method and substance. (1994, p.215)

The grid approach and the lived-experience approach come from two totally different disciplines. The former is derived from personal-construct psychology. The latter comes from phenomenological-hermeneutic philosophy. However, both disciplines share a concern with the nomothetic emphasis of psychometric research. They share the qualitative mode of inquiry. They acknowledge that the presuppositions and theoretical framework held by positivistic researchers often hinder understanding and finding the truth. The positivistic research paradigm inappropriately defines the problem under study. The qualitative mode of inquiry considers the client's definition of the problem as important and to be elicited. People's perception of reality, rather than objective reality, affects their choice of action and behaviour. Both disciplines pay attention to the study of social reality from the perspective of actors and investigate the meanings that appear in human experience. The personal-construct theorists achieve this understanding through the repertory grid (G. Kelly, 1955). This technology, used in interaction between the researcher and the participants, develops conversational heuristics for exploring an individual's phenomenological world. From another route, the phenomenological-hermeneutic philosophers achieve this understanding through the cognitive scheme informed by narratives (Polkinghorne, 1988). Heaton (1968) defined phenomenology as "the science of lived experience". He also suggested that "Husserl developed phenomenology so that it becomes the descriptive analysis of experience. He went beneath the
abstract and derived constructions of science to seek their foundations in common sense and experience" (Heaton, 1968, p.297). Although the repertory-grid and the phenomenological-hermeneutic approaches are based in different disciplines, both explore the participants' phenomenological world. This common ground offers the possibility of the interdisciplinary triangulation used in this research. This interdisciplinary triangulation demands not only greater investment in research time but also an effort to understand the two different sets of philosophy underpinning the research. However, it increases credibility, essential for a qualitative study: hence: its vigorous use here.

In conclusion, the repertory grid method helped the participants externalise their comparisons and perceptions of the Chinese and Canadian role-holders in organizations. From the tree diagrams and the percentage of association table, we can see a distinct pattern: the participants associate with others not by rank but by cultural similarity. The Canadians and the Chinese role-holders fall into two distinct clusters. Differences are perceived not by virtue of role positions but by culture. The constructs extracted from individual grids suggest that the participants construed the Chinese bosses as typically "Benevolent Commanders" and the Canada bosses as "Consultative Facilitators"; the Chinese subordinates as typically "Quiet Achievers" and the Canada subordinates as "Outspoken Fighters"; and the Chinese peers as typically "Tamed Workhorses" and the Canada peers as "Employee-benefit Seekers". They consider that the Canada subordinates as being the least effective among the role-holders and have little association with them. The data from the repertory grids provide a basis for triangulation. The constructs when carefully compared with the findings collected from the phenomenological hermeneutic approach show no inconsistence or contradiction. We may therefore suggest that a higher degree of trustworthiness and confidence can be accorded to the research findings in this study.
PART IV - CONCLUSIONS

This part consists of only one chapter. However, it is composed of three major sections. The first section presents a summary, to give readers an overall view of the findings. The second section discusses the implications for practice on the basis of each major finding. The third section contains recommendations on how cross-cultural understanding can be promoted at work, the limitations of the study and directions for further research.
Chapter 10
Summary, Implications, and Conclusion

(1) Summary

The literature reveals that the cross-cultural study of Chinese organizational behaviour has relied heavily on large-scale surveys and pre-existing survey instruments. Such an approach has allowed the explanation of differences in national cultures and practices at an aggregate level. Identifying something different between Westerners and Chinese by statistical means so as to argue the distinctiveness of the latter is possible. However, the methodology of these positivistic studies has typically rested on Western a priori assumptions and Western constructs. These may have little meaning in the world of Chinese respondents. Hence, these organizational behaviour studies failed to elicit the operative framework of values and thoughts which guide Chinese work behaviour.

The present qualitative study used the phenomenological hermeneutic method of analysis based on interviews with 10 Chinese. All of them had worked in both Hong Kong and Canada, which respectively represent the Oriental and the Western world. The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured, to help the participants reveal their lived experience in working across the cultural line. The interviews were followed by my going through a repertory grid with them, a method originating with personal-construct theory, which argues that individuals interpret their worlds through psychological constructs. The grid method served as a conversational tool for the participants to externalize their personal models of the world. Both methods aim at descriptive analysis of the participants' lived experience, based on phenomenological philosophy. Both approaches share a similar research paradigm. They resist the problems of determinism, a priori research assumptions, and pre-existent researcher categories. That is to say, the data collected in the research belong to the respondents and not the researcher. Both approaches follow the qualitative mode of inquiry. Collecting the data through these two different methods and disciplines allowed for triangulation. The analysis was first manual and then used the Focus computer programme. This software analyzed the qualitative data quantitatively by cluster analysis and other statistical methods. I showed the results to half the participants to verify their validity.

I intended to capture snapshots of the participants' perceptions of cross-cultural differences and inquire into their experience concerning the organizational behaviour at work in both cultures.
The primary objective was to distill from their narratives and reported experience the world views that shape their perceptions. The secondary objective was to capture their perceptions of the ways people behave and of the characteristics of the role-holders in organizations in these two cultures. As to the primary objective, 7 meta-narratives emerged. They form principles for understanding the mind maps which shape how the Chinese interpret behaviours at work. Secondly, I identified 4 dimensions of modus operandi and a series of personal constructs. The former represents perceptions of differences in major dimensions of work practice, the latter perceptions of the characteristics of the role-holders in these two cultures. The 7 meta-narratives were as follows: the triangulation supports their validity.

The meta-narrative of existence
People exist for Organization vs. Organization exists for People

The meta-narrative of achievement
Insecurity & Achieving vs. Optimism & Carefree

The meta-narrative of work
Committing vs. Contracting

The meta-narrative of conflict
Harmonizing vs. Confronting

The meta-narrative of power
High Inequality Tolerance vs. Low Inequality Tolerance

The meta-narrative of relationship
Continuous vs. Disjointed

The meta-narrative of communication
Spacious Grey vs. Tight Blue

The four major dimensions which the research participants perceive as cross-cultural differences between the Chinese and the Canadians in the modus operandi at work were Planning, Cooperation, Leadership and Controlling.

(A) The Planning Dimension

Planning is the process of deciding what to do and what not to do in an organization. This modus operandi differs as between the Chinese and Canadians. Some scholars have suggested that the Chinese do not use formal planning because they are neither abstract nor sequential in thinking. Formalized planning requires abstraction and involves linear sequencing of steps towards a
predefined objective. No matter what the scholars suggested, the participants’ experience revealed that Chinese use formalized planning as much as, but in a different form from, the Canadians. Chinese use intuition and visions to plan with an end in mind; this future scenario provides a picture for the direction to be set. Unlike the Canadians, Chinese attend more to their relationship networks than to physical assets as the resource for materialising their vision. With a clear direction in mind, Chinese manoeuvre in a fashion similar to the theory of “muddling through”. Use of concrete objects and images distinguishes the Chinese way of thinking. They tend to illustrate their ideas and plans as visions and images. Universal propositions, abstraction and formulas may not appeal to them as effective planning. Though Canadians use these latter planning approaches, the Chinese do not consider organizations here as doing realistic and effective planning. From their experience, another fundamental difference in planning between the two cultures relates to the degree of consultation and participation. Canadians view the process of consultation as fundamental for planning but the Chinese perceive it as a luxury; they focus more on efficiency and speedy output. They trust that experts and professionals make decisions better than the people affected by the decisions do. Consultation they view as putting up a show; they do not trust it as a process to genuinely collect views for planning. Participants working in a consultative environment in Canada experienced dilemmas and conflicts over whether the price for such a democratic decision-making process is worth paying.

(B) The Cooperation Dimension

Cooperation refers to the modus operandi of working together to achieve common goals. The data reveal that Canadians and Chinese perceive differently what constitutes cooperation. They have different notions of the “ought to” behaviours that can lead to cooperation. Cooperation is essential for team effort. One participant defined a team as “a gang with ‘brotherhood’ to perform a shared task.” The Chinese stress members’ obligations, though unwritten and implicit, to mutually share the burden and bear each other’s trouble in adversity. A clear definition of duties, outlining which jobs belong to you or me, is not for them conducive to cooperation. Canadians, however, favour a clear delineation of duty while cooperating with each other. In the Chinese work environment, people are encouraged to learn how to perform duties outside their own area of
responsibility. The unions, administrative systems and duty lists in Canada prevent such flexibility. The participants viewed the Chinese flexibility as lubricated by interpersonal touches which they described as “patting on the shoulder”, “mutual understanding” and “being compassionate”.

In the Chinese world view, a high degree of cooperation also means that many tasks are done simultaneously, not one after the other. A Chinese team may not fully appreciate the idea of one thing at a time in sequencing work. Chinese work with discomfort in the Western culture, in which people rigidly follow the order and steps in a linear manner, with little flexibility to jump ahead or to quickly reverse the process. Sticking to the sequence easily frustrates the Chinese: they view it as lacking efficiency and cooperation. Another essential element of cooperation is trust, the confidence in a person or in a system as credible and reliable. Evidently, the participants saw that the level of trust placed in people is notably higher in Canada. Introducing trust in the workplace affects the practices of delegation, empowerment and control. Greater trust in the nature of people as good leads to greater freedom for decentralizing decision-making. Less monitoring of work progress and less documentation are required in the Canadian working environment. However, this freedom may at the same time bring to Chinese the feelings of insecurity and discomfort.

(C) The Leadership Dimension

Leadership is culturally specific. Leadership and its effectiveness vary according to time, location, belief, value and perception. However, the cultural dimension of leadership is rarely examined. Most research on leadership has examined it from the perspective of its function: this often has led to the assumption that these Western theories are universally applicable. Few studies have highlighted the cultural dimension. My data suggest that leadership can be viewed as a creature of culture. A person can only be a leader with a style with which the followers feel comfortable. What is effective in a leader in one culture may not be effective at all in another. What works with Canadians may appear odd and ineffective to the Chinese. The participants, holding a Chinese world view, consider certain dimensions as important for effective leadership with Chinese followers. These dimensions differ from Canadians’ expectation of leaders. They can be broadly stated as:

(i) Possession of moral character.
(ii) The compatibility of leadership image and role expectation.
(iii) The display of compassion to inspire work commitment and loyalty.
(iv) Followers are touched more by compassion than eloquence.
(v) Leader digests information from members and makes decisions for them.

(D) The Control Dimension

When organizational members are allowed to use their own discretion and exercise their judgements, the situation necessitates control. Whether control should be tight or loose depends on many factors. Culture is one of the primary considerations. Some cultures place greater level of trust in human nature than others. The greater the trust among the members, the less the need for control mechanisms. Chinese place less trust in people and in their future than Canadians do. They generally tolerate being monitored and put under some form of control. In contrast, control is a touchy word in Canada. The participants perceived Canadians as control-resistant and defiant, seeing managerial control as policing. Mechanisms such as annual appraisals and documentation to assess and track accountabilities are rare in Canadian organizations as compared to those in Hong Kong. The Chinese take making mistakes more seriously. The system in Canada is not set up for monitoring the employees' performance. Managers have less authority to demand their orders to be obeyed. Managerial control is loose. Compared with the Chinese, leaders in Canada have more difficulties getting people to comply with management's expectations. Extracts from the data allowed me to form a model with 3 dichotomies relating to the cross-cultural differences in control between Chinese and Canadians: People vs. Organization, Freedom vs. Restriction and Process vs. Outcome. Chinese organizational behaviour falls into the field towards Organization, Restriction and Outcome. This control orientation contrasts with the Canadian one, which veers towards People, Freedom and Process. In addition, the Chinese fall into the Commanding style, the Canadians into the Laissez-Faire style in the model.

Perceptions of cultural differences in the characteristics of the role-holders in organization

Organizations can be seen as systems of roles and relationships. One of the many ways of analysing organizational behaviour stems from examining the roles and relationships among the members. All role-holders are expected to carry with them attributes and behavioural patterns congruent with their role. Focused grids for each participant suggest that they construe the Chinese,
people of their own culture, as “neighbours”. The tree diagram for elements from the cumulative grid shows that they grouped the Chinese subordinate, Chinese boss, Chinese peer and Myself into one cluster. The Canada boss, Canada peer and Canada subordinate form another cluster. The participants construe themselves as most like a Chinese peer and least like a Canada subordinate. The percentage of association table indicates that the participants associated themselves strongly with the Chinese peer but weakly with the Canada subordinates. The Chinese participants identify least with the behavioural patterns and attributes of Canadian subordinates. They express higher percentages of association with the Chinese than with the Canadians, despite rank; their perceptions of differences rely on cultural behaviour patterns and attributes, not on the person’s rank. For them, culture sets people apart even if they hold similar roles.

I extracted the characteristics of the role-holders from the individual grids and examined them. Chinese boss and Canada boss differ in many dimensions, as did the Canada subordinates and Chinese subordinates. The characteristics of the latter set of role-holders contrasted very strongly with each other. The participants see themselves as closest to the Chinese subordinates and furthest from the Canada subordinates. They saw themselves as almost exactly like a Chinese peer. They view themselves as holding the same world view and attributes as the Chinese peer. In a 6-point ranking of effectiveness, the average score the participants gave to Canada subordinates does not indicate them as effective at all. They perceived the Chinese boss to be effective. The Canada boss was rated just below the Chinese boss. These subjective views of the effectiveness of organizational members and the ratings rest on the participants’ culturally specific criteria.

**Triangulation**

For triangulation, the sociogrid representing the commonality shared by the group was matched with the results of the thematic process. I carefully compared the constructs obtained from the grid with the meta-narratives and the themes identified for the modus operandi in the workplace. The two sets of results did not contradict; there was no inconsistency. The theme related to cooperation stands out as the thing causing the most concern to the participants working across the cultural line. I examined the attributes and behavioural patterns unique to each role-holder from the grids against the meta-narratives and the modus operandi. Again, there was no major
inconsistency. The grid approach and the lived-experience approach come from two different disciplines, personal-construct psychology and phenomenological-hermeneutic philosophy respectively. This interdisciplinary triangulation offered greater credibility for the study.

(II) Implications for Practice

People enter an organization with preconceived notions of what “ought” and “ought not” to be. These notions are shaped by their world views. These world views affect their interpretation of reality. Their interpretations influence their ways of behaving. The following sections highlight the implications for practice of the major findings: the meta-narratives, the modus operandi and the constructs.

Meta-narratives

(A) The Chinese world view of what they ought to do in an organization is to subordinate their needs to that of the organization. Employees are not supposed to have their needs met at the organization’s expense. The Chinese meta-narrative of existence is “people should exist for the organization”, rather than the opposite, which they experience in Canada. This meta-narrative shapes the Chinese way of seeing their rights and responsibilities as members of an organization.

The practical implications are that conflicts cannot be avoided when one end of the polarity is altruism for the organization and the other end is persistent pursuit of individual rights. The former is advantageous to management but is subject to exploitation. Chinese working in Canada should go through a consciousness-raising process for their own rights, having been exposed to another culture. Change of mental programming is slow but is possible under conditions such as living across the cultural line. On humanitarian grounds, Canadians can help the Chinese to raise their awareness that the interest of individuals, and not just of organizations, should be respected. Canadians can provide a role model for learning human rights and encourage the Chinese to stand against any exploitation by the organization. At the same time, more compromising to the needs of the organization and less militancy for one’s own rights may have positive effects on Canadian organizations. This is an aspect Canadians may wish to consider. The world view that one exists for another carries the notion of dependence of one party upon the other; the new “life script” should
be based on interdependency, rather than dependency or counter-dependency.

(B) Culture has mentally programmed the Chinese to think that working like busy bees to achieve as much as possible is appropriate. Their over-indulgence in work to acquire materialistic gains relieves their sense of insecurity and meets their need to feel in control of their future. As a result, they hoard resources and earnings for rainy days. They put themselves under self-generated pressure to do well, to secure long-term employment and to create financial reserves not only for themselves but also for their children. These achievements often impose a great cost, such as having an unbalanced way of life. In the meta-narrative of achievement the Chinese show envy of the optimistic and carefree style of the Canadians. Canadians' quality of work life and enjoyment of leisure are viewed as luxuries that the Chinese often find their life lacks. Insecurity & Achieving vs. Optimism & Carefree is another meta-narrative that sets Chinese apart from Canadians.

The implications for practice are that people in both cultures have different goals for work and therefore different sets of motivating factors. They may make judgements on the other's ways of life, using their own set of cultural values as the yardstick. Chinese can perceive employees who are optimistic and carefree as being lazy and inefficient. Chinese from Hong Kong should appreciate that both societies are in different stages of economic development and life values. Their "peasant" mentality of laboring like a work horse and hoarding savings for a rainy day needs reviewing, because in Canada the Chinese are living in a different society and work environment. Working across the cultural line provides an opportunity for the Chinese to learn that relaxing is not a crime. Canadians can invite them to feel the joys of leisure and a balanced lifestyle. The turbulent business environment also makes it impossible to have the complete security for the future that the Chinese desire. Canadians should not perceive the Chinese's near-compulsive over-achieving as "competing" or as an intended threat. This behaviour is the Chinese mode of adaptation to insecurity. In fact, having a high achiever as a member of the team will bring about better output for the organization. People should accept that everyone, has their own choice of lifestyle and should not be judged. However, people should be given the opportunity to try a different lifestyle and not be compulsively fixated on the one their cultural background imposed on them. Trying to have a taste of each other's way of work life is a baby step towards better appreciation of the other's culture.
World views of work as an execution of a contract or as a fulfilment of a commitment are greatly different. The former emphasizes meeting of the terms previously agreed upon, drawing a clear line to prevent work intruding on private time and personal life. The latter expects personal sacrifices to meet the organization’s demands, working overtime, giving work priority over self, and not calculating the immediate return. The Chinese meta-narrative of work is a commitment and not a contract. The difference in world view in this aspect creates dissimilarity in interpreting what constitutes loyalty and fulfilment of performance expectation.

From a pragmatic point of view, the purpose of contracting is to seek commitment from the other party to fulfill the contractual requirements. Contractual requirements are spelt out in clear terms to state the minimum rights and obligations. Contracts imply clarity and legality. Commitment offers flexibility and compassion for helping each other. Both approaches aim at ensuring the other party puts their best effort into achieving the organization’s objective. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Chinese can learn from the Canadians the advantages of setting their boundaries and rights. There is a Chinese saying: “Start off as a mean person and wind up being a person with gentlemanliness (Junzi)”. The process of clarifying and wrestling with the terms of a contract is starting as a mean person. Chinese often avoid this phase of the contracting process. As a result, ambiguity leads to future misunderstanding and mistrust. Mutual understanding should be achieved at the beginning of working together. However, the process should involve “dancing” rather than “wrestling” with each other in legalistic and formal terms. Chinese often seek long-term commitments and consider the organization’s needs without being calculative at the beginning. However, this does not mean they do not seek compensation in the end. Work being a commitment, Chinese do not set boundaries separating private time and personal life from office time and organizational life. This practice allows organizations more flexibility to adapt to new customer-service needs and to the changing demands of a highly-competitive market. Canadians might like to design work in such a way as to make good use of the Chinese characteristics in this respect.

Conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life. In all cultures, conflict is expressed, handled and resolved in ways acceptable to the members. Chinese prefer conflicts to be smoothed over and expressed in a low-key manner. They see Canadians as over-assertive and confrontative.
The participants expressed the pain of not being able to assert themselves in the Canadian culture, due to their language skills and their meta-narrative of seeking harmony. The Chinese prefer an "avoiding" style and perceive the Canadians as adopting a "competing style" in handling conflicts. Some cultures resolve conflict by open debates and by ultimately seeking a court ruling after displaying legal arguments. Chinese culture prefers a third-party mediation to litigation, discussion to debate and an informal setting to a courtroom. Chinese seek to resolve conflicts with harmony creation. These two cultures' meta-narratives of conflict, harmonizing versus confronting, are clearly different.

Creating harmony rather than argument is the prerequisite for conflicts to be resolved among the Chinese. The golden principle is not to marshal the arguments openly, even if they are sound and rational. Harmony can be created through attending to relationship, trust, face, maturity and readiness. Unlike the Canadians, the Chinese perceive openly debating an issue and arguing reasons as a direct confrontation. Confronting a Chinese who has not established a mutual relationship or understanding brings a stiff position and deadlock. The name of the game is to ensure building and conveying mutual trust. The trust assures the other party that your intention in showing differences is not hurting but caring enough to confront. Unless it is your strategy to irritate, arguments are better be exchanged in private. Negative comments should be sugarcoated, because the loss of face will create unresolvable situations. Face also means that even if one party is wrong the other party should not point it out bluntly. Create a respectful excuse, so that there is a ladder for the other party to climb down, a hole to bury their shame, a container for their disgrace and a wise reason to change their position. For the Chinese, tolerance is an appropriate attitude to a conflict situation with. The situation requires a mature person willing to wait for the appropriate time for the deadlock to be resolved. It is dangerous to fuel the fire when it is burning. One can just stay away from it, wait for the right timing or create an opportunity for harmonious discussions. Third party mediators, tea house meetings and other strategies are appropriate for the Chinese. Readiness to settle is often conveyed by the simple gesture of having a cup of coffee or a meal together. The "Tai Chi" formula applies best to handling conflicts with the Chinese. The "Tai Chi" principle discourages tackling up-front but suggests the application of force at the leverage point of change. "Using four ounces of force to move a weight of a thousand pounds" is a principle the Chinese like to use in dealing
with conflict. However, living in a culture with a different style of conflict management, the Chinese should develop a meta-narrative of debate as a way to seeking truth and using the heat from arguments for purifying thoughts. The change of constructs in this dimension has to be achieved experientially, through programmes such as assertiveness training.

(E) Some cultures allow power be concentrated in few people, others demand it be shared. The Chinese tolerate unequal distribution more than Canadians do. The former allow those in positions of authority to have no clear limits on their power. As a result, privacy and human rights are subject to infringement. The Chinese were not socialized in the same way as the Canadians for freedom of choice. In a collective culture, roles and relationships are prescribed by through kinship and blood linkages. The Chinese are bound to accept certain ascribed obligations as givens. These obligations are not supposed to change nor to be subject to personal choices. This world view leads to accepting power distance. Privilege, prerogatives and power awarded to elites, professionals, experts and authoritative figures are unquestionably accepted. The Chinese meta-narrative of power features high inequality-tolerance. This is deeply ingrained in the Chinese mind: the participants were dismayed by Canadians’ intolerance of power distance and inequality at work. They perceived the Canadians as over-using their rights to question authority, to share power and to be consulted in the workplace.

The implications for practice at work are that, being equalitarian and democratic, Canadians do not pay much attention to power distance behaviours such as dressing up, self-effacement and submitting to people in authority. Chinese have seen Canadians as playful and informal. Dressing up, rituals and elaborated ceremonies are not part of the Canadian tradition, but they are important symbols of respect in Chinese culture. An employee visiting the boss would be rude to not dress formally and bring a gift. A graduate student with earning ability who lets the professor pay for lunch feels guilty or at least inappropriate. Coming from an equalitarian culture, Canadians may feel uncomfortable when Chinese treat them in that manner. When Canadian consultants work with the Chinese, they should be prepared to be treated as experts with a high status. Equally, the Chinese may expect the foreign expert to accept certain directives from the authority. Such a practice does not mean yielding or being degraded but is only a gesture of respect. When respect is offered, the
Chinese expect to return a greater level of respect. As they say, "If you give me a foot of respect, I shall reciprocate with a mile of it". Canadians in power positions find the Chinese are mentally programmed to act with courtesy, respect and caution. They hesitate to reveal their true selves or speak the whole truth, in order not to irritate the authority figure. This barrier can be removed by deliberately lowering one's high status to get their counsel. Such a gesture of condescending to stand as an equal is often reciprocated with gratefulness and loyalty. Chinese superiors do not have a clear idea of power boundaries. Canadians need not feel offended at all when Chinese bosses unintentionally step out of their official boundaries at work. They may ask for help outside one's official duties or call one during one's vacation. This behaviour is not meant as intrusive but is, in fact, a sign of intimacy and of having no boundaries or barriers at work. Some participants called that a "buddy" relationship. Working in the Canadian culture, Chinese should learn to respond immediately, like Canadians, if they feel overpowered, manipulated, and unfairly treated. Courage and risk-taking is required universally for changing a power imbalance, even only a perceived one.

(F) The Chinese have developed a sophisticated system of relationships, expressed in a complicated and subtle manner involving the notions of reciprocation and human passion. Understanding the intricacies of a relationship demands sensitivity: cultivating a network requires the investment of time. The Chinese exploit every opportunity to build and maintain human relationships at work. These once established, they expect them to be permanent, stable and continuous. Relationship is more than a lubricant for conducting business: it is also a measure to prevent others from creating obstacles at work. Face is a sensitive issue to be handled with care in the Chinese culture. Their meta-narrative of relationship differs from that of the Canadians, who play by a different set of rules. To the Canadians, it is not mandatory to honour face. Relationships are viewed more as disjoined and temporary. Favour is not deposited for cashing back. There is no such a formula as favour reciprocation. Giving a favour is a personal choice; therefore, returning a favour is not obligatory. The participants value this simple and open relationship characteristic of Canadian culture. However, they feel ambivalent about opening up to shift their meta-narrative.

Tracing the relationships built and the favours offered to each other among the Chinese provides clues to predict the behavioural dynamics and political behaviour in organizations.
Politicking in organizations includes coalition formation, divide and rule, collecting and using IOUs, seeking alliances. Many of these strategies are related to the forming and breaking of relationships. These relationships are not built in a day, but are established over a long period, using an intangible accounting system of favour-exchange. These accounting "records" are kept on a long-term basis. Information on past favour debits and credits offers important clues to predicting organizational behaviour. Chinese resent people who do not honour the favour-reciprocation system: such people can easily "turn the pig’s belly inside out", as one participant pointed out. Canadians see relationship more as being short term and temporary, an event-to-event transaction. Such a practice may not be helpful in collaborating with the Chinese. On the other hand, Chinese can often get entangled in their relationship network and their favour-reciprocation system. Rationality and objectivity are often skewed by face and relationship issues. Chinese can learn in the Canadian culture how to separate issues from people so that arguments do not strain personal relationships. The harm to long-term relationships due to differences of opinion should be reduced to minimum, to create space for accepting a diversity of views as Canadians do in sorting out their problems.

(G) The participants’ lived experience allows us to extract the meta-narrative of communication, which underpins a major dimension of difference between the two cultures. The Canadians’ meta-narrative in this dimension is “tight blue”, the Chinese “spacious grey”. Tight refers to seeking precision in expressing the message, a principle of communication Canadians value. This principle may not fit well with the Chinese game rules of maintaining relationships and avoiding direct conflict. Blue stands for openness, a metaphor taken from the blue sky, connoting clarity and transparency. The meta-narrative for the Chinese in this dimension is spacious grey. Their meaning-making scheme is that communication should offer space for both parties to change positions. Precision and clarity lead to inflexibility. The grey area in the Chinese meta-narrative offers a cushion for protection from conflict. It protects the relationship and allows the parties to the communication freedom of manoeuvre.

Canadians are open and frank: there is no reason to expect them to guess or read others’ minds or motives as the Chinese do. The Chinese’s processes of guessing and speculating make them indirect or passive. This process serves the social function of protecting the conversing parties
from a direct clash of opinion. They tend to hide their own background and give indirect answers. So, they appear covering-up and evasive. Chinese say “yes”, but it does not always mean an affirmative. It tends to be a tentative answer to avoid clashes. They may even consider questioning for clarification as unfriendly and intrusive. Chinese do not easily make a statement unless it is well thought through. Canadians speak while they think; Chinese only speak after they have thought. Once a Chinese makes a statement, it is conclusive. Chinese are sensitive to feedback, as they consider it directed at the person rather than at the issue. Their communications become more spacious and grey because English is not their first language for social conversations. Their inability to chime in, understand the jokes and converse spontaneously during discussions and the like lead the Chinese to appear more grey and reserved. Working in the Canadian culture, Chinese should learn to call a spade a spade. They should ask when they are in doubt and learn to label their feelings. Knowing the Chinese communication characteristics, Canadians may find that the Chinese are not mysterious; they just have a reserved and indirect approach of expressing their views. Canadians can even be direct and open with the Chinese when the relationship is positively established and the atmosphere is informal enough for a genuine exchange of views.

Modus Operandi

(A) Planning can be centralised, controlled and dictatorial. It can be distributed, open and participative. Most of the Chinese meta-narratives are not conducive to consultative planning, a process Canadians prefer in decision-making. The Chinese meta-narratives shape people’s minds for organization-dominance, insecurity-avoidance, loyalty, harmony, inequality-tolerance, permanent relationships and unassertiveness. Western approaches in management and education are based on participative decision-making and democratic values. Due to the differences in world view, these approaches are likely to find the Chinese culture a pitfall rather than an opportunity. Changing to be consultative in planning is a long-term process; it takes time for Chinese to learn democracy in the workplace, given their cultural characteristics. However, increased participation in planning can be achieved through modifying the approaches management educators and consultants use.

Because Chinese favour concrete thinking, consultants can start the planning by helping them to begin with an end in mind. The end is represented by a picture or a metaphor that is
developed through the process of visioning. This approach worked successfully with the Chinese (Pun & Taylor, 1992). Their visions should be shared, discussed and modified by small groups. Planning does not stop at this stage. It can include priority-setting and steps for achieving the vision—Chinese tend to plan their steps along the way. Participation can continue through non-threatening approaches to group decision-making. The nominal group approach has been found to be helpful (Pun, 1996). To encourage debate in a non-threatening way, the planning-group members can be involved in role-playing situations. In the hypothetical situations and roles, the members' inhibitions about verbalizing their negative and opposing views can be significantly reduced (Pun & Thomas, 1989). However, the above are techniques to go around pitfalls. In the long run, the meta-narratives of the Chinese need gradual modification to take in a different mind map. It is only through changing their world view, practicing consultation and trying out democratic values in the workplace that the Chinese as a nation and as a culture can achieve modernization. Covey's (1989) principle of personal leadership suggests that people can effectively plan by “beginning with the end in mind”. He promotes the use of “visualization” and believes that “all things are created twice. There is a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things” (p.99). This planning concept, advocated by Covey in his number 1 National Bestseller in America, represents the Chinese way of planning. Canadians who plan in abstraction by pure rationality may find the Chinese way of using “visualization”, “concrete thinking” and “muddling through” a useful balance.

(B) Cooperation stands out in both sets of data as a dimension that bothers the Chinese participants. It is the area that causes the most problems and concerns. Chinese cooperating with Canadians face the practical problem of their inability to know the Canadians' unspoken rules, game plays and mind maps. As a result, they cannot predict Canadians' reaction and responses. Because cooperation with people from another culture and race is difficult, they stay away from teamwork altogether. This lack of working closely together ends in people from both cultures remaining ignorant of each other's unspoken rules and mind sets. This problem is not unique to the Chinese in Canada. It challenges all visible minorities in Canada. There is no short cut to the solution, which lies in developing the cultural sensitivity of all the people in this multicultural society. Knowing how to cooperate among people from different cultures is a necessary condition for building up a better
Canada, a country based on the ideal of cultural diversity and multiculturalism. Specifically in working with the Chinese, there are a number of practical ways to increase cooperation.

On the content side, successful cooperation requires mutual understanding of the goals, roles and procedures. On the process side, cooperation requires mutual support, trust, communication, leadership and interpersonal relationships. Coming from a different culture, the Chinese encounter difficulties in knowing the content side of cooperation in Canada. They need elaboration of the details. Coming from a culture that expects people to ask if they do not understand and to be independent in sorting out their own problems, Canadians do not bother to communicate the details. The problem is aggravated because the Chinese are culturally programmed not to be inquisitive. Elaboration and repetition of a message are not insults to others’ intelligence: Chinese have much patience and tolerance as listeners. Giving the Chinese more details than generally required for communicating with other Canadians and checking back on their understanding will help overcome the barriers to cooperation. On the process side, the characteristics of the Chinese make them good supporters. They are particularly responsive to signals of positive interpersonal relationships and human concern. A pat on the shoulder, an offer of time for meals together, and reciprocation of their good work through excusing their minor mistakes can greatly help in building up the cooperative spirit. For the Chinese’s part, they should spend more of their social time with Canadians. Only through mixing socially and at work can they think like Canadians and learn their game rules of cooperation. It will greatly help if Chinese can accept the fact that ignorance is not a shame and asking is the best way to learn. A paradigm shift in this direction will help them cooperate better with their Canadian colleagues.

(C) Leadership is culturally specific; the style of leadership has to be adjusted accordingly to achieve effectiveness. The Chinese expect a leader to be an exemplary figure, a caring parent and a model of perfection with sound morality. Influence is induced through compassion and the greatness of the leader’s character. In many ways, the greatness behind the characteristics of a Chinese leader lies in the relationship between follower’s psychological needs and the leader’s. The psychological needs exist in “the desire to worship and the desire to be worshiped”. Leaders and followers depend upon each other to fulfill their psychological needs. From the practical side, they
extract from each other something that gives them the physical and psychic energy to play their roles.

The implication for practice as a leader among the Chinese is the enhancing of charisma. The theory of charismatic leadership is applicable to the Chinese culture. Of course, the attributes of leaders differ between the Chinese and the Canadian cultures. Pye (1983) used Mao Tse-tung's insight into the needs of leaders and followers to explain the essence of charismatic leadership. The need to worship taps the basic human needs for dependency; the need to be worshipped goes to the core sentiment of narcissism. Not that creating follower dependency is ethically right for a leader, a consultant or a manager; nor is creating the sentiment of worship. However, for practical reasons, leaders should try to meet the followers' psychological needs. This approach can serve as a starting point for building up relationships and bonds at the start of working together. However, the goals should be to create interdependency and de-mystify the worship of the leader. Chinese holding a leadership role in Canadian culture should adjust to a different style. Public speaking skills, assertiveness and debating techniques, not normally given much emphasis for leadership development in the East, should be picked up by Chinese leaders working in the West.

(D) Compared with the Canadians, Chinese are less sensitive to being controlled. Canadians expect to be trusted and given the freedom to exercise independent decisions. Chinese also expect trust and freedom. However, being trusted and given freedom is an honour rather than a basic right in Chinese culture. Canadians play down the need for control and exercise an honour system. This low-control atmosphere in Canadian organizations caused the Chinese participants a lot of insecurity. They are concerned with accountability, with avoiding chaos and abuses. With these concerns, they favour action to promote discipline and monitoring. They are comfortable with serious and formal atmosphere at work. On the contrary, a relaxing and playful atmosphere that conveys a lack of seriousness in the workplace is not their cup of tea. Hence, Canadians need not feel offended that the Chinese are not involved in social activities such as wearing crazy costumes on Halloween. However, one can expect them to really dress up for a semi-official function, reflecting their serious attitude at work. Control implies uniformity and they expect everyone to dress up to indicate their common respect for the occasion.
Control works externally and internally to maintain stability in an organization and in a society. "Li" is a Chinese set of model behaviours to be followed for harmonious living. It regulates relationships, roles and communication. "Li" means more than just courtesy, etiquette or manner. It has great implications for controlling the behaviour of the Chinese at work. There is no identical English word for literal translation. A practical implication that should not be overlooked is that "Li" becomes a self-control mechanism in this collective culture. Unlike laws and regulations which induce punishment, "Li" brings about preventive measures and self-discipline. "Li" sets up models of work behaviour for the Chinese to follow. The Chinese are mentally programmed to perform according to these mind maps. Hence, knowing these meta-narratives helps predict, shape and control their work behaviour. The control model discussed in this Chinese meta-narrative suggests that they tend towards organization, restrictions and outcome, while Canadians tend towards people, freedom and process. To induce performance, the following advice is appropriate to the Chinese, but would likely upset Canadians:

"Follow what the management advises you to do, as it is good for the organization and for all the people, although it is slightly unfair to you this time." \(\text{(People exist for Organization)}\):

"Accept these arrangements; these are the rules every one of us has followed for some years." \(\text{(Toleration of Restrictions)}\); and

"Do not argue any more, and just get on with it. We are interested in the production and the output." \(\text{(Outcome and Achievements)}\)

Organization, preset rules and outcomes are imperatives for the Chinese but not so much for the Canadians. A mild form of control may even encourage the Chinese to work with a greater sense of security and comfort. The meta-narratives provide insight for seeking practical guidelines on whose basis one can act in education, consulting and management settings involving the Chinese.

\(\text{(III) Conclusions}\)

A major part of my career is devoted to management education and organizational development in cross-cultural settings involving Chinese and other people from different parts of the world. I was challenged both by the difficulties encountered in making Western management methods work in Chinese culture and by Westerners' barriers to understanding the Chinese. My
experience suggests that pure knowledge of the organizational behaviour of people from another culture does not lead to better understanding and cooperation. The starting point for change comes from appreciating and respecting the unique ways people in the other culture think and behave. However, parochialism and a sense of cultural superiority hinder people appreciating other cultures. This attitude of mind leads to judging whether the people in another culture are good, bad, superior, inferior, civilized or under-developed. Naturally, the research participants, bearing the Chinese meta-narratives, placed subjective judgements on Western culture. To genuinely report their lived experience, I chose not to hide these biases or judgements. Readers should not be offended by the participants, who boldly reported their perceptions with good intentions. Readers do not have to agree with their views but should try to understand why they think that way. The readers should pardon the participants if they made inappropriate and politically incorrect statements during the interviews. In fact, the repertory grid and the interview externalized their thinking. The research process partly brought to their awareness dimensions of which they were not conscious, including their biases. This could be a starting point for their further reflections on how they can more effectively and more open-mindedly, work across the cultural line.

People may have worked in a foreign culture or with people from another culture for a long time without gaining a true understanding of the culture they are in touch with. On one hand, many people do not have the desire to understand a foreign culture. On the other hand, they have not attempted to see the foreign world through the "glasses" of the people in that culture. Putting themselves into the world view of others enables one to better understand the world from their situations. Of course, while changing their glasses, people may experience disorientation and even temporary blurring of vision. People even expand their perspectives by rethinking the thoughts of the people from another culture. They can truly empathize with other people by visiting their emotions as well as feelings. Although one cannot leave one’s world behind, one can make sense of the others’ world by trying to understand it from their perspective. Collingwood (1946) suggested the theory of reenactment: that we can reconstruct another people’s world and enter into it. In this way, we can interpret reality from their cultural perspective without physically becoming one of them. We can make experiential trips to their world. These experiential trips can be made through daily contact with people from a different culture and through training exercises such as role
tending, role plays and psychodramas.

G. Kelly (1955) suggested the concept of "the person as scientist" in which people keep testing their hypotheses. When their understandings are put under test and found to be wrong, people should revise their hypotheses by checking (a) with the people from that particular culture and (b) with people who are facing similar situations. The former involves us in dialogue with people holding a different frame of mind. When they make clear what the experience means to them, the perspectives fuse. This results in a fusion of horizons, a theory propounded by Gadeamer (1960). Mutual understanding takes place in the process of dialoguing. Bohm (1990) suggests that people suspend judgement and create space for accepting differences in dialoguing. People should not hold onto presuppositions and values as Orientals or Westerners when observing the behaviour of others in an organization. One can achieve dialoguing by being a better listener, enquirer and reflective thinker in one’s daily contacts with people from a different culture.

We can change our hypothesis by discussing it with people who face similar situations. Learning and change can take place through finding out our own ignorance with a group of people who are our comrades in adversity. These people should best be met as a learning community in a small group (the action learning set). The social process of articulating what we have done well or badly helps loosen our constructs and creates social support for continuous development. Questioning insight and real problems, rather than programmed knowledge and hypothetical problems, produce significant learning and change. This approach comes from Revans (1984), whose action learning philosophy has greatly assisted me in managing change and working across the cultural line. This approach has also helped me and others in appreciating and respecting people from a different culture.

This research is also an attempt to make use of the qualitative inquiry method and the repertory grid to understand how Chinese perceive the cross-cultural differences of organizational behaviour in Canada. Distilling from the research participants’ experience, I captured their world views. From their stories, I grasped snapshots of their perceptions and investigated what these cross-cultural differences meant to them. Qualitative research allowed me to explore the meaning of their lived experience. However, I make no claim that the world views of all Chinese are identical. Nevertheless, the meta-narratives developed here can be tested as hypothesis for validation with a
larger sample size. The samples can be drawn from Hong Kong Chinese, mainland Chinese and Taiwan Chinese for comparison. As a springboard for future studies, the same methodologies used in this study can be used for investigating Canadians who have similar cross-cultural experience. The comparison will create new knowledge and provide verification for this study.

My recent change of identity from a landed immigrant to a Canadian citizen stimulates me to consider a more ambitious study. The same methodology can be applied to investigating the cross-cultural perceptions of the Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, Brazilians and other ethnic groups. In a truly multicultural country, this type of study is both necessary and enriching. I hope this study provokes more research in this area. I dream that this inquiry is a springboard for other studies that will help enhance cross-cultural understanding and respect. It also provides a coherent paradigm to help educators and management consultants understand the Chinese. I hope the ideas presented will help spark more ideas on how Western management and educational approaches can be adapted to work with the Chinese.

Canada is entering the 21st century. We can feel proud of the country, not because of its being the largest country in terms of physical size, but because of its space to accept different cultures and world views. In this new century, we cannot foresee Canada leading the world by its economy, discoveries, history or even technology. However, it can lead the world in the multicultural ideal, in which different cultures can live together with understanding and harmony. In fact, this is an ideal model for the world. Multiculturalism does not require people to melt into other’s culture, but it requires them to be open enough to accept differences and appreciate others’ world views. I hope the ideas in this thesis help achieve this noble ideal.
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Gwan Tu Shu.


Appendix 1

(Grid Form for Research Participants' Completion)

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<th>Name or Synonym</th>
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<th>Chinese Bass</th>
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Most Effective (3.2.1)

Least Effective (-1,-2,-3)

You are welcome to repeat those items which you have more to say and you can also choose roles not asterisked for comparison.
FOCUS: AT
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: AT

Value intrinsic & quality work life. Process oriented
Share Canadian's language, enjoyment, thinking & behaviour
See things alike & similar hypothesis of life
Assert, expressive, vocal
Ready to fight and confront
Performance-expecting process and consultation, not just result
Skeptical of authority Boss is unreasonable. Management is not trustworthy
Vocal, confronting and rebellious
Least effective
Want to be led

1 2 2 2 2 1 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

1 Seek materialistic achievement, price tag, task accomplishment
5 Lack knowledge of western value & practice
6 Treasure money, status symbol, power over others
2 Listen, silent, reserve
3 Compromise, eliminate conflict
7 Performance-expecting concrete results, tangible outcomes
4 Appreciate management's problem & rationale
8 Appreciate management's difficulties
10 Most effective
9 Initiate, take the lead, cause things to happen
Seek materialistic achievement, price tag, task accomplishment  
Assert, expressive, vocal  
Ready to fight and confront  
Skeptical of authority Boss is unreasonable. Management is not trustworthy  
Lack knowledge of western value & practice  
Treasure money, status symbol, power over others  
Performance-expecting process and consultation, not just result  
Vocal, confronting and rebellious  
Want to be led  
Least effective

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1 Value intrinsic & quality work life. Process oriented  
2 Listen, silent, reserve  
3 Compromise, eliminate conflict  
4 Appreciate management’s problem & rationale  
5 Share Canadian’s language, enjoyment, thinking & behaviour  
6 See things alike & similar hypothesis of life  
7 Performance-expecting concrete results, & tangible outcomes  
8 Appreciate management’s difficulties  
9 Initiate, take the lead, cause things to happen  
10 Most effective

Appendix: 28
**Element Matches**

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**Element Links**

- E2 linked to E4 at 96.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 94.0
- E4 linked to E7 at 82.0
- E2 linked to E6 at 76.0
- E1 linked to E5 at 74.0
- E3 linked to E7 at 72.0

**Construct Links**

- L5 linked to L6 at 100.0
- R4 linked to R7 at 88.6
- L1 linked to L5 at 85.7
- R3 linked to R7 at 85.7
- R2 linked to L6 at 82.9
- R4 linked to R8 at 82.9
- R8 linked to R10 at 82.9
- R9 linked to R10 at 82.9
- R2 linked to R3 at 77.1
FOCUS: SC
Elements: 7, Constructs: 12, Range: 1 to 6, Context: SC

Close to the customers, front line
Less concern with resources & funding. More concerned with delivery of service;
Enjoy & exercise their right. Work enough to get by as written down
More sharing on topics & problems they face - personal, family, life
Detached from and not closely associated with the Chinese
Cannot expect them to be thorough & excellent. Promise & not deliver
Demand & fully exercise their right
Lower self demand for work
Routine work, less individualized and less self created work approach
Keep to one's own work & on day to day operation
Lack of a system's views of the organization

4 Detached from clients
4 Source of finance - worry & conscious of it, funding concern
1 Most effective
5 Accommodating, give up rights, willing to take extra
6 Mind self more and mind own business, our topics are different from the Canadian
7 More talk topics, sharing same concerns
3 Achieve & over achieve, attention to do well
2 Easy to compromise & accommodating
9 Higher self demand for skill, & knowledge at work
8 Common task, more individual & self created work approach
11 Networking and socially active
10 Conscious of environmental impact on work

Chinese Subordinate
Myself
Chinese Peer
Chinese Boss
Canada Boss
Canada Peer
Canada Subordinate

Appendix: 3A
Less concern with resources & funding. More concerned with delivery of service;

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1 Source of finance - worry & conscious of it, funding concern
2 Easy to compromise & accommodating
3 Achieve & over achieve, attention to do well
4 Close to the customers, front line
5 Enjoy & exercise their right. Work enough to get by as written down
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9 Higher self demand for skill, & knowledge at work
10 Conscious of environmental impact on work
11 Networking and socially active
12 Most effective

Myself
Chinese Subordinate
Canada Subordinate
Chinese Peer
Canada Peer
Chinese Boss
Canada Boss
Element Matches

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- E2 linked to E4 at 85.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 76.7
- E3 linked to E5 at 76.7
- E4 linked to E7 at 76.7
- E1 linked to E2 at 68.3
- E6 linked to E7 at 65.0

Construct Links

- R3 linked to R7 at 100.0
- R1 linked to L4 at 85.7
- R8 linked to R9 at 85.7
- R8 linked to R11 at 85.7
- R2 linked to R3 at 82.9
- R10 linked to R11 at 82.9
- L5 linked to R12 at 80.0
R2 linked to R9 at 77.1
L6 linked to R7 at 77.1
R1 linked to R12 at 74.3
L5 linked to L6 at 71.4
FOCUS: CC
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: CC

Receptive to ideas and not "mouht back" 3
Loyalty to organization, complete work on time and thoroughly 2
Expect thorough work 7
Most effective 10
Relational approach 1
Do not go for a confronting relationship 8
Maintain good working relationship & less positional difference 4
Tend to work with initiative 9
Culturally similar - can detect the psychology & needs of Canadian 6
Keep relationship distance to avoid jeopardizing control and power 5

3 Argue and assert own right. More difficult to supervise
2 Self oriented, less concern for others or for organization
7 Get by, snap shot manner at work
10 Least Effective
1 Not relational oriented
8 Advocate & believe in union
4 Conscious of own position being lower & difficult
9 Tend to expect instruction / order
6 Difficult to understand local
5 Uphold professional status & professional pride

31.77465
Canada Subordinate
Chinese Subordinate
Chinese Peer
Chinese Boss
Myself
Canada Boss
Canada Peer
Not relational oriented
Self oriented, less concern for others or for organization
Argue and assert own right. More difficult to supervise
Conscious of own position being lower & difficult
Keep relationship distance to avoid jeopardizing control and power
Difficult to understand local
Get by, snap shot manner at work
Advocate & believe in union
Tend to expect instruction / order
Least Effective

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1 Relational approach
2 Loyalty to organization, complete work on time and thoroughly
3 Receptive to ideas and not "mouth back"
4 Maintain good working relationship & less positional difference
5 Uphold professional status & professional pride
6 Culturally similar - can detect the psychology & needs of Canadian
7 Expect thorough work
8 Do not go for a confronting relationship
9 Tend to work with initiative
10 Most effective

Myself
Chinese Subordinate
Canada Subordinate
Chinese Peer
Canada Peer
Chinese Boss
Canada Boss
FOCUS Calculation  8-Dec-94 19:14:34
FOCUS Output 8-Dec-94 19:14:34

Element Matches

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Element Links

E2 linked to E7 at 92.0
E2 linked to E4 at 84.0
E4 linked to E6 at 74.0
E1 linked to E3 at 68.0
E1 linked to E7 at 68.0
E5 linked to E6 at 58.0

Construct Links

L7 linked to L10 at 94.3
L2 linked to L3 at 91.4
L2 linked to L7 at 91.4
L4 linked to L9 at 88.6
L1 linked to L10 at 85.7
L4 linked to L8 at 85.7
L1 linked to L8 at 80.0
R5 linked to L6 at 77.1
L6 linked to L9 at 77.1
FOCUS: KK
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: KK

Task oriented: 8
"Not just a contract", longer term perspective: 5
Loyal - "Stay longer", not job hopping, committed, ready to take instructions from: 3
Diligent, more organized, achievement oriented: 2
More planning, has visions: 6
Most effective: 10
Loyal - try to fulfill task as a team: 4
Sharing: 7
More open in accepting other's opinion: 1
More sharing and less boundary: 9

8 Social activity & personal feelings more important than work
5 Shorter term, goal, perspectives, and just treat it as a contract
3 More questions before taking instructions. Not a superior but a counterpart
2 Loose, not so achievement oriented
6 Lack planning, visioning & organizing ability
10 Least effective
4 Achievement for their own, has own agenda, not as a team
7 On their own, not knowing others' needs
1 Dictatorial
9 More formal, bureaucratic at work as a team

Canada Peer
Canada Subordinate
Canada Boss
Myself
Chinese Subordinate
Chinese Peer
Chinese Boss
Appendix: 5A
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1. More open in accepting other's opinion
2. Diligent, more organized, achievement oriented
3. Loyal - "Stay longer", not job hopping, committed, ready to take instruction fro
4. Loyal - try to fulfill task as a team
5. "Not just a contract", longer term perspective
6. More planning, has visions
7. Sharing
8. Social activity & personal feelings more important than work
9. More sharing and less boundary
10. Most effective

Appendix: 5B
Element Matches

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- E6 linked to E7 at 86.0
- E4 linked to E6 at 82.0
- E1 linked to E7 at 80.0
- E2 linked to E4 at 66.0
- E1 linked to E5 at 64.0

Construct Links

- L1 linked to L9 at 85.7
- L2 linked to L3 at 85.7
- L2 linked to L6 at 85.7
- L3 linked to L5 at 85.7
- L4 linked to L7 at 85.7
- L4 linked to L10 at 85.7
- L1 linked to L7 at 82.9
- L6 linked to L10 at 80.0
- L5 linked to R8 at 71.4
FOCUS: SL
Elements: 7, Constiucls: 10, Range: 1 t o 6, Context: SL

Can bo friends and have sharing outside work context

Some gaps for ieal sharing, tlielr expectations cannot easily be understood
Lesscxprcssivcto\hem

People I feel cornfortable t o gcnuinely share with & get support
2

3
3

"Exchange of favour", relationship Is emphasized

1

1

Care about overall situation o f the organization, concern about the output

2

Connectcd socialty

8

1

4

4

Let amblguity, relationship & unclarlty at work t o prevail

More flexible t o change & even alter or revlse the final decision
Conslder the perspectives & thinklngs of others & respond t o other's need
Strhre for output
Least effcctlve

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Clarity In divison o f work

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| Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: SL |

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<td>2 Consider the perspectives &amp; thinking of others &amp; respond to other’s need</td>
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<td>3 More flexible to change &amp; even alter or revise the final decision</td>
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<td>7 Can be friends and have sharing outside work context</td>
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Appendix: 6B
Element Matches

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Construct Matches

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Element Links

- E2 linked to E6 at 88.0
- E3 linked to E5 at 88.0
- E1 linked to E7 at 84.0
- E4 linked to E7 at 84.0
- E1 linked to E6 at 80.0
- E2 linked to E3 at 60.0

Construct Links

- L3 linked to L5 at 94.3
- L2 linked to L6 at 91.4
- L2 linked to L3 at 88.6
- R1 linked to R8 at 82.9
- R1 linked to L4 at 82.9
- L7 linked to L9 at 82.9
- R8 linked to L9 at 82.9
- L4 linked to L5 at 77.1
- L6 linked to R10 at 68.6
Focus: MW
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: MW

Ideas easily understood amongst themselves but not by me, need little details

Unpredictable, surprising decisions. Hard to know how they think

Know the timing to exercise, to give in & to use humour with the Canadian

They know the unspoken rules & styles for influencing Canadians to work

Difficult to communicate with. Can hardly be sure whether they will be pleased

Target of concern being different from mine

Linked by friendship and not by work

Different roles and not bother my overall bigger picture and concern

Have work knowledge that can be relied upon

Most effective

1. Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that message is got across
2. Reactions and decisions can be predicted & rationale can be understood
3. Have similar targets of concern and offer similar service as mine
4. Have friendship and similar interest
5. Have anxiety & uncertainty in communicating ideas across to Canadians, cautious
6. Not knowing the Canadian game play, pulse and inclination
7. Have difficulties in knowing the unspoken rules of the Canadians
8. Overall view of organization and therefore similar concerns
9. Not having work knowledge for detailed execution of job assignments
10. Least effective
Difficult to communicate with. Can hardly be sure whether they will be pleased

Unpredictable, surprising decisions. Hard to know how they think

Not having work knowledge for detailed execution of job assignments

Different roles and not bother my overall bigger picture and concern

Have anxiety & uncertainty in communicating ideas across to Canadians, cautious

Not knowing the Canadian game play, pulse and inclination

Target of concern being different from mine

Have difficulties in knowing the unspoken rules of the Canadians

Linked by friendship and not by work

Least effective

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Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that message is got across

Reactions and decisions can be predicted & rationale can be understood

Have work knowledge that can be relied upon

Overall view of organization and therefore similar concerns

Ideas easily understood amongst themselves but not by me, need little details

Know the timing to exercise, to give in & to use humour with the Canadian

Have similar targets of concern and offer similar service as mine

They know the unspoken rules & styles for influencing Canadians to work

Have friendship and similar interest

Most effective

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Element Matches

* E1  E2  E3  E4  E5  E6  E7

E1  * 100  76  84  54  84  52  56
E2  *  76 100  64  78  64  76  80
E3  *  84  64 100  50  88  52  52
E4  *  54  78  50 100  46  78  94
E5  *  84  64  88  46 100  52  44
E6  *  52  76  52  78  52 100  72
E7  *  56  80  52  94  44  72 100

Construct Matches

*  R1  R2  R3  R4  R5  R6  R7  R8  R9  R10

R1  * 100  86  66  77  34  43  74  40  77  57
R2  *  86 100  63  69  26  34  77  31  80  60
R3  *  66  63 100  77  63  71  74  69  66  69
R4  *  77  69  77 100  57  66  80  63  89  69
R5  *  34  26  63  57 100  86  49  89  46  49
R6  *  43  34  71  66  86 100  57  97  54  63
R7  *  74  77  74  80  49  57 100  54  91  60
R8  *  40  31  69  63  89  97  54 100  51  60
R9  *  77  80  66  89  46  54  91  51 100  57
R10 *  57  60  69  69  49  63  60  60  57 100

*  L1  L2  L3  L4  L5  L6  L7  L8  L9  L10

R1  * 40  31  69  63  83  91  54  94  51  66
R2  *  31  23  60  54  86  89  46  91  43  57
R3  *  69  60  74  91  66  74  71  71  80  66
R4  *  63  54  91  74  71  80  71  77  63  66
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R7  *  54  46  71  71  63  77  51  74  60  69
R8  *  94  91  71  77  34  43  74  40  77  63
R9  *  51  43  80  63  66  80  60  77  51  71
R10 *  66  57  66  66  63  66  69  63  71  34

Element Links

E4 linked to E7 at 94.0
E3 linked to E5 at 88.0
E1 linked to E3 at 84.0
E2 linked to E7 at 80.0
E4 linked to E6 at 78.0
E1 linked to E2 at 76.0

Construct Links

L6 linked to L8 at 97.1
R1 linked to L8 at 94.3
L3 linked to R4 at 91.4
R7 linked to R9 at 91.4
R2 linked to L6 at 88.6
R4 linked to R9 at 88.6
R2 linked to L5 at 85.7
R1 linked to R7 at 74.3
L3 linked to L10 at 68.6
Less assertive for individual right
Share more personal stuff. More resonance. Similar status
Think & research. Not risk out too much in expressing thoughts & feelings
My reactions and responses to certain issues are different from the Canadians
Tend to demand less from the organization
Considerate to organizations' interest, may shut up for the overall interest
More sharing related to work
Consider not just for self but from perspectives of others & organization
Most effective
Less generation gap. Similar concern, background & social activity

More assertive, Speaking up, Arguing
Outlook, perspectives, status, expectation & interest are different
Explicit & direct in expressing thoughts & feelings. Dare to speak out first
Similar in responses, reactions and understanding of the issues
Tend to demand more from organization to accommodate their individual situation
More fight for the demands. "You-sort-out-my-problem" attitude
Less sharing related to work
Consider more from their own perspective & less for organization as a whole
Least effective
Younger. Activities different from mine

Appendix: 8A
Explicit & direct in expressing thoughts & feelings. Dare to speak out first
More fight for the demands. "You-sort-out-my-problem" attitude
More assertive. Speaking up. Arguing
Tend to demand more from organization to accommodate their individual situation
Less sharing related to work
Consider more from their own perspective & less for organization as a whole
Outlook, perspectives, status, expectation & interest are different
My reactions and responses to certain issues are different from the Canadians
Younger. Activities different from mine
Least effective

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1 Think & research. Not risk out too much in expressing thoughts & feelings
2 Considerate to organizations' interest, may shut up for the overall interest
3 Less assertive for individual right
4 Tend to demand less from the organization
5 More sharing related to work
6 Consider not just for self but from perspectives of others & organization
7 Share more personal stuff. More resonance. Similar status
8 Similar in responses, reactions and understanding of the issues
9 Less generation gap. Similar concern, background & social activity
10 Most effective

Appendix: B
Element Matches

* E1 E2 E3 E4 E5 E6 E7

E1 * 100 62 82 50 66 68 54
E2 * 62 100 44 88 32 66 84
E3 * 82 44 100 32 80 58 36
E4 * 50 88 32 100 20 62 92
E5 * 66 32 80 20 100 54 24
E6 * 68 66 58 62 54 100 70
E7 * 54 84 36 92 24 70 100

Construct Matches

* R1 R2 R3 R4 R5 R6 R7 R8 R9 R10

R1 * 100 86 83 86 77 80 89 37 71 77
R2 * 86 100 80 89 80 83 80 46 80 86
R3 * 83 80 100 80 66 69 83 37 66 71
R4 * 86 89 80 100 80 83 74 51 80 80
R5 * 77 80 66 80 100 97 66 54 83 89
R6 * 80 83 69 83 97 100 69 51 80 91
R7 * 89 80 83 74 66 69 100 37 71 77
R8 * 37 46 37 51 54 51 37 100 49 43
R9 * 71 80 66 80 83 80 71 49 100 89
R10 * 77 86 71 80 89 91 77 43 89 100

* L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9 L10

R1 * 29 37 29 43 46 43 29 91 40 34
R2 * 37 40 37 51 43 40 37 89 43 37
R3 * 29 37 29 43 46 43 29 86 46 34
R4 * 43 51 43 51 54 51 43 94 49 49
R5 * 46 43 46 54 40 43 46 80 40 40
R6 * 43 40 43 51 43 40 43 83 43 37
R7 * 29 37 29 43 46 43 23 80 40 34
R8 * 91 89 86 94 80 83 80 46 74 80
R9 * 40 43 46 49 40 43 49 74 34 40
R10 * 34 37 34 49 40 37 34 80 40 34

Element Links

E4 linked to E7 at 92.0
E2 linked to E4 at 88.0
E1 linked to E3 at 82.0
E3 linked to E5 at 80.0
E6 linked to E7 at 70.0
E1 linked to E6 at 68.0

Construct Links

L5 linked to L6 at 97.1
L4 linked to L8 at 94.3
L1 linked to L8 at 91.4
L6 linked to L10 at 91.4
L1 linked to L7 at 88.6
L2 linked to L4 at 88.6
L9 linked to L10 at 88.6
L3 linked to L7 at 82.9
L2 linked to L5 at 80.0
FOCUS: IS
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: IS

Common educational background
Treat others equally with little difference
Humble, close to the ignored
Kind to the powerless
Tend to be approachable & humble
Same level
Topic of conversation - language, area of concern
Same culture, similar approach in problem solving
Attitude towards boss - loyalty focused
Most effective

Least effective

Diff. in educational background
More politics & feel status differences
Away from those being ignored
Detached
In power positions
Language barrier and different life concerns
Different culture, different approach to problem solving
Lack personal commitment at work, different loyalty (to system vs boss)

100 90 80 70
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Different culture. Different approach in problem solving.
Language barrier and different life concerns.
Lack personal commitment at work. Different loyalty (to system vs to boss).

More politics & feel status differences. In power positions away from those being ignored.
Distant detached. Distant loyalty (to system vs to boss).
Distant in power positions. More politics & feel status differences.
Away from those being ignored.

Topic of conversation - language, area of concern.
Attitude towards boss - loyalty focused. Tend to be approachable & humble.
Kind to the powerless. Treat others equally with little difference.
Tend to be approachable & humble. Treat others equally with little difference.
Humble. Close to the ignored.

Most common educational background.
Element Matches

*  E1  E2  E3  E4  E5  E6  E7

E1  100  80  74  74  70  68  54
E2  80 100  70  82  70  76  58
E3  74  70 100  80  88  78  68
E4  74  82  80 100  72  82  72
E5  70  70  88  72 100  86  56
E6  68  76  78  82  86 100  70
E7  54  58  68  72  56  70 100

Construct Matches

*  R1  R2  R3  R4  R5  R6  R7  R8  R9  R10

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R2  100 100  83  71  71  77  74  71  74  80
R3  83  83 100  71  71  80  71  80  91
R4  71  71  71  100 100  89  86  89  69  74
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R6  77  77  71  89  89 100  80  77  74  74
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R10 66  66  60  77  77  77  69  77  63  57

Element Links

E3 linked to E5 at 88.0
E5 linked to E6 at 86.0
E2 linked to E4 at 82.0
E4 linked to E6 at 82.0
E1 linked to E2 at 80.0
E3 linked to E7 at 68.0

Construct Links

R1 linked to R2 at 100.0
R4 linked to R5 at 100.0
R3 linked to R10 at 91.4
R4 linked to R6 at 88.6
R5 linked to R8 at 88.6
R7 linked to R8 at 85.7
R1 linked to R3 at 82.9
R7 linked to R9 at 82.9
R2 linked to R6 at 77.1
FOCUS: HL
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: HL

Raise questions. Ask why before accepting assignments & instructions
Worker of instructions
Concerned with own assignment
Concern over one's own personal issues & interest
Lack dedication to job
Social oriented
Low work commitment
Different culture & language - blocks & barriers
Least effective
Treat others equal in status

3 Work according to instructions
9 Doer - work and implement
4 Concerned with staff development apart from output
7 Concern over organizational objective & staff interest
6 Dedicated to work
5 Output & result oriented
1 High commitment and positive attitude at work
2 Similar culture & language - easier and better communication
10 Most effective
8 View themselves being different in status

Chinese Subordinate
Chinese Peer
Chinese Boss
Myself
Canada Boss
Canada Peer
Canada Subordinate
Low work commitment
Different culture & language - blocks & barriers
Raise questions. Ask why before accepting assignments & instructions
Concerned with own assignment
Output & result oriented
Dedicated to work
Concern over one's own personal issues & interest
View themselves being different in status
Waiter of instructions
Least effective

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  High commitment and positive attitude at work
2  Similar culture & language - easier and better communication
3  Work according to instructions
4  Concerned with staff development apart from output
5  Social oriented
6  Lack dedication to job
7  Concern over organizational objective & staff interest
8  Treat others equal in status
9  Doer - work and implement
10 Most effective

Display: HL
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: HL
Element Matches

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Element Links

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- E2 linked to E4 at 84.0
- E4 linked to E6 at 84.0
- E3 linked to E5 at 80.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 72.0
- E1 linked to E7 at 66.0

Construct Links

- L5 linked to L6 at 97.1
- R1 linked to R2 at 94.3
- R1 linked to L5 at 94.3
- R4 linked to R7 at 91.4
- R2 linked to R10 at 85.7
- R4 linked to R9 at 85.7
- R3 linked to R9 at 82.9
- L6 linked to R7 at 80.0
- L8 linked to R10 at 80.0
FOCUS: KW
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: KW

- Buddy. Good friends: 9
- No gap & sharing: 7
- Mixing together. A mask before boss: 4
- Similar training & background: 3
- Similar cultural value: 1
- Similar topic & interest: 2
- Not tunnel vision of the organization: 5
- Interact & chit-chat: 6
- Team work opportunity: 8
- Most effective: 10

9 Keep detached to avoid difficulty in assigning work
7 Social distance & cannot get close
4 Detached. More freedom
3 Similar views & concerns e.g. feminist & advocacy
1 Race difference
2 Need to find topic & not spontaneous in chatting with them
5 Fragmented views & challenge authority
6 Not mixing, alienated, & clear work division
8 Dare not share too much. No cooperation opportunity
10 Least effective
Display: KW
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: KW

Race difference
Need to find topic & not spontaneous in chatting with them
Similar views & concerns e.g. feminist & advocacy
Detached. More freedom
Fragmented views & challenge authority
Not mixing, alienated, & clear work division
Social distance & cannot get close
Dare not share too much. No cooperation opportunity
Keep detached to avoid difficulty in assigning work
Least effective

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1 Similar cultural value
2 Similar topic & interest
3 Similar training & background
4 Mixing together. A mask before boss
5 Not tunnel vision of the organization
6 Interact & chit-chat
7 No gap & sharing
8 Team work opportunity
9 Buddy. Good friends
10 Most effective

Myself
Chinese Subordinate
Canada Subordinate
Chinese Peer
Canada Peer
Chinese Boss
Canada Boss
#### Element Matches

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- E1 linked to E6 at 90.0
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- E2 linked to E7 at 78.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 64.0

#### Construct Links

- L5 linked to L6 at 97.1
- L1 linked to L2 at 94.3
- L1 linked to L3 at 94.3
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- L3 linked to L4 at 94.3
- L4 linked to L7 at 94.3
- L7 linked to L9 at 94.3
- L6 linked to L8 at 82.9
- L8 linked to L10 at 82.9
Chinese Subordinate
Chinese Boss . . . . .
Chinese Peer . . . . .
Myself . . . . . . . .
Canada Boss . . . . .
Canada Peer . . . . .
Canada Subordinate
Difficult to communicate with, can hardly be sure whether they will be pleased

Unpredictable, surprising decisions, hard to know how they think

More assertive. Speaking up. Arguing

They know the unspoken rules & styles for influencing Canadians to work

know the timing to exercise, to give in & to use humour with the Canadians

Love work commitment

Similar in responses, reactions and understanding of the issues

Race difference

Tend to demand more from organization to accommodate their individual situation

Demand & fully exercise their right

6 Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that message is got across

7 Reactions and decisions can be predicted & rationale can be understood

3 Less assertive for individual right

9 Have difficulties in knowing the unspoken rules of the Canadians

8 Not knowing the Canadian game play, pulse and inclination

2 High commitment and positive attitude at work

5 My reactions and responses to certain issues are different from the Canadians

1 Similar cultural value

4 Tend to demand less from the organization

10 Easy to compromise & accommodating

Chinese Subordinate

Myself

Chinese Peer

Chinese Boss

Canada Boss

Canada Subordinate

Canada Peer

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1. Similar cultural value
2. High commitment and positive attitude at work
3. Less assertive for individual right
4. Tend to demand less from the organization
5. Similar in responses, reactions and understanding of the issues
6. Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that message is got across
7. Reactions and decisions can be predicted & rationale can be understood
8. know the timing to exercise, to give in & to use humour with the Canadians
9. They know the unspoken rules & styles for influencing Canadians to work
10. Easy to compromise & accommodating

Myself: Chinese Subordinate
Canada Subordinate

Chinese Peer
Canada Peer

Chinese Boss
Canada Boss
Element Matches

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Element Links

E3 linked to E5 at 94.0
E4 linked to E7 at 94.0
E1 linked to E5 at 90.0
E2 linked to E4 at 88.0
E6 linked to E7 at 82.0
E1 linked to E2 at 56.0

Construct Links

R2 linked to L5 at 97.1
R2 linked to L8 at 97.1
R3 linked to R7 at 97.1
L8 linked to L9 at 97.1
R1 linked to R4 at 94.3
R1 linked to L5 at 94.3
R3 linked to L9 at 94.3
R4 linked to R10 at 94.3
R6 linked to R7 at 85.7
Socio Construct Analysis of 10 grids

Mode Constructs at 92.0

Mode Construct 1: 10 constructs in 5 grids at 92.0

G1A1: Race difference - Similar cultural value
G2A1: Low work commitment - High
G4A3: More assertive, speaking up arguing -
G4A4: Tend to demand more from organization to accommodate - Tend to demand less from organization
G4A8: Similar in response & reaction and in understanding - My reaction and response to certain issue is different
G5A1: Difficult to communicate with. Can hardly be sure - Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that mess
G5A2: Unpredictable, surprising decisions. Hard to know - Reactions and decisions can be predicted & rational
G5A6: Know the timing to exercise, give in & be humorous - Not knowing the Canadian game play, pulse and incl
G5A8: They know the unspoken rules & styles for influence - Have difficulties in knowing the unspoken rules of
G9A2: Demand & fully exercise their right -

Easy to compromise & accommodating
Percentage of association with *Myself*

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Impact of Cultural Differences in Business Communication

Source of finance - worry & conscious of it, funding concern
Dictatorial 4
Think & research. Not risk out too much in expressing thoughts & feelings
Similar cultural value
Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that message is got across
High commitment and positive attitude at work
Same culture. Similar approach in problem solving
Let ambiguity, relationship & unclarity at work to prevail
Seek materialistic achievement, price tag, task accomplishment
Relational approach

2 1 3 2 1
2 1 3 2 1
2 1 3 2 1
2 1 3 2 1
2 1 3 2 1
2 1 3 2 1

2 Less concern with resources & funding. More concerned with delivery of service;
4 More open in accepting other's opinion
7 Explicit & direct in expressing thoughts & feelings. Dare to speak out first
10 Race Difference
6 Difficult to communicate with. Can hardly be sure whether they will be pleased
9 Low work commitment
8 Different culture. Different approach to problem solving
5 Clarity in division of work
1 Value intrinsic & quality work life. Process Oriented
3 Not relational oriented

Appendix: 16A
Seek materialistic achievement, price tag, task accomplishment

Less concern with resources & funding. More concerned with delivery of service;

Not relational oriented

Dictatorial

Let ambiguity, relationship & unclarity at work to prevail

Difficult to communicate with. Can hardly be sure whether they will be pleased

Explicit & direct in expressing thoughts & feelings. Dare to speak out first

Different culture. Different approach to problem solving

Low work commitment

Race Difference

Value intrinsic & quality work life. Process Oriented

Source of finance - worry & conscious of it, funding concern

Relational approach

More open in accepting other's opinion

Clarity in division of work

Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that message is got across

Think & research. Not risk out too much in expressing thoughts & feelings

Same culture. Similar approach in problem solving

High commitment and positive attitude at work

Similar cultural value

Myself

Chinese Subordinate

Canada Subordinate

Chinese Peer

Canada Peer

Chinese Boss

Canada Boss
FOCUS Calculation 8-Dec-94 16:09:02
FOCUS Output 8-Dec-94 16:09:03

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Element Links

- E3 linked to E5 at 90.0
- E4 linked to E6 at 86.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 78.0
- E4 linked to E7 at 78.0
- E2 linked to E6 at 70.0
- E1 linked to E7 at 56.0

Construct Links

- L6 linked to L9 at 94.3
- L6 linked to L10 at 91.4
- L7 linked to L10 at 91.4
- L8 linked to L9 at 88.6
- R5 linked to L8 at 85.7
- R1 linked to R5 at 80.0
- R1 linked to L3 at 74.3
- L2 linked to R4 at 74.3
- R4 linked to L7 at 65.7
FOCUS: B
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: B

- Listen, silent, reserve
- Topic of conversation - language, area of concern
- Similar culture & language - easier and better communication
- Reactions and decisions can be predicted & rationale can be understood
- Similar topic & interest
- Easy to compromise & accommodating
- Considerate to organizations' interest, may shut up for the overall interest
- Consider the perspectives & thinking of others & respond to others' need
- Diligent, more organized, achievement oriented
- Loyalty to organization, complete work on time and thoroughly

1. Assert, expressive, vocal
2. Demand & fully exercise their right
3. More fight for the demands, "You-sort-out-my-problem" attitude
4. Loose, not so achievement oriented
5. Less lock from other's perspective, more self-centered
6. Unpredictable, surprising decisions, hard to know how they think
7. Need to find topic & not spontaneous in chatting with them
8. Language barrier and different life concerns
9. Different culture & language - blocks & barriers
10. Need to find topic & not spontaneous in chatting with them

Appendix: 17A
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<th>Display: B</th>
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| Assert, expressive, vocal | 1 1 4 1 4 1 4 4 2 |
| Demand & fully exercise their right | 2 3 2 6 1 3 |
| Self oriented, less concern for others or for organization | 3 9 3 8 1 4 |
| Loose, not so achievement oriented | 4 4 5 3 2 4 |
| Less lock from other's perspective, more self-centered | 5 0 9 2 1 1 4 |
| Unpredictable, surprising decisions, hard to know how they think | 6 2 2 1 0 2 1 |
| More fight for the demands. "You-sort-out-my-problem" attitude | 7 4 4 3 1 4 1 |
| Language barrier and different life concerns | 8 1 4 3 1 3 |
| Different culture & language - blocks & barriers | 9 2 3 3 3 3 |
| Need to find topic & not spontaneous in chatting with them | 10 4 2 2 2 4 |

| Listeners, silent, reserve | 1 |
| Easy to compromise & accommodating | 2 |
| Loyalty to organization, complete work on time and thoroughly | 3 |
| Diligent, more organized, achievement oriented | 4 |
| Consider the perspectives & thinkings of others & respond to other's need | 5 |
| Reactions and decisions can be predicted & rationale can be understood | 6 |
| Considerate to organizations' interest, may shut up for the overall interest | 7 |
| Topic of conversation - language, area of concern | 8 |
| Similar culture & language - easier and better communication | 9 |
| Similar topic & interest | 10 |

- **Myself**
- **Chinese Subordinate**
- **Canada Subordinate**
- **Chinese Peer**
- **Canada Peer**
- **Chinese Boss**
- **Canada Boss**
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- E2 linked to E4 at 86.0
- E6 linked to E7 at 80.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 68.0
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### Construct Links

- L4 linked to L5 at 94.3
- L5 linked to L7 at 94.3
- L8 linked to L9 at 94.3
- L2 linked to L7 at 88.6
- L2 linked to L10 at 88.6
- L3 linked to L4 at 88.6
- L6 linked to L10 at 82.9
- L1 linked to L8 at 80.0
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FOCUS: C
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: C

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<td>Similar training &amp; background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyal - &quot;stay longer&quot;, not job hopping, committed, ready to take instructions</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work according to instructions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less assertive for individual right</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve &amp; over achieve, attention to do well</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compromise, eliminate conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have work knowledge that can be relied upon</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack personal commitment at work. Different loyalty (to system vs to boss)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less flexible &amp; not prepared to modify their decision after formal closing</td>
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<td>Similar views &amp; concerns e.g. feminist &amp; advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argue and assert own right, more difficult to supervise</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>More questions before taking instructions, not a superior but a counterpart</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raise questions. Ask why before accepting assignments &amp; instructions</td>
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Diagram showing the distribution and comparison of constructs.
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<tr>
<td>Ready to fight and confront</td>
<td>Cannot expect them to be thorough &amp; excellent. Promise &amp; not deliver</td>
<td>Argue and assert own right, more difficult to supervise</td>
<td>More questions before taking instructions, not a superior but a counterpart</td>
<td>Less flexible &amp; not prepared to modify their decision after formal closing</td>
<td>Not having work knowledge for detailed execution of job assignments</td>
<td>More assertive. Speaking up. Arguing</td>
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<td>Similar views &amp; concerns e.g. feminist &amp; advocacy</td>
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<td>Achieve &amp; over achieve, attention to do well</td>
<td>Receptive to ideas and not &quot;mouth back&quot;</td>
<td>Loyal - &quot;stay longer&quot;, not job hopping, committed, ready to take instructions</td>
<td>More flexible to change &amp; even alter or revise the final decision</td>
<td>Have work knowledge that can be relied upon</td>
<td>Less assertive for individual right</td>
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Appendix: 18B
Element Matches

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Construct Matches

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Element Links

- E4 linked to E7 at 90.0
- E6 linked to E7 at 88.0
- E2 linked to E4 at 86.0
- E1 linked to E2 at 82.0
- E3 linked to E5 at 76.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 64.0

Construct Links

- L5 linked to L10 at 94.3
- L5 linked to L8 at 91.4
- R2 linked to R7 at 85.7
- L3 linked to L10 at 85.7
- R6 linked to L8 at 85.7
- R1 linked to R2 at 82.9
- R1 linked to R6 at 80.0
- L3 linked to L4 at 77.1
- L4 linked to L9 at 71.4
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<td>Straight forward, clearly stipulated</td>
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<td>Different roles and not bother my overall bigger picture and concern</td>
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<td>Tend to demand more from organization to accommodate their individual situation</td>
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<td>Detached. More freedom</td>
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- Appravate management's problem & rationale
- Close to the customers, front line
- Maintain good working relationship & less positional difference
- Loyal - try to fulfill task as a team
- "Exchange of favour", relationship is emphasized
- Overall view of organization and therefore similar concerns
- Tend to demand less from the organization
- Tend to be approachable & humble
- Concerned with staff development apart from output
- Mixing together. A mask before boss

Appendix:: 19B
Element Matches

* E1 E2 E3 E4 E5 E6 E7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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Construct Matches

* R1 R2 R3 R4 R5 R6 R7 R8 R9 R10

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Element Links

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E1 linked to E3 at 76.0
E4 linked to E7 at 76.0
E1 linked to E4 at 74.0
E5 linked to E6 at 68.0
E2 linked to E7 at 64.0

Construct Links

L1 linked to L3 at 91.4
L7 linked to L9 at 88.6
L1 linked to L7 at 85.7
L6 linked to R8 at 85.7
R2 linked to R8 at 80.0
L3 linked to L6 at 80.0
R2 linked to R4 at 74.3
R4 linked to R10 at 74.3
L5 linked to L9 at 71.4
FOCUS: E
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: E
Lack knowledge of western value & practice | 1 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 Share Canadian's language, enjoyment, thinking & behaviour
Accommodating, give up rights, willing to take extra | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 Enjoy & exercise their right, work enough to get by as written down
Keep relationship distance to avoid jeopardizing control and power | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 Uphold professional status & professional pride
Shorter term, goal, perspectives, and just treat it as a contract | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 "Not just a contract", longer term perspective
Care more about individual parts | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 Care about overall situation of the organization, concern about the output
Have anxiety & uncertainty in communicating ideas across to Canadians, cautious | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 6 Ideas easily understood amongst themselves but not by me, need little details
Less sharing related to work | 7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 7 More sharing related to work
Detached | 8 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 8 Kind to the powerless
Output & result oriented | 9 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 9 Social oriented
Fragmented view & challenge authority | 10 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 10 Not tunnel vision of the organization

Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: E

Appendix: 20B
Element Matches

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Construct Matches

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Element Links

- E3 linked to E5 at 90.0
- E2 linked to E4 at 86.0
- E4 linked to E6 at 84.0
- E6 linked to E7 at 80.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 74.0
- E1 linked to E7 at 60.0

Construct Links

- R1 linked to R6 at 91.4
- R6 linked to R9 at 88.6
- L4 linked to L7 at 85.7
- L5 linked to L7 at 85.7
- L4 linked to L10 at 82.9
- R2 linked to R9 at 80.0
- R1 linked to L10 at 77.1
- L5 linked to R8 at 77.1
- R3 linked to R8 at 71.4
More sharing on topics & problems they face - personal, family, life
See things alike & similar hypothesis of life
Lack dedication to job
More relaxed, enjoy life, separate work from living
Consider more from their own perspective & less for organization as a whole
Lack planning, visioning & organizing ability
Not mixing, alienated & clear work division
Know the timing to exercise, to give in & to use humour with the Canadian
Culturally similar - can detect the psychology & needs of Canadian
In power positions

2 1 1 1 1 1 4
1 1 1 1
9 1 1 2
5 1 1
7 2 3
4 3 2
10 2 2 4 4 4 4
6 2 2 2 4
3 3 1 1 4 4 4
8 4 4 4 4 4

2 Mind self more and mind own business, our topics are different from the Canadians
1 Treasure money, status symbol, power over others
9 Dedicated to work
5 Strive for output
7 Consider not just for self but from perspectives of others & organization
4 More planning, has visions
10 Interact & chit-chat
6 Not knowing the Canadian game play, pulse and inclination
3 Difficult to understand local
8 Same level

Chinese Subordinate
Chinese Peer
Myself
Chinese Boss
Canada Boss
canada Peer
Canada Subordinate

Appendix: 2IA
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- **Treasure money, status symbol, power over others**
- **Mind self more and mind own business, our topics are different from the Canaians**
- **Difficult to understand local**
- **Lack planning, visioning & organizing ability**
- **More relaxed, enjoy life, separate work from living**
- **Not knowing the Canadian game play, pulse and inclination**
- **Consider more from their own perspective & less for organization as a whole**
- **In power positions**
- **Dedicated to work**
- **Not mixing, alienated & clear work division**
- **See things alike & similar hypothesis of life**
- **More sharing on topics & problems they face - personal, family, life**
- **Culturally similar - can detect the psychology & needs of Canadian**
- **More planning, has visions**
- **Strive for output**
- **Know the timing to exercise, to give in & to use humour with the Canadian**
- **Consider not just for self but from perspectives of others & organization**
- **Same level**
- **Lack dedication to job**
- **Interact & chit-chat**
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Element Links

- E3 linked to E5 at 90.0
- E4 linked to E6 at 88.0
- E4 linked to E7 at 86.0
- E2 linked to E7 at 82.0
- E1 linked to E3 at 68.0
- E1 linked to E2 at 58.0

Construct Links

- L1 linked to L2 at 94.3
- R5 linked to L9 at 91.4
- L1 linked to L9 at 88.6
- L3 linked to L6 at 85.7
- R4 linked to R7 at 85.7
- R5 linked to R7 at 85.7
- L6 linked to R10 at 85.7
- R4 linked to R10 at 77.1
- L3 linked to R8 at 71.4
FOCUS: G
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: G

- Get by, snap shot manner at work
- Concern over one's own personal issues & interest
- Performance - expecting process and consultation, not just result
- Some gaps for real sharing, their expectations cannot easily be understood
- Target of concern being different from mine
- More politics & feel status differences
- Detached from and not closely associated with the Chinese
- Outlook, perspectives, status, expectation & interest are different
- Social distance & cannot get close
- On their own, not knowing others' needs

- Expect thorough work
- Concern over organizational objective & staff interest
- Performance - expecting concrete results, & tangible outcomes
- Can be friends and have sharing outside work context
- Have similar targets of concern and offer similar service as mine
- Treat others equally with little difference
- More talk topics, sharing same concerns
- Share more personal stuff. More resonance. Similar status
- No Gap & sharing
- Sharing

- Myself
- Chinese Peer
- Chinese Boss
- Chinese Subordinate
- Canada Boss
- Canada Subordinate
- Canada Peer
- Canada Subordinate

Appendix: 22A
Performance - expecting process and consultation, not just result
Detached from and not closely associated with the Chinese
Get by, snapshot manner at work
On their own, not knowing others' needs
Some gaps for real sharing, their expectations cannot easily be understood
Target of concern being different from mine
Outlook, perspectives, status, expectation & interest are different
More politics & feel status differences
Concern over one's own personal issues & interest
Social distance & cannot get close

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1. Performance - expecting concrete results, tangible outcomes
2. More talk topics, sharing same concerns
3. Expect thorough work
4. Sharing
5. Can be friends and have sharing outside work context
6. Have similar targets of concern and offer similar service as mine
7. Share more personal stuff. More resonance. Similar status
8. Treat others equally with little difference
9. Concern over organizational objective & staff interest
10. No gap & sharing

Myself
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Chinese Subordinate
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Canada Subordinate
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Chinese Peer
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Canada Peer
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Chinese Boss
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Canada Boss
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- E3 linked to E5 at 76.0
- E1 linked to E6 at 72.0
- E2 linked to E6 at 64.0
- E2 linked to E4 at 58.0

### Construct Links

- R5 linked to R6 at 88.6
- R6 linked to R8 at 88.6
- R1 linked to R5 at 85.7
- R7 linked to R10 at 85.7
- R1 linked to R9 at 82.9
- R4 linked to R10 at 82.9
- R2 linked to R8 at 77.1
- R2 linked to R7 at 74.3
- R3 linked to R9 at 71.4
FOCUS: H
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: H

Social activity & personal feelings more important than work
They know the unspoken rules & styles for influencing Canadians to work
Similar in responses, reactions and understanding of the issues
Advocate & believe in union
Vocal, confronting and rebellious
View themselves being different in status
Routine work, less individualized and less self created work approach
Connected through specific work
Humble. Close to the ignored
Dare not share too much. No cooperation opportunity

Task oriented
Have difficulties in knowing the unspoken rules of the Canadians
My reactions and responses to certain issues are different from the Canadians
Do not go for a confronting relationship
Appreciate management's difficulties
Treat others equal in status
Common task, more individual & self created work approach
Connected socially
Away from those being ignored
Team work opportunity

Chinese Subordinate
Chinese Boss
Chinese Peer
Myself
Canada Peer
Canada Boss
Canada Subordinate

Appendix: 23A
Display: II  
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: II

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1. Vocal, confronting and rebellious  
2. Routine work, less individualized and less self created work approach  
3. Advocate & believe in union  
4. Task oriented  
5. Connected socially  
6. Have difficulties in knowing the unspoken rules of the Canadians  
7. My reactions and responses to certain issues are different from the Canadians  
8. Away from those being ignored  
9. View themselves being different in status  
10. Dare not share too much. No cooperation opportunity

1 Appreciate management's difficulties  
2 Common task, more individual & self created work approach  
3 Do not go for a confronting relationship  
4 Social activity & personal feelings more important than work  
5 Connected through specific work  
6 They know the unspoken rules & styles for influencing Canadians to work  
7 Similar in responses, reactions and understanding of the issues  
8 Humble. Close to the ignored  
9 Treat others equal in status  
10 Team work opportunity

Appendix: 23B
Element Matches

* E1 E2 E3 E4 E5 E6 E7


Element
Matches

Construct
Matches

Element Links

Construct Links
More formal, bureaucratic at work as a team
Tend to expect instruction / order
Want to be led
Lower self demand for work
Different educational background
Younger. Activities different from mine
Less expressive to them
Linked by friendship and not by work
Keep detached to avoid difficulty in assigning work
Waiter of instructions

More sharing and less boundary
Tend to work with initiative
Initiate, take the lead, cause things to happen
Higher self demand for skill, & knowledge at work
Common educational background
Less generation gap. Similar concern, background & social activity
People I feel comfortable to genuinely share with & get support
Have friendship and similar interest
Buddy. Good friends
Doer - work and implement
Display: 1
Elements: 7, Constructs: 10, Range: 1 to 6, Context: 1

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<tr>
<td>Tend to expect instruction/order</td>
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<tr>
<td>More formal, bureaucratic at work as a team</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less expressive to them</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linked by friendship and not by work</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Younger. Activities different from mine</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Different educational background</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waiter of instructions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep detached to avoid difficulty in assigning work</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1  Initiate, take the lead, cause things to happen
2  Higher self demand for skill, & knowledge at work
3  Tend to work with initiative
4  More sharing and less boundary
5  People I feel comfortable to genuinely share with & get support
6  Have friendship and similar interest
7  Less generation gap. Similar concern, background & social activity
8  Common educational background
9  Doer - work and implement
10 Buddy. Good friends

Appendix: 24B
Element Matches

*  E1  E2  E3  E4  E5  E6  E7

+----------------------------------+
| E1  * 100  84  82  70  64  62  80 |
| E2  * 84  100  70  74  56  54  68 |
| E3  * 82  70  100  64  74  68  70 |
| E4  * 70  74  64  100  42  40  90 |
| E5  * 64  56  74  42  100  86  44 |
| E6  * 62  54  68  40  86  100  42 |
| E7  * 80  68  70  90  44  42  100 |

Construct Matches

*  R1  R2  R3  R4  R5  R6  R7  R8  R9  R10

+----------------------------------+
| R1  * 100  86  86  60  74  71  77  86  83  69 |
| R2  * 86  100  83  51  83  86  86  100  86  83 |
| R3  * 86  83  100  63  77  74  80  83  80  71 |
| R4  * 60  51  63  100  57  49  43  51  43  46 |
| R5  * 74  83  77  57  100  91  86  83  74  89 |
| R6  * 71  86  74  49  91  100  89  86  83  97 |
| R7  * 77  86  80  43  86  89  100  86  83  86 |
| R8  * 86  100  83  51  83  86  100  86  83  83 |
| R9  * 83  86  80  43  74  83  83  86  100  86 |
| R10  * 69  83  71  46  89  97  86  83  86  100 |

Element Links

E4 linked to E7 at 90.0
E5 linked to E6 at 86.0
E1 linked to E2 at 84.0
E1 linked to E3 at 82.0
E2 linked to E4 at 74.0
E3 linked to E5 at 74.0

Construct Links

R2 linked to R8 at 100.0
R6 linked to R10 at 97.1
R5 linked to R6 at 91.4
R1 linked to R2 at 85.7
R1 linked to R3 at 85.7
R5 linked to R7 at 85.7
R7 linked to R8 at 85.7
R9 linked to R10 at 85.7
R3 linked to R4 at 62.9
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Canadian Style of Conflict Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>opposition mentality (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stepping on (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>destroy (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make a noise (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will easily make a fuss of it (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voice that out and will not take the unequal treatment (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not feel a need to accommodate(competitng)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take care of my problem and you take care of yours (avoiding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do it their way (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>totally correct (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zero tolerance (competing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Chinese Style of Conflict Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not normally point that out openly (avoiding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let you off (avoiding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reciprocation (accommodating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoid pointing out that [unequal treatment] openly (avoiding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not so easily take the issue out to have direct confrontation (avoiding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not be so vocal of our rights (avoiding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we tolerate (accommodating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoid treading on the toes of others(avoiding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak ill or criticize severely of the boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amongst the colleagues (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criticize them at their back (competing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we creating difficulty to my boss (accommodating)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resolve the issue by compromising and reconciliation (compromising)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accept mid way solutions or ambiguity (compromising)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content Analysis: Differences of Conflict Management Style between Chinese and Canadians
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Effectiveness Scores (Cumulative)</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Boss</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Peer</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Boss</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Subordinate</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Peer</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Subordinate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table of Effectiveness Scores for the 7 elements
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs from the mode grid using the Repertory Grid Method</th>
<th>Meta-narratives and Themes from the Hermeneutic Phenomenological Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy to communicate opinion across, sure that message is got across vs. Difficult to communicate with, can hardly be sure whether they will be pleased</td>
<td>Cooperation dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactions and decision can be predicted and rationale can be understood vs. Unpredictable, surprising decisions, hard to know how they think</td>
<td>Meta-narrative of communication: Spacious Grey vs. Tight Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less assertive for individual right Vs More assertive, speaking up, arguing</td>
<td>Meta-narrative of conflict: Harmonising vs. Conflicting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have difficulties in knowing the unspoken rules of the Westerners yet skilled in ... vs. They know the unspoken rules &amp; styles for influencing Canadians to work</td>
<td>Cooperation dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not knowing the Canadian game play, pulse and inclination vs. Know the timing to exercise, give in &amp; be humorous with the Canadians</td>
<td>Cooperation dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High commitment and positive attitude at work vs. Low work commitment</td>
<td>The meta-narrative of work: Committing vs. Contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My reaction and response to certain issues are different from the Canadian but being... vs. Similar in response &amp; reaction and in understanding of issues</td>
<td>Cooperation dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar cultural value vs. race difference (for teaming together)</td>
<td>Cooperation dimension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to demand less from organization vs. Tend to demand more from organization to accommodate their individual situation</td>
<td>The meta-narrative of power: High vs. Low inequality tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to Compromise and accommodating vs. Demand and fully exercise their right</td>
<td>The meta-narrative of existence: People exist for organization vs. organization exist for people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table of Comparison between the Mode Constructs and the Meta-narratives / Modus Operandi
IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

1.0  1.1  1.25  1.4  1.6
2.5  2.2  1.8

150mm

6"

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