

What game are you really playing?

Gert Jan Hofstede



foreigners are not
crazy
foreigners are not
evil
...but they play
by
different rules

Rules of the game

If you want to

- ...reward me: hold up **green card**
 - Success story
- ...punish me: hold up **red card**
 - Failure story
- ...challenge yourself: hold up **yellow card**
 - Audience assignment



Programme

- Declared versus unwritten rules
- 'A game is a game is a game?'
 - Chess, Beer Game, Trust & Tracing game, Triangle Tangle
- No, game runs reproduce social life.
 - 6 dimensions of culture
 - Games revisited: hidden rules play up!
- So what?
 - Create cross-cultural evidence:
 - Simple games (= explicit rules are simple)
 - Game runs / teams / individuals with different hidden rules
 - Good debrief
 - Create synthetic hidden rules

Declared and unwritten rules: Conference banquet

- Declared rules:
 - All attendees can participate
 - ...if they have paid their conference fee
- Unwritten rules:
 - What to wear? Who sits where? Can you change places?
 - When can you start eating? Should you finish your plate? Can you offer your food to a neighbour? Can you burp?
 - Who proposes a toast? Can you get drunk?
 - What can you talk about? Should there be songs, speeches?
 - ..., ...

Chess

- Player is 'not' involved
- But...
 - Warfare in a match
 - Aljechin:
 - 'Chess is vanity'
 - Fischer-Spassky 1972
 - Warfare around matches
 - Vassily Ivanchuk:
 - staring at ceiling, dope?



Aljechin



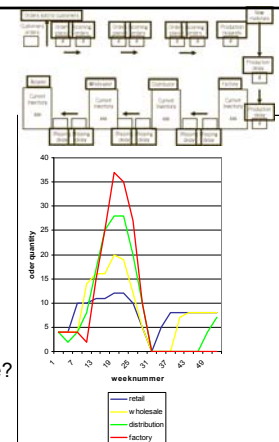
Spassky - Fischer 1972



Ivanchuk-Wang Yue 09

Beer game

- Logistics, bull whip effect
- Players are 'non-communicating automata'
- But...
 - Do you comply?
 - Do you get the purpose?
 - What message do you get?
 - Do you mastermind the game?



Trust & Tracing game

```

    graph LR
      Producer --> Middleman
      Middleman --> Retail Outlet
      Retail Outlet --> Market
      Market --> Producer
      Middleman --> Producer
      Retail Outlet --> Middleman
  
```

- Trade game
 - 21 people play 3x4 traders + 7 customers
 - Product with hidden quality
 - Not 'personal', only financial objective
- But...
 - Whom do you trust? trace? cheat on?
 - Do you make horizontal partnerships?
 - Do you want fixed partners?

Mejer, S.A.; Hofstede, G.J.; Beers, G.; Omta, S.W.F. (2006) Trust and Tracing game: learning about transactions and embeddedness in a trade network. *Production Planning & Control* 17 (6) - p. 569 - 583.

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Triangle Tangle

- Save the world!
 - 4 x 5 people play secret agents
 - Collaborative deciding under stress
 - You can 'kill' by winking
 - Incentives for individual, team and game
- But...
 - Game dynamics hugely different across games
 - Group level powerful driver

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A game is a game is a game? No, game runs reproduce social life.

- ¿Social life?
 - Match between:
 - Individual drives and ambitions
 - Societal institutions and options
 - Aiming at:
 - Being a good member of your group
 - ...according to its unwritten rules
 - ⇒ 'Group' is *moral circle*. Anything from family to society. Not for non-members!

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Collectivism, Hierarchy, Aggression, Otherness, Short / long term, Humility: Which map is what?

Indulgent - Restrained

Large - Small power distance

Long - Short term

Masculine - Feminine

Anxious - Relaxed

Individualist - Collectivist

Six dimensions of culture (Cultures and Organizations 3rd ed 2010)

Teamwork models

Y-axis: Individualism (top) / Individualist (bottom)

X-axis: Feminine (left) / Masculine (right)

Labels: team harmony, team performance, fun, individual performance

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Models of organisation

Y-axis: weak market (top) / strong machine (bottom)

X-axis: small (left) / large pyramid (right)

Labels: market, family, uncertainty avoidance, machine, pyramid

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Games revisited: Chess

- Chessboard is a pyramid
 - Strong hierarchy among pieces
 - Popular in Slav countries
 - ...where Chess players are Big
- Go stones are a family
 - Humble pieces
 - Popular in East Asia




Pictures from Dutch Chess film 'long live the Queen'

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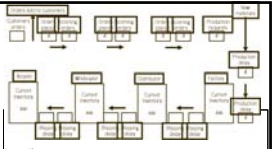
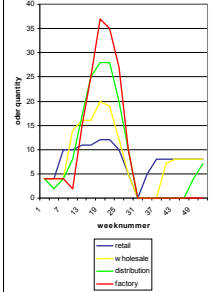
Beer game

Chain 'machinery' fixed

- Swiss: simulate game

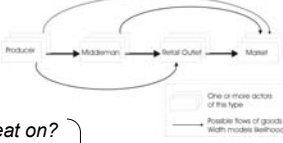
But...relation with facilitator

- ≈ organization metaphor
- ⇒ different dynamics
- US: want to win
- Dutch: meddle
- Moldavians: obey

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Trust & Tracing game



One or more actors of this type


Relative level of goods with modes feedback

- Whom do you trust? trace? cheat on?
- Do you make horizontal partnerships?
- Do you want fixed partners?

- Depends on culture...
 - US trace up front, Dutch get cheated upon
 - Chinese subchain, Dutch trade with everyone
- and on group identity
 - Subchains per school
- and personality

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Triangle Tangle



- You can 'kill' by winking
- ♂ kill, ♀ cooperate
- Incentives for individual, team and game
- ♂ dominate, except...

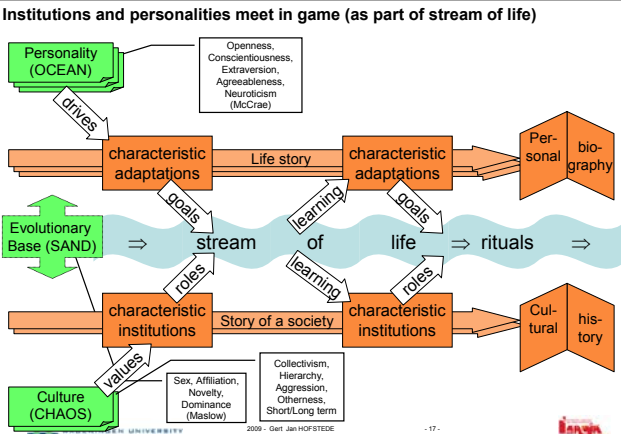
Process:

- When stress mounts, collaborate
- 'Unwritten rules' set early in game
- Culture-dependent motivation



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Institutions and personalities meet in game (as part of stream of life)



Personality (OCEAN): Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism (McCrae)

Evolutionary Base (SAND)

Culture (CHAOS): Sex, Affiliation, Novelty, Dominance (Maslow); Collectivism, Hierarchy, Aggression, Otherness, Short/Long term

characteristic adaptations → Life story → characteristic adaptations → Personal biography

characteristic institutions → Story of a society → characteristic institutions → Cultural history

stream of life: goals, learning, roles, rituals

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Game reproduces society...

- Goals (← SAND / OCEAN / CHAOS)
Win, impress, be friends, obey, avoid, try something new...
- Roles (← Game)
Leader, sidekick, maverick, reconciliator, enemy, spoilsport, dutiful pupil...
- Rules (← Declared: Game, Unwritten: SAND / OCEAN / CHAOS)
e.g. red, yellow, green cards: how do you use the declared rules?
Depends on unwritten rules of being a conference attendee

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So what?

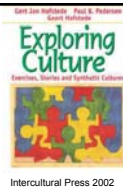
- You can use game to 'unhide' hidden rules
 - Take any game, try:
 - a simple game
 - with ambiguous incentives and roles:
 - Individual
 - Team
 - Game run
 - Debrief for perception, objectives, role enactment

Debrief for hidden rules

- For each participant:
 - Perception
 - What was the aim of the game?
 - Objectives
 - What did you try to achieve?
 - Role enactment
 - Who took which role? How and how quickly?
 - Why? Age, gender, skills, ...
- Discuss (if acceptable)

So what?

- You can create explicit hidden rules:
- 'Synthetic' cultures
 - Hyper-individualist, hyper-collectivist
 - Hyper-large, hyper-small power distance
 - ...etc...10 in total
- Simple collaboration tasks
 - E.g. discuss, trade
- ...but real misunderstandings!
- Takes preparation, courage, debriefing
 - More threatening in collectivistic, large PD, Uncertainty avoiding, short term-oriented, restrained cultures



Intercultural Press 2002

Hofstede, G.J. (2000)
You must have been at a Different Meeting
Journal of Global Information Technology Management 3:2 (2000) - p. 42 - 58.

One synthetic culture: Extreme short-term orientation (Shotor)

- Seven golden rules:
 1. Never lose face.
 3. Quick results are expected.
 4. Traditions should be respected.
 7. Saving is not popular
- Positive words: relation, gift, excited, today, truth, quick, spend, receive, grand, show, bottom line
- Negative words: work, save, duty, goal, future, invest, afford, effort
- At a glance: talkative, warm, formal, big spenders, fatalistic
- Gender roles: elaborate rituals

Synthetic cultures and Prejudices

- <indivs> are cold
- <collecs> are glued together
- <hipows> are autocratic
- <lopows> are disrespectful
- <femis> are not committed
- <mascus> think they're so good
- <uncavos> are closed to ideas
- <unctols> break the rules
- <lotors> are stingy
- <shotors> are irresponsible

Programme revisited

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Conclusion: Life is a case of serious gaming

Always

We play the social game by the hidden rules of our culture

In new groups

We create new hidden rules

In games

We create declared rules

...and we fill in the gaps with our hidden rules

It is vital to understand our hidden rules

