

Cross Cultural Entry Model

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Looking back on my anticipated challenges for working and studying in France, I had a general sense of what my challenges might be and the actual experience was very enlightening for future cultural immersions that I will subject myself to. Before arriving in France, my CQ report showed a high drive, moderate knowledge, and lower strategy and action scores, all of which generally were born out in my actual experience. I certainly found plenty of drive for this multicultural experience in my fascination with the details of Lyonnaise space and behavior, and this served me well as I worked to blend in effectively. Of note, I was aware of a strong desire to behave appropriately and to meet with the approval of everyone I interacted with. This included using public transit correctly, interacting with shopkeepers appropriately, and every other brief social exchange that I happened across. Knowing how strongly I wanted to blend-in feels important to know to allow for adequate preparation for future trips. This aligns with my lower CQ action score, particularly that I didn't have many language skills. Hopefully I am improving my CQ strategy skill right now in considering a model for future cultural entry.

There were two successful elements that I must endeavor to repeat in the future when travelling. The first was learning from resources specifically designed to help with my exposure, best exemplified in this case by the book *French or Foe?*, and secondly the gathering of key phrases that allowed me to politely navigate around my lack of French speaking ability. It was both outwardly effective and internally highly calming to be able to say in French *I'm sorry I don't speak French, excuse me for bothering you, please, thank you*, etc. For my next international trip, I will work on my language skills and try to build a model of understanding how the locals behave so that I might make sense of what I see more than just reacting to how abnormal it is compared to my experiences at home.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions' theory was also helpful in this effort to better understand why things are different. For instance, France is regarded as having a higher uncertainty avoidance index relative to the United States according to Hofstede, and knowing this allowed me to pay a little more attention to following the rules and etiquettes I observed than I might have done otherwise. I do have a strong tendency to want to understand the rules of whatever environment I'm in as well, so this is aligned personally for me.

In conclusion, my new point of view on entering new cultural contexts includes knowing myself, doing research and preparation for what I might find, and using curiosity and personal resilience to learn and react positively while immersed in the new environment. The key thing I know about myself in this context is that I very much want to be able to blend-in successfully. This desire to blend-in requires some level of preparation as I learn a little of the language and use resources such as Hofstede's model and others to start to imagine why and how things will differ from my usual daily experience. Lastly, engaging in the new cultural context with as much curiosity, flexibility, and resilience as I can muster will contribute to my best ability to integrate. I feel quite positive that my efforts in France were positive and largely successful and I look forward to my next chance to improve on this success. I'm working on my Spanish already.

References

Platt, P. (2003). *French or Foe?: Getting the Most Out of Visiting, Living and Working in France.*

London: Culture Crossings.