Chapter 5
Keeping with the Times: Coaching, Culture and Positive Psychology

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Introduction

Recent events (i.e., #BlackLivesMatter) have increased the awareness of topics around diversity and inclusion in our immediate environments, including the workplace. This attention has necessarily been diverted to the relationship between coaches and coachees too. Yet, while positive psychology (PP) based coaching is increasingly being adopted worldwide—with some success—its spread risks reducing cultural diversity. Instead it might even negate inclusion because it displaces emerging local research and practice that might serve to highlight national, religious, gender, and socio-political factors. For instance, most practice and research in PP have been based on work conducted on "WEIRD" samples, that is: Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic populations (Henrich et al., 2010). The same is true for coaching which is largely a Western practice (Abbott & Salomaa, 2016; Plaister-Ten, 2013; Rosinski, 2010). As more than 90% of the psychology literature emerges from the US, despite the fact that the country only accounts for 5% of the world's population (Arnett, 2008, 2009; Bermant et al., 2011), WEIRD

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samples form the basis for theoretical and practical development. Such models are not wrong, but they were neither designed for nor validated on non-WEIRD individuals. This chapter aims to carve a path forward for the coaching practitioner working with populations that do not self-identify as WEIRD and to propose theoretical guidance, practical strategies as well as arguments for why better models can and should be developed.

Theory, Basic Concepts and Key Developments

Same Words, Different Meaning

Similar to PP, coaching and coaching psychology (CP) have matured into an established field. Each dovetails with the other, with a focus on the positive aspects of human functioning (versus a remediation of the negative), a focus on non-clinical populations, and a process of building strengths and other personal characteristics (Lomas, 2020). The discipline of positive psychology coaching (PPC), a convergence of all three, is comparatively new and various definitions and conceptualisations have been proposed (e.g. Biswas-Diener, 2010, 2020; Burke, 2017; Green & Palmer, 2019; Lomas, 2019; Passmore & Oades, 2014). For the purpose of this chapter we define PPC as "evidence-based coaching practice informed by the theories and research of positive psychology for the enhancement of resilience, achievement and wellbeing" (Green & Palmer, 2019, p. 10). The definition implies that PPC, while rooted in PP, is just coaching (Biswas-Diener, 2020) and does not necessarily require the use of positive psychology interventions (PPIs). However, it has been suggested that PPC is a PPI in itself if it has an explicit wellbeing focus (Lomas, 2019). Within this chapter we will assume an explicit wellbeing focus in PPC sessions that may or may not include the use of PPIs.

However, *wellbeing* can mean different things in non-WEIRD contexts as many PP researchers have pointed out (Lambert et al., 2020). PP has explored some cultural wellbeing influences, from subjective views of what happiness is (Joshanloo, 2019), dialectic perspectives on emotional constructs in East Asian cultures (Nisbett, 2019; Schimmack & Diener, 2002), interdependent forms of happiness in societies with a stronger emphasis on collectivism (Krys et al., 2019) or even fear of happiness in Asia and the Middle East (Joshanloo & Weijers, 2014), as a few examples. The expanded approach of Positive Psychology 2.0 (PP 2.0) would correspond with the call for a more global view that considers the full richness of wellbeing from diverse cultural perspectives (Wong, 2013), and even more with a likely third wave of PP (Lomas et al., 2020). Yet overall, PP mirrors other sectors of psychology, with little focus on the diversity of participants, research topics and methods of practice. Despite efforts to increase cultural representation in research and practice, it remains to be seen if they have improved the situation (Arnett, 2008; Christopher et al., 2014; Hartmann et al., 2013; Rao & Donaldson, 2015).

In the absence of or with limited consideration for locally derived knowledge, the void is being filled by importing Western concepts and understandings of positive functioning which are used as the basis for what individuals should aspire to become (Lambert et al., 2015). While many PP constructs may apply in principle globally, such imports impoverish the available knowledge of what human behaviour consists of in other cultural contexts and preclude the ability of individuals to understand themselves on their own terms. Hence, the call for indigenous versions of PP has been made repeatedly, for example for Indigenous Australian contexts (Craven et al., 2016), for Muslim (Joshanloo & Weijers, 2019) and Middle Eastern cultures (Lambert et al., 2015).

What Is Culture?

The term *culture* lends itself to ambiguity. The best known culture frameworks, for example by Hofstede (1991)/Hofstede et al. (2010), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993, 2012) or Triandis (1972, 2002), were intended to compare one cultural group against another along various dimensions; the most commonly known is probably individualism-collectivism. Further, culture is often assumed to mean nationality; yet the term describes general tendencies of *any* group which may also vary depending on the individual and context (Hofstede, 2011; Rosinski, 2003). For example, someone who self-identifies as Arab could hail from Northern Africa or the Middle East, could be Muslim or Christian, and living in the region or a Western country. A self-identified "Westerner" could be from anywhere in Europe, Australia or the US. At work, they might identify with the culture of their company while in their spare time they might identify as supporters of a football team or their child's scout group. Thus, generalisations along generic group dimensions can be problematic, especially when applied to a one-to-one relationship like coaching with the risk of stereotyping the individual (Hofstede et al., 2010; Rosinski, 2010; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

Culture can be described as "generally accepted beliefs, conventions, customs, social norms and behaviours" of a group with which an individual self-identifies (van Nieuwerburgh, 2016, p. 450). The challenge with culture is that many aspects are not explicit. Culture can be viewed as an onion with three layers (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012): Only the outer layer is observable and explicit, like language or architecture. The middle (i.e., norms and values) and core layers (i.e., basic assumptions) are implicit and inform the outer layers, but are only observable in the outer layer's expressed components. Hence, coach and coachee may need to display a level of Cultural Intelligence (CQ; Earley & Mosakowski, 2004) that requires knowledge about the cultural context, acute awareness (mindfulness) for elements implicit in cross-cultural encounters and appropriate behaviour for the context, with all three elements dynamically adapting during interactions (Thomas, 2006).

In PP, a growing body of research examines the impact of cultural differences on PPIs and the merits of such interventions in non-Western cultural contexts (i.e., Hendriks et al., 2018; Lambert et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2018; Leon et al., 2018). This is apt as many interventions depend on an autonomous self and focus on self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-compassion, self-worth, etc. (Foody et al., 2013; Hendriks et al., 2018; Wong & Roy, 2017). For example, in a gratitude study, an effective strategy in the West, Chancellor et al. (2015) showed that while it made Japanese employees happier, they were also less collegial over time. Another study comparing the USA (individualistic) with Taiwan and India (collectivistic) showed that gratitude was less effective in boosting wellbeing for individuals in the latter nations (Shin et al., 2020). The 'self' focus is often at odds with a relational self (i.e., close ties with immediate others; Brewer & Chen, 2007) or an interdependent self (i.e., group memberships and collectives to which one belongs; Hashimoto & Yamagishi, 2013). Accordingly, there is scope for more nuanced research and the continued development of interventions, with implications for coaching contexts as well.

Cultural Flavours of Coaching

Coaching, also rooted in Western philosophy, typically takes a person-centred, humanist approach (Joseph, 2014; Rogers, 1957) which, similar to PP, assumes coachees are self-directed, self-actualising individuals with agency to develop their wellbeing, positive emotions, strengths and resilience (van Zyl et al., 2016). A focus on the coachee reality could be considered a route to cultural neutrality (van Zyl & Stander, 2013) in cross-cultural encounters and make PPC the ideal way of coaching multiculturally. Yet, the implicit cultural assumptions embedded in PP as well as coaching methods and research, in combination with personal implicit cultural assumptions of coach and coachee (Roth, 2017), raise the question if such neutrality is altogether possible (Pedrotti et al., 2009).

Similarly, the role of coach can be understood quite differently in Asia or the Middle East where cultural traditions of mentoring-like guidance exist. For example, Arab/Muslim literature describes informal mentoring-type relationships in society (Dwairy, 2006) or in the context of a system called wasta which was historically designed to maintain wider family or business relationships (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011; Whiteoak et al., 2006), also seen in organisations (Noer et al., 2007). Role-modelling in career development (James & McManus, 2011) and in Muslim/Arab therapy settings (Dwairy, 2006) has also been observed. Such traditions may be reflected in the expectations of coachees. Thus, coaches working in the Middle East may have to work on a spectrum from teaching, role-modelling and mentoring to coaching, while to the coachee this may all be coaching (King & van Nieuwerburgh, 2020).

Accordingly, it has been suggested that mentoring (Garvey, 2014) may be more appropriate than coaching in such contexts (Anagnos, 2013). For example, India has an ancient 'mentoring tradition' in the form of the guru (teacher) and shishya (pupil) relationship where the teacher imparts knowledge. This tradition has found more

modern applications in management contexts with the mentor-mentee dyad (Arora & Rangnekar, 2014; Pio, 2005; Raina, 2002). In China or Malaysia, with a culture with hierarchies and subsequent respect towards seniors or teachers, a coach is perceived as someone of high 'position' or as more senior (Gan & Chong, 2015; Nangalia & Nangalia, 2010). Thus, the coachee would likely expect the coach to provide guidance and offer advice and opinion on a certain issue or challenge, though to a lesser extent in Hong Kong (Lam, 2016).

In sum, PPC could mean different things both in terms of coaching and wellbeing, depending on where in the world coach and coachee are based, where they are from (Abbott & Salomaa, 2016) and with what cultures they personally identify. Literature and research on PP, CP, let alone PPC, from non-WEIRD populations that could help clarify meanings is patchy. Thus, this overview raises important and often unanswered questions around the continued use of concepts, tools and theories in contexts for which they were not designed, while ignoring pre-existing mentoring and coaching traditions within cultures. Without more research from and in the region, the unfiltered application of PPC might undermine the fields of PP, CP and PPC as the normative assumptions of what constitutes coaching, wellbeing and its correlates in the workplace remain unchallenged.

Practice: Methods, Techniques and Application

Cross-Cultural Coaching

An awareness for the diversity coaches may encounter has been recognised as a professional requirement in the coaching world since the introduction of the term cross-cultural coaching (CCC; Rosinski, 2003). Although many definitions of CCC with shared premises have since been proposed, no single definition has emerged (Abbott & Salomaa, 2016). Still, cross-cultural coaching models have been introduced to facilitate successful CCC, such as Plaister-Ten's (2013, 2016) Cross-Cultural Coaching Kaleidoscope, a three-stage model that views the coaching relationship as an adaptive system of factors that together form culture, Passmore and Law's (2009) Universal Integrated Framework, and Rosinski (2003, 2010, 2019) Coaching Across Cultures model, including the Cultural Orientations Framework (COF).

This chapter will use Rosinski's Coaching Across Cultures model to illustrate how culture can inform coaching practice and become an active ingredient for PPC. The model systematically integrates culture and has two objectives. One, it enables more effective work across cultures, and two, it allows for more creative and integrative forms of coaching by challenging individuals' underlying cultural assumptions and offering alternative ways of thinking, communicating, managing time and engaging in activities (Rosinski, 2010).

Its roots lie in the broader realisation that traditional coaching and leadership—in addition to being WEIRD—have assumed a worldview that is not universal and are

Cultural Orientations Framework (COF)

Sense of Power and Responsibility Control/Harmony/Humility	**Time Management Approaches** Scarce/Plentiful Monochronic/Polychronic Past/Present/Future
Definitions of Identity and Purpose Being/Doing Individualistic/Collectivistic	**Organizational Arrangements** Hierarchy/Equality Universalist/Particularist Stability/Change Competitive/Collaborative
Notions of Territory and Boundaries Protective/Sharing	**Communication Patterns** High Context/Low Context Direct/Indirect Affective/Neutral Formal/Informal
Modes of Thinking Deductive/Inductive Analytical/Systemic	**Others** Your Customized Supplemental COF Dimensions

Fig. 5.1 Categories and dimensions of the cultural orientations framework (COF). Note: Adapted from Rosinski and Company (n.d.). COF Assessment: Determining individual and collective cultural orientations. Retrieved from https://www.cofassessment.com/ with permission

insufficient to address the complex challenges in our turbulent, interconnected and global environment. The conception of time constitutes one example. If a culture considers time as scarce, a person of that culture is likely to become more productive. However, by cramming more activities into the agenda and working faster, that person risks feeling overwhelmed without necessarily spending time on what truly matters which might negatively affect wellbeing. If, on the other hand, time is considered plentiful, a person is likely to slow down and regain perspective. Paradoxically, the scarcity of time may thus be more appreciated. Awareness for and the ability to combine both perspectives would allow a person to be efficient (doing things right) as well as effective (doing the right things) as required. It would also increase the understanding for other people in a group with different conceptions of time and allow for a more constructive dialogue about time management in a team.

This model is complemented by the COF with 17 cultural dimensions and its corresponding assessment (Fig. 5.1), a measurement tool that facilitates an understanding for these dimensions expressed by individuals, teams and organisations (Rosinski and Company, n.d.). COF cultural dimensions range on a continuum of two (e.g., direct-indirect communication) or three (e.g., past-present-future) cultural orientations. By showing a group's cultural profiles across various levels of an organisation (i.e., division, nationality, management level, merging entities, etc.) the tool allows a view of the multiple realities that exist within groups at a particular time. Thus, like psychometric assessments in general, the COF may generate

dialogue and understanding for different perspectives and inform change. The debrief of a group or an individual might involve activities exploring:

- What orientations might have been overused/underused in a situation?
- How has the coach taken the cultural perspective into account?
- How have cultural differences been leveraged?

In one-to-one coaching, a coach might work with the coachee to raise self-awareness and self-knowledge around cultural orientations and their impact on the basis of a personal profile. Coaching questions might be:

- Do your culture orientations vary in different contexts?
- How might your orientations affect the way you coach/lead? (e.g., biases displayed, choices of behaviours made consciously or unconsciously)

However, as noted in the context of cultural dimensions, users of this tool should avoid making definitive assertions and generalised assumptions of truth about individuals, groups or societies (Rosinski, 2010) that may result in stereotyping and ignore the temporary nature of such assessments. Each cultural orientation has merits and can contribute unique strengths to projects and solutions. If individual expressions of cultural orientations are viewed as character strengths in the sense of PP, coaches and coachees can leverage these dimensions and explicitly target wellbeing aspects in PPC.

PP coaches should be reminded that cultural dimensions encompass both visible (e.g., behaviours, languages, artifacts) and invisible manifestations (e.g., norms, values, basic assumptions and beliefs; Rosinski, 2003). Thus, apart from observable attributes and the COF assessment results, PPC practitioners need to consider the invisible facets and how they influence the cognitive diversity of individuals, such as individual communication preferences, thinking modes, sense of identity and purpose, as well as personal physical and emotional boundaries inherent in cultural dimensions.

An example of how cultural orientations (i.e., a culturally determined inclination to think, feel or act) can impact projects, may be taken from attempts by authorities to manage the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and global differences in social behaviour. In China, a generally more interdependent and collectivist culture, people conformed to larger dominant group behaviours (e.g., wearing a mask in public), maintained harmony and tended to put the interest and safety of the group before individual interests. In the US, a generally more independent and individualistic culture, mask wearing is contested on the basis of personal freedom and a potential infringement of an individual's civil liberties. These are only two examples, but they illustrate how authorities might use different measures and emphasise different values and norms in their communication to achieve the desired outcome of containing the spread of coronavirus in their respective societies. Now consider, that societies are multicultural in themselves as we explained earlier in the examples of "Westerners" or "Arabs". While the majority of a population may respond in their thinking, feeling and acting in the desired way, the reactions of other parts might be different even if on the surface they are, for example, all "Chinese" or "American".

Yet, to the extent that feeling and thinking may be internal and invisible, authorities can only guess from the visible manifestations (e.g., refusal to wear face masks) what invisible cultural facets (i.e., values and beliefs) might be at work. As PPC practitioners, this illustrates how coaches need to be highly attuned to coachees' visible manifestations of culture, to explore potential invisible cultural aspects and use assessment tools like the COF and its cultural dimensions flexibly to guide but not to stereotype.

Cultural orientations are not fixed. Cultures and the individuals in these cultures move on a continuum bounded by the extremes on either end, with their positioning mutable in the face of various situations (Hills & Atkins, 2013). In our COVID-19 example, an individual's thinking on wearing a face mask may change as well as that of the entire group. Because a person's inclination to think, feel and act is malleable, increased understanding for own and others' cultural orientations can lead to personal and group-wide growth that are the remit of coaching conversations and goals. CCC relationships are designed to help coachees and their teams recognise differences, and, more importantly, to leverage these differences as individual strengths or abilities that can be used to operate in different cultural spaces. The COF can provide a roadmap and terminology to navigate this cultural terrain. Exploration and dialogue may also shed light on conflicts which may be the result of and, in their display and resolution, are likely influenced by cultural orientations. Unaddressed or without consideration for the visible and invisible cultural facets, they could cause much damage.

Strengths-Based Coaching: Who Has the Final Say?

Strengths-based approaches from PP have been identified early on as an area of overlap between PP and CP (Clifton & Harter, 2003; Grant, 2005; Kauffman, 2006; Linley & Harrington, 2005). Models from PP and adjacent fields can complement CCC approaches for PPC practitioners; they include the notion of Character Strengths and Virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) with its 24 general strengths, assessed by the VIA Survey (VIA Institute on Character, n.d.), Gallup's 34 CliftonStrengths designed for the workplace and respective survey (Gallup, n. d..) or Cappfinity's 60-item StrengthsProfile (formerly Realise2; Linley & Bateman, 2018). Strengths-based PPIs were shown to increase wellbeing (Proyer et al., 2015) as did engaging a coachee's character strengths (Govindji & Linley, 2007) using the VIA classification (Niemiec, 2018) or self-identified strengths (Fouracres & van Nieuwerburgh, 2020). When employees had the opportunity to do what they do best, an indication of strengths use on Gallup surveys, firm productivity (Asplund & Blacksmith, 2012), engagement (Harter & Stone, 2011) and financial performance (Harter et al., 2010) all increased. Results using character strengths in the workplace also showed greater self-efficacy (Govindji & Linley, 2007), better goal progress (Linley et al., 2010), greater likelihood of being categorised as "flourishing" at work (Hone et al., 2015), better talent retention, employee engagement and financial

growth (Peláez et al., 2020), as well as positive outcomes for both in-role and extra-work performance (van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015).

While the VIA classification and its survey have been validated cross-culturally (Park et al., 2006), questions around the universal application of strengths categories may exist, for example as a result of wellbeing literacy (Oades et al., 2020) or culturally influenced lay conceptions of happiness (Joshanloo, 2019). Thus, by applying, for example, Western concepts of wellbeing and strengths, coaches might miss the exact strengths inherent in the coachee's cultural context and tradition that might have the potential to enhance and enrich coaching conversations and outcomes. Alternative VIA strengths classifications have been proposed, for example for Muslim contexts (Pasha-Zaidi & Odeh, 2019), or adaptation of the Oxford Happiness Inventory to arrive at the Chinese Happiness Inventory (Lu & Shih, 1997).

An additional challenge when working with character strengths is self vs other focus and the risk that strengths use may be viewed as self-enhancing. For example, social norms in Arab/Muslim society tend to favour cohesion, respect and social duties (Dwairy, 2006) while avoiding confrontation (Dwairy, 2006; Jones, 2008). Similarly it has been proposed that in East Asian "face" cultures, self-enhancement is guided by humility, concern about the public (versus private) perception, prevention of losing face and harmony (Lee et al., 2014). Thus, emphasis on building on a coachee's strengths towards a coachee's own success may jar with interpretations of humility and harmony in China when brought to bear in the workplace. Colleagues might consider doing something the coachee is particularly good at as "showing off" which might endanger a group's harmony. Recognising and improving an individual's weaknesses instead might be more aligned with the group's values. Working with and appreciating an entire team's strengths and values, or appreciating strengths in others, for example through strength spotting (Linley, 2008), may be more appropriate in a Chinese team.

These examples highlight the possibility that strengths-based coaching in non-WEIRD contexts may have to be applied not only differently with respect to the types of strengths that are valued by each coachee but also with a pragmatic focus on the actual possible use of strengths in interdependent cultures. The complexity increases when coaching in multicultural teams. Carefully managed, an opportunity may lie in the identification of cultural diversity as a strength in itself.

Universal or Indigenous Approach?

It has been argued that while universal CCC models have found wide use, they are arguably still subject to influence from, and bias towards, underlying Western philosophies (Berry et al., 2011), particularly as many are designed by Westerners themselves. Thus, the question arises if—as in psychology in general—indigenous "CPs" and "PPCs" (Misra & Gergen, 1993; Pickren, 2009) are an imperative. While such a call for culture-specific adaptations to coachees' contexts has been supported

(Abbott & Salomaa, 2016), it may run counter to the aims for universal professional standards in coaching (Passmore et al., 2010) or coaching competency frameworks.

Models like *Coaching Across Cultures* aim to address such criticism by allowing to view reality from non-Western perspectives, for example by including orientations like humility ("InshAllah" in contrast with the more Western "control" orientation), collectivism or hierarchy which makes room for more directive coaching approaches (Rosinski, 2003). That the model found appeal in several Asian countries, for example as a mandatory part of the MBA in globalisation curriculum at Business Breakthrough University in Tokyo, can be considered an encouraging sign that flexible universal CCC models may be viable options.

Meanwhile, coaches have also developed practical models to work in specific local contexts. In the Middle East, Palmer and Arnold (2009) propose a five-step Development Pipeline, based on their experience of working with mainly male Arab Muslims. A case study by Noer (2005) describes the development of the Triangle Coaching Model in a Saudi organisation with suitable CCC behaviours (Noer et al., 2007). The Ershad coaching framework, a theoretical model by van Nieuwerburgh and Allaho (2017), links Western-based coaching practice with Islamic teaching and proposes a terminology familiar to Muslim coachees. Many more regional adaptations may exist as coaches adapt ad-hoc to their coachees, as a study of executive coaches working with Emiratis in the national cultural context of the United Arab Emirates suggests (Dodds & Grajfoner, 2018). While coaches did not change their methods, they became more directive due to a perceived expectation that the coach should take a position of power and guide coachees. Similar adaptations with respect to directiveness have been observed in Asia (Gan & Chong, 2015; Hui et al., 2019; Lam, 2016; Nangalia & Nangalia, 2010). However, when exploring Emiratis' experience of being coached, a more nuanced picture emerged with respect to levels of desired directiveness, depending on coaching goals (King & van Nieuwerburgh, 2020). The study findings suggest that directiveness may be desired along the part of the coaching spectrum aimed at a coachee's learning of tools or skills; yet coachees appear to appreciate opportunities for self-directed reflection more, often in-between coaching sessions, where the aim is to achieve better (self-)understanding, clarity and personal growth.

So far, this chapter sought to give an overview of the theoretical concepts and models that are relevant for PPC practitioners working in multicultural contexts, which can, realistically, be found in almost every environment once a person becomes aware of the many visible and invisible cultural facets encountered in oneself and others on a continuous basis. The chapter then moved to practical models and frameworks that PP coaches may encounter in their work and explored how some of the theoretical aspects may manifest in coaching work, using Rosinski's model and strengths-based approaches as examples, and highlighted important considerations for PPC practitioners in this field. The next part offers a practical case study from one of the authors.

Chinese-Indian Team Coaching: Case Study by Phek Yen Ng

One of the authors undertook team coaching for a group of Chinese leaders from one of the largest Chinese communication technology companies that was expanding into South-East Asia and India. The overseas operation in India was established in 2015 with a group of Chinese leaders seconded to India to manage the local teams, marketing and sales operation including setting up a new factory. Over the past 2 years, the India operation grew rapidly, and the company is now one of the top three players in the Indian market. The Chinese management team recruited Indian talent to develop the local market; some of these hires occupied key positions.

During the business and local team expansion, management issues came to light. The Chinese leaders were losing trust in the Indian team's work and ability to deliver. Specifically, the Indian teams were perceived as not keeping their deadlines and promises. On the other hand, the Indian team saw the Chinese leaders as demanding, expecting long working hours and offering no work-life balance. This affected internal collaboration: Chinese management was unable to gain commitment from local teams, while the Indian team didn't receive managerial support and showed little engagement in their work. As a result, marketing campaigns were delayed, response to market developments was slow and the cost of communication rose (i.e., a two-hour project now took weeks to complete).

Two marked dimensions emerged from the team COF profiles that were then discussed in a joint team coaching session: 'control-humility' and 'direct-indirect' communication. First, the Chinese leaders tended towards a 'control' orientation, showing a preference for taking charge, being proactive and pushing to make things happen. The top underlying value for the Chinese leaders was diligence. Because of this value, they showed strong initiative in making things happen. Comparatively, the Indian team displayed a laissez-faire attitude with a preference towards 'humility'.

Second, in the 'direct/indirect' communication dimension, the Chinese leaders leaned towards 'direct' communication and showed a preference for expressing their opinions in a straightforward manner. The Indian team preferred 'indirect' expression of thought and disagreement, with the top underlying value of harmony. For example, they would say "yes" even though they did not agree with a decision or set of instructions. As a result, misunderstandings were common. The Indian team felt offended, uncomfortable and disrespected, while the Chinese leaders perceived them as unable to deliver, as untrustworthy and called for closer control and supervision to ensure compliance.

Both teams were able to recognise their different cultural preferences and values in this session. They reflected on what would happen if they continued to over- and underuse certain orientations (control or humility, direct or indirect communication). Several actions were taken. First, the Chinese leaders held regular dialogue with the Indian team to learn about each other's values and understand what drives their respective control/humility preferences. Second, they also appointed core Indian managers with strong abilities to adjust their direct/indirect communication

preference to serve as a bridge in delivering tough messages to the local team. Third, the CEO seconded outstanding Indian performers to the Chinese headquarters to promote learning about Chinese, Indian, organisational and work culture for the benefit of the organisation and employees. Fourth, the Indian team relied on the Chinese leaders to communicate with headquarters to obtain resources and support for local operations.

These first steps helped raise awareness and understanding for some of the main cultural differences. A next step may include working towards further leveraging each other's strengths inherent in cultural orientations in a systematic fashion and improving wellbeing. For example, an Indian manager may be able to offer valuable support to navigate a situation that offers the company limited control while a Chinese manager may be able to assist a team facing a tight deadline by instilling confidence. Similarly, respective communication strengths can be utilised depending whether firm, clear communication is required or a measured message that helps maintain goodwill or create buy-in from other parties.

At the same time, increased understanding of respective strengths may motivate individuals to flex and stretch personal preferences and activate underused personal strengths. This might, for the Chinese team, paradoxically involve achieving more by learning to let go (i.e., leveraging 'control' and 'humility') by striving for sustainable results rather than counterproductively aiming for results at all costs. Both teams might combine clarity and sensitivity in communications going forward (i.e., leveraging 'direct' and 'indirect' communication). Combining diverse strengths in such a way can allow capitalising on the full spectrum of team strengths (Rosinski, 2019).

Future Directions and Considerations

The field of coaching started with practitioners, not as an evidence-based science. Awareness for culture in coaching had an even later start. This may go some way in explaining why CCC research is still scarce and why practitioner models like the ones presented in this chapter emerged first. Initiatives like the Global Code of Ethics (European Mentoring and Coaching Council, 2018), as well as the Code of Ethical Practice in Positive Psychology (Jarden et al., 2019) aim to increase the awareness for diversity and inclusion in (positive) coaching practice, but more research is needed to complement such efforts. While understanding bias and privilege highlights the need to do things differently, it does not necessarily offer the means to do so. Without alternatives to dominant Western models, even well-meaning practitioners are left to use ill-fitting models and decide for themselves how they can be adjusted. Issuing global research and practice challenges, as has been done by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) for health, education and practice in recent years, or Rosinski's offer to make the COF available for select research proposals, can serve to satisfy the need for greater diversity and inclusion of

all voices in the areas of coaching, CP and PP, but can also incentivise researchers and practitioners in addressing these issues.

Heightened awareness for diversity, inclusion and the many cultural variations even within seemingly homogenous groups makes this chapter and the topics raised a concern for all coaches. Coaching in a culturally intelligent manner, that is mindful of the limitations of the various PPC tools and approaches described, may help pave a way forward for PPC practitioners, particularly as the field must develop its own systematic and empirically developed corpus of knowledge (Van Zyl et al., 2020) to explicitly address issues of culture. It may mark the start of a long line of changes that mean managing and/or upending altogether larger systems of bias, privilege and unstated inequalities that influence how wellbeing is understood, experienced and managed in the field (Christopher et al., 2014; Fessler, 2010; Gone, 2011; Hicks et al., 2015). Expanding our understanding of the mechanisms at play when coaching in non-WEIRD cultural contexts through research, training and further enhancements of culturally-sensitive ethics and competency frameworks seems not only paramount, but timely as PP moves into its 'third wave', making these issues explicit areas of urgent attention, scientific development and moral imperative (Lomas et al., 2020). Together with PP initiatives designed to formally expand research into less represented parts of the world and to both elicit and develop "other" models of wellbeing (Lambert et al., 2020), PPC may move beyond simple views of culture and instead understand wellbeing from a range of global perspectives that enables the development of appropriate PPC applications, theories and frameworks that have the potential to unseat Western views that have claimed dominance—unfairly, inaccurately and potentially even with damaging effect—for far too long.

Discussion Points

- Consider the different cultural groups you are part of in various life contexts (e.g., at work, with family of origin, in the community). How do they influence or reflect your personal values, beliefs, thinking, feeling and acting?
- In your next training, when reading PPC research or when working with your favourite coaching model, consider the implicit underlying assumptions the authors or facilitators make and the values inherent. What impact do they have when you coach clients of different age, gender, socioeconomic background, race or religion?
- Read up on PP 2.0 and 3.0. Consider how strengths-based coaching sits within it and what opportunity a cultural lens may offer PP practice and research.
- Consider your own cultural preferences and the differences you encounter in coaching conversations with your coachees' preferences. What can you learn from the different cultural perspectives for yourself and as a coach? How could you leverage the differences for a more effective coaching conversation?

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Silvia King is a positive psychology coach, public speaker and enthusiastic empowerer of people. She works with individuals and teams to help them flourish through 1-to-1 Positive Psychology coaching and group workshops. She holds an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology and Coaching Psychology (MAPPCP) from the University of East London and an MA/lic.oec.publ. (Business Management) from the University of Zurich. Her complementary qualifications include Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence facilitation, certified Laughter Yoga Teacher who trained with the creator of Laughter Yoga, Dr Madan Kataria, and certified MTa® Experiential Learning facilitation. She has over 15 years' experience of working in a cross-cultural corporate context. Her coaching work started in cross-cultural corporate communications. Today, with her pragmatic approach to coaching, she helps people and teams to thrive. Silvia delivers workshops and trainings, is a conference speaker and "puts the P into PERMA", e.g., as the founder of the Dubai Pop-up Laughter Club. As a researcher, she explored Emirati Muslims' experience of being coached. Silvia is co-creator of the ICF accredited course "Develop your cultural sensitivity for successful cross-cultural coaching, mentoring & leadership".

Louise Lambert, based in Dubai (United Arab Emirates), is a Canadian registered psychologist who develops, delivers, and evaluates positive psychology/positive education intervention programs for organizations and schools across the GCC region. She has several peer-reviewed publications, some of which have been featured in recent RAND Corporation and World Happiness Reports (2019). Her research areas include culture and subjective wellbeing, the development of character strengths for greater PISA scores and employment outcomes for youth, as well as the use of positive psychology interventions for greater wellbeing in the workplace. Since 2015, Dr. Lambert has been the Editor of the *Middle East Journal of Positive Psychology*. She is also the author of the first regional textbook in positive psychology (Springer, 2019), and general psychology (Cambridge, 2018), and teaches at a local university.

Phek Yen Ng FCCA, FCPA is an executive coach and facilitator with a strong business background. She has more than 20 years of working experience in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. She was the Finance Director for the largest telco in China, where she was the first and only expatriate in the Group which consists of more than 300,000 employees during that period. Her extensive management and leadership experience in Chinese SOEs and MNCs has provided her rich intercultural experience in understanding and leading teams of diverse cultures. She is also an entrepreneur with her boutique consulting firm in Beijing and Hong Kong. Her work focuses on global leadership, diversity and inclusion, and innovation. She has coached and trained leaders and teams in Asia to help them becoming more effective globally. Originally from Malaysia, Phek Yen is now based in Beijing. She received her EMBA from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Phek Yen is a Master Certified in the Cultural Orientations Framework. She is also a Stakeholder Centered Coaching Certified Coach, LEGO® Serious Play facilitator, and FORTH Innovation facilitator.

Philippe Rosinski, MCC, is considered the pioneer of intercultural and global coaching. He is the author of two seminal books, *Coaching Across Cultures* and *Global Coaching*. For almost 30 years and across continents, Philippe has helped people and organizations thrive and make a positive difference in the world. Philippe is a world authority in executive coaching, team coaching, and global leadership development. He is the first European to have been designated Master Certified Coach by the International Coach Federation. He has also developed an integrative coaching supervision approach. Philippe is the principal of Rosinski & Company, a consultancy based in Belgium with partners around the globe, and a professor at the Kenichi Ohmae Graduate School of Business in Tokyo, Japan. He intervenes in several other academic institutions including HEC Paris and the University of Cambridge. He is the co-author of over 10 books including *Evidence Based Coaching Handbook* and *Mastering Executive Coaching*, and the author of the *Cultural Orientations Framework (COF) assessment*. A Master of Science from Stanford University, Philippe has received numerous awards including the Thinkers50 Marshall Goldsmith Leading Global Coaches Award (London, 2019) and has been listed among the Global Gurus Coaching Top 30 (2021).