

## **Doing things together: decision making process styles**

**Gustavo Pires, Carlos Colaço, José Pinto Correia & António Rodrigues Pereira**

University : Faculdade de Motricidade Humana – FMH (Human Kinetics School), Portugal

### **Introduction**

A global crises marked by increasing poverty and exclusion in our asymmetrical world faces humanity at the beginning of the XXI century. According to UNESCO, culture is a crucial key to solve World crisis. For that reason, that world-wide organisation decided to develop a new tool, the “World Culture Report”, to provide world-wide analysis on which new policies can be based. As it was aforementioned by the UNESCO’s General – Director, culture shapes the way we see the world. It therefore has the capacity to bring about the change of attitudes needed to ensure peace and sustainable development, which structure the only possible way ahead, for peace and life on the planet. Therefore, culture is an essential issue to make people understand each other. To create this understanding, each other must start to know the way people make their own choices and decisions. This abstract presents the main ideas about a research project concerning differences in “decision making process styles”. The project has two main objectives. The first is a theoretical one. We want to state that sport can be an excellent tool (“a cultural integrator device”) to understand cultural diversity among countries in the world. The second objective is an empirical one. We want to argue that to understand cultural diversity we must know the “human decision making process style”.

### **Method**

In order to reach the first objective we are going to use the main references and speculate about the prime issues concerning the subject. The second objective is going to be accomplished by a questionnaire: a decision-making process style questionnaire was used to determine the sports managers self perception in terms of a “cognitive contingency model” (Rowe, A. & Mason, R. & Dickel, K. & Snyder, N., 1990).

### **Results**

The emergence of a national culture is a hard process to acquire, done by successive generations, and by certain values and norms that are shared by communities that live in a national state or territory. Culture involves people values and traditions with which they can identify to. When we think about culture we are looking at ways different groups of people live, work and play together. People are exposed to different cultures. The cultural gap can be narrow or large. Intercultural encounters can be stressful in variable degrees. According to Chelladurai, P. (1999) “culture has a significant impact on one’s personality. Culture as a general influence determines the range of experiences and situations to which the individual is exposed and the values that he or she holds.” Sport is at the same time a consequence of the integration of cultural diversity and a expression of it. By sport people from different cultural identities can share basic ideas and common behavioural patterns. When the athletes joined together in Sydney in 2000 for the Olympic Games, there were 100 years since women first took part in the Games in Paris 1900. But for many Moslem females opportunities remain desolate. Being together in a common project is really sport main’s purpose. As Chalip, L. (1995) mentioned “modern sport is inextricably intertwined with government policymaking.” Therefore sport can be one of the issues that government policies can choose in order to improve human rights and the relations between people and countries.

When different persons are found working together, their cultures often conflict because their underlying values, norms and beliefs also differ. Each decision style tends to reflect different cultures. For example, according to Rowe A., et al, (1991) the directive style is associated with a dominant need of power; the behavioural style needs affiliation; the analytical style pursues achievement; and the conceptual style wants recognition. Our initial hypothesis was that different decision-makers may use different styles and have different reactions according to nationalities, gender and ages identities.

According to Rowe, A. et al (1991), values between 20-40 from the application of the standardized questionnaire are considered in an week zone, between 40-80 are in the middle zone, and values upper 80 constitute a strength zone.

From the application of the Rowe, A. et al (1991) standard questionnaire to a sample of N = 88 portuguese sport managers (male: N = 55, female N = 33), it is possible to conclude (see table) that, in general terms, a slight down tendency exists in the directive and analytic domains and an ascent accentuated in the behavioural domain. The decomposition of our sample in gender and three age groups (< 25), (26 to 35) and (+ 35), gives the following indications: (1) Portugal presents a lower score in the directive (70) and analytic style (81); (2) in the conceptual style Portugal presents the same value as the American sample; (3) Portugal presents a higher value in the behavioural style (68); (4) concerning the Portuguese gender it is possible to conclude that the females present lower values in the directive and analytic styles and higher values in the conceptual and behavioural ones; (5) concerning the age groups, it is possible to conclude by a significant slight down tendency in the behavioural style from 72 to 58, and an ascent accentuated tendency 79 to 90 in the analytical style, as the age progresses from <25 to +35.

Table							
	Rowe, A.	Portuguese Sport Managers					
<i>Styles</i>	Total	Total	Male	Female	Age < 25	26 to 35	+ 35
Directive	75	70	72	67	68	74	72
Analytic	90	81	85	76	79	81	90
Conceptual	80	80	80	81	82	78	80
Behavioural	55	68	63	76	72	68	58

## Discussion

UNESCO's main purpose is to improve “the mutual knowledge and understanding of people”, by promoting “the free flow of ideas by word and image”. In so doing it is hoped to banish the “suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war”. Of course, it is not an easy thing to do. “Life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved.” Any way, we must learn to leave in a common world with our legitimate differences. For this mutual understanding it is essential to know in all possible ways the “mode” in which people make decisions and the values and attitudes in which they are anchored – the “cultural script and mindset”.

## References

- Calhoun, D. 1981. *Sports Culture & Personality*. Leisure Press. N.Y.
- Chalip, L. 1995. *Policy Analysis in Sport Management*. In: “Journal of Sport Management, issue number 9.
- Chelladurai, P. 1999. *Human Resources Management in Sport and Recreation*. Human Kinetics.
- Dahl, S. 1998. *Cultural Diversity, Globalisation and Cultural Convergence*. Project presented to the European University. Barcelona.
- Fukuyama, F. 1995. *Trust – Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. Free Press.
- Fukuyama, F. 1999. *A Grande Ruptura - A Natureza Humana e a Reconstrução da Ordem Social*. Quetzal. Lisboa.
- Guay, D. 1993. *La Culture Sportive*. PUF, Col. Pratiques Corporelles. Paris.
- Hargreaves, J. 1982. *Sport, Culture and Ideology*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, Reprinted 1985. London
- Lewis, R. 1996. *When Cultures Collide: Managing Successfully Across Cultures.*, Nicholas Brealey. London.
- Malinowski, B. 1968. *Une Théorie Scientifique de la Culture*. Maspero. Paris.
- McRae, H. 1994. *The World in 2020 - Power, Culture and Prosperity: A Vision of the Future*. Jarper Collins Publishers. London.
- Rowe, A. & Mason, R. & Dickel, K. & Snyder, N. 1990. *Strategic Management – A Methodological Approach*. Addison – Wesley Publishing Company.
- United Nations Development Programme. 1998. *Report on the Oslo Symposium*. United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, The Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. October.
- Wanning, E. 1991. *Culture Shock! USA*. Kuperard. London.

## Contacts co-ordinates author

Prof. Gustavo Pires, e-mail: [gustavopires@netcabo.pt](mailto:gustavopires@netcabo.pt)  
 Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, Estrada da Costa, Dafundo, Cruz Quebrada, 1495-688 Lisboa  
 (Portugal)