

Patterns of Developing Cultural Intelligence of the Prime Ministers of
Newly Independent Estonia

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Abstract

Cultural intelligence has become a vital ability for many different roles today. This paper focuses on a new role that has got little attention by the researchers of cultural intelligence before: the prime ministers on foreign assignments in the context of Estonia. Four Estonian prime ministers were interviewed with the purpose to explore how the cultural intelligence of the prime ministers of the newly independent Estonia was formed and qualitative thematic data analysis techniques were employed. In this paper, the role of the prime minister on foreign assignments is defined and four different ways of becoming culturally intelligent are explored. The findings show that the primary contacts with different cultures a person might have in his childhood, depended on which part of Estonia they grew up (South-Estonia vs North-Estonia, urban vs rural) and on their family background. The two-year-long military service during the period of the Soviet Union, working with political international youth organizations and a few-month-long trainings in foreign countries in the early '90s also offered a culturally enriching experience. All four prime ministers can speak several languages and have developed for themselves guidelines for communicating with people from other cultures, showing they are aware of the importance of cultural intelligence and motivated to become better in international communication.

Keywords: cultural intelligence, cultural exposure, prime minister, foreign assignments, role theory

1. Introduction

Today's globalising world offers numerous opportunities for self-actualization for people as well as for organizations. But having an opportunity to act internationally is only half of the win, the other half comes from being able to perform successfully when getting there. People who are able to communicate effectively with people from different cultures or while being in a foreign culture, are a great asset to any organization that has its interests outside its cultural environment. The need for people who can operate successfully outside their cultural environment has led to the development of the concept of cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence is defined as the capability of an individual to successfully adapt to a new cultural environment, which differs from his normal cultural setting (Earley & Ang, 2003). It helps to understand why some people are more successful in performing in foreign cultures than others and what is needed for adapting in foreign cultures.

While investigating cultural intelligence, researches usually focus on the context of a certain role position. Most of them have concentrated on international manager's position (e.g. Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Peterson, 2004; Johnson et al., 2006; Huff, 2013), but there are also studies which were conducted among other role positions, e.g. in the public sector, military personnel on foreign assignments (O' Conner, 2010; Rehg et al. 2012) or students in various contexts (Crossman & Clarke, 2009; Ramis & Krastina, 2010). Those different role positions show how cultural intelligence has become important in various fields of today's world.

Despite the diversity of different role positions, the role of prime minister and especially his role on foreign assignments has not been investigated. Depending on the country's political system, prime ministers can hold a very important role in foreign policy and their ability to perform well on foreign assignments can determine the whole country's well-being. According to Estonia's Government of Republic Act and International

communication law in Estonia, the prime minister is the head of executive power who owns full authority in foreign negotiations (Government of Republic act of 1995; Välissuhtlemisseadus, 2006). Despite Estonia's complicated historical background, Estonia has been quite successful in their foreign policy and its prime ministers have played an important role in it. The aim of this paper is to explore different patterns how the cultural intelligence of newly independent Estonia's prime ministers was formed. Consequently, the following research questions were formulated: (1) how is the prime minister's role on foreign assignments defined in Estonian context (2) which have been the moments in their lives that have formed their cultural intelligence? To answer the posed questions the theoretical frameworks of cultural intelligence and role theory were worked through, and in-depth interviews were conducted with four ex-prime ministers of newly independent Estonia.

2. Theoretical background cultural intelligence

When studying whether and how people adapt in foreign environments, two basic terms come up: *cultural intelligence* and *cultural competence*. Those terms are not clearly distinguished in literature having led to tangled understandings and misuse. There does not seem to be consensus whether cultural intelligence is one of the cultural competence models and a part of the cultural competence perspective, or whether they are independent perspectives (Johnson et al., 2006; Leung et al., 2014). In the current paper, the difference between them is explained to ensure that the proper term is used throughout the study.

The confusion with the terms might be caused by the fact that there is not much consensus on what cultural competence consists of among different researchers (Johnson et al., 2006). There are numerous models of cultural competence: some that are wider concepts where cultural intelligence model forms only a part of the cultural competence model, resulting in cultural intelligence being one part of the bigger concept – the cultural

competence (Figure 1) (e.g. Reichard et al., 2015); or models where there is no common core, making them completely different models (e.g. Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000).

Both terms have been used to research individual's ability to function effectively across cultures (Early & Ang, 2003; Ng & Earley, 2006; Whaley & Davis 2007). Also, they both have been widely used in various disciplines such as global leadership (e.g. Bird et al. 2010; Earley & Peterson, 2004), international businesses (Lloyd & Härtel 2010; Crowne, 2008) and international education (Cushner & Mahon 2009; Peng et al., 2015). Cultural intelligence though focuses more on intercultural capabilities while cultural competence on intercultural traits. Bearing in mind that the purpose of this article is to explore different patterns how prime ministers have become successful on their foreign assignments and the confusion over the term *cultural competence*, the term used in this article, is cultural intelligence, which focuses more clearly on the process of becoming more successful in adapting and operating in foreign environments.

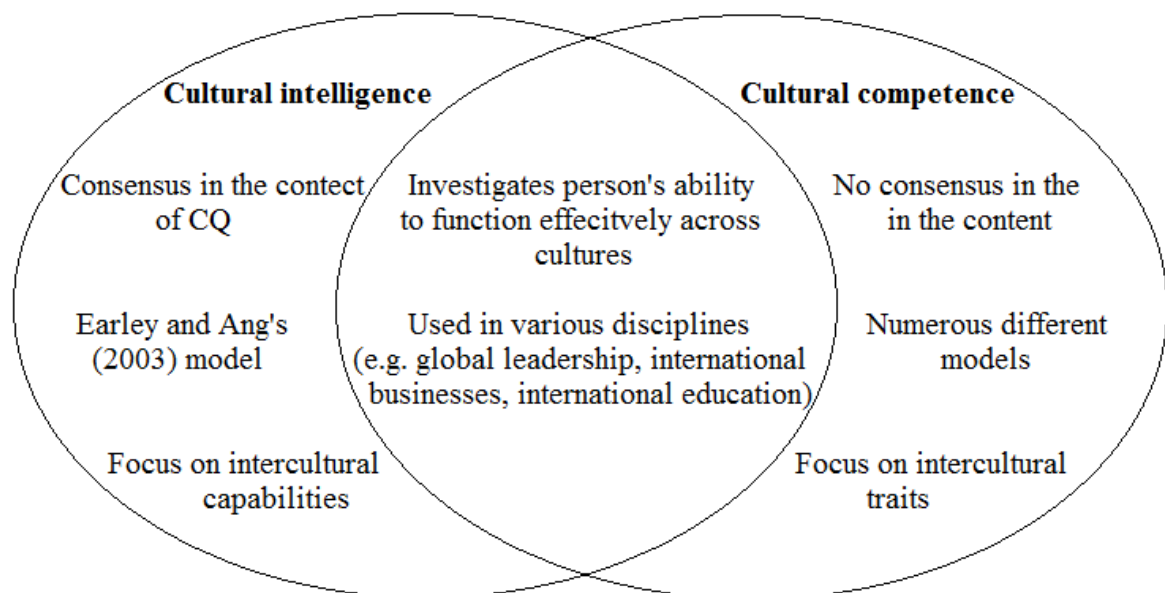


Figure 1. The comparison of the concepts of cultural intelligence and cultural competence with their intersection (Composed by the author)

One of the earliest discussions on cultural intelligence (CQ) defined the term as the capability of an individual to successfully adapt to a new cultural environment, which differs from his normal cultural setting (Earley & Ang, 2003). This includes an ability to communicate with people from other cultures and across cultural context (Thomas et al., 2015). Cultural differences can emerge from being of different race, nation or ethnical background (Ang et al., 2007). If required, a person can develop an entirely new behavioural pattern, for example new gestures and intonation (Earley & Peterson, 2004) to cope in a different environment. According to Thomas et al., CQ is a system that brings together knowledge and skills that influence each other and connects with cultural metacognition (Thomas et al., 2008). As Peterson said, cultural intelligence is actually the patterns of behavior, which consist of skills (such as language skills) on the one hand, and characteristic features (for example flexibility), on the other (2004). These patterns adjust according to the values and attitudes of the culture where the communication takes place (ibid.). This, in turn, assures that the individual behaves appropriately in the communication situations, can make himself understandable and refrains from rash judgments of the situation enabling the creation of functional partnerships in foreign cultural environments (Plum et al., 2008; Triandis, 2006). Cultural intelligence helps to understand why some people are more successful in performing in foreign cultures than others and what is needed for adapting more easily in foreign cultures.

In 2002, Early introduced the structure of cultural intelligence where he brought out 3 main facets of CQ (Figure 2): cognitive, motivational and behavioural. The fourth aspect, metacognitive, that soon became an independent facet, was in the initial approach under the cognitive facet. The latter structure has remained more or less the same in different studies until today, though some of the facets have been prioritized more, and some have been left

out (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang et al. 2006; Thomas et al, 2008; Ismail et al., 2012). Next, the four main facets are described briefly.

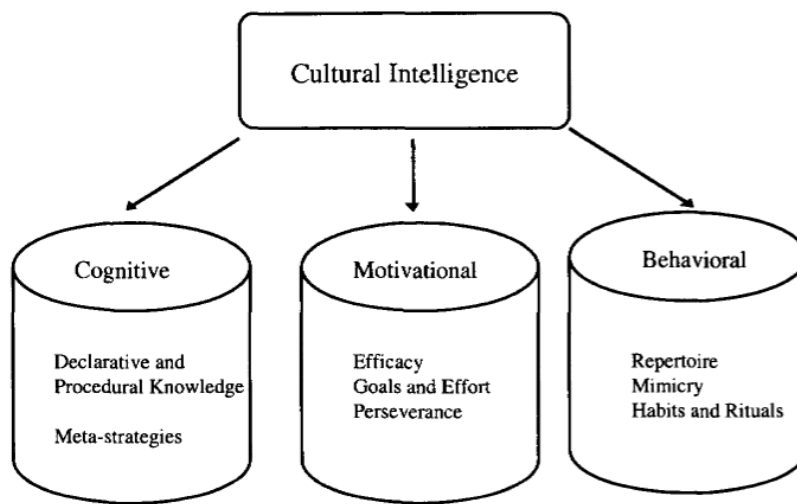


Figure 2. Facets of cultural intelligence (Early, 2002)

Metacognitive CQ shows how a person comprehends cross-cultural experiences (Ang et al. 2006; Ismail et al., 2012) by controlling the processes where cultural knowledge is gained. It includes coming up with a strategy before the cross-cultural encounter, studying the assumptions of the encounter, and when the experience differs from the assumptions, then adjusting the mental plans (Ismail et al., 2012). People with higher metacognitive CQ dedicate time to reflect on their cultural assumptions and conform them based on the cultural norms and experiences to interacting with people from the culture (Ang et al., 2006). It prevents us from narrow-minded thinking and making premature conclusions.

Cognitive CQ is the overall understanding of the culture and its differences compared to other cultures (Earley & Ang, 2003). It includes 3 types of knowledge: declarative such as knowledge about legal, economic and political systems, social interaction norms, religious beliefs and language (Ang et al., 2006; Ismail et al., 2012), procedural that is the ability to process the knowledge, act upon it and gain new declarative knowledge, and conditional that is knowledge of when and why use cognitive knowledge (Early, 2002). This is practical

knowledge that one can read from books or internet and prepare himself before going to a foreign country.

Motivational CQ is the key to make people want to adapt into new cultures. It triggers person's interest to experience new situations and interact with culturally different people (Earley & Ang, 2003; Ang et al., 2006; Templer et al., 2006) and enables him to use the gained knowledge to produce culturally appropriate response (Earley & Peterson, 2004). People with high motivational CQ are more open to new cultures and do not get discouraged so easily when finding themselves in difficult situations or failing, and are more confident in their abilities to be successful in interacting in foreign environments (Earley & Ang, 2003). People with low motivational CQ rather avoid communicating with foreign cultures and cannot handle emotionally culturally difficult situations that well.

Behavioural CQ is individual's ability to acquire and adapt behaviours appropriately in the new cultural settings to engage in high-quality social interactions (Ang et al., 2006; Thomas et al., 2008). This includes the verbal and non-verbal actions that are suitable for foreign environments (Early & Ang, 2003; Ismail et al., 2012). For example, people with higher behavioural CQ are more easily able to choose proper behaviours, gestures, tones and words as well as can learn languages faster (Early, 2002; Early & Ang, 2003). But there are also more indirect ways how individual's behaviour is connected to behavioural CQ: a person may know what the desired behaviour is but because of his deep set reservations, is still unable to act that way or shows his hesitations that could offend the host (Early, 2002; Earley & Ang, 2003), for example, while eating some exotic cuisines. Therefore, behavioural CQ is not only about adapting appropriate behaviours but also overcoming mental barriers that prevent a person from applying them.

Those dimensions generally apply to all individuals trying to successfully manage in foreign settings but the experience and consequences can still vary depending on the role the

person represents while being abroad. Cultural intelligence researchers have usually focused on a certain role while investigating cultural intelligence. Next, some of the most researched roles are looked at more closely.

2.1. Cultural intelligence in the context of various roles

While studying cultural intelligence, many researchers have focused on different role positions when talking about cultural intelligence. In this chapter, four different role positions that are often explored by cultural intelligence researchers, are described: international managers, students, exchange students and military personnel in overseas assignments. The author uses role theory to describe each role's essence and places it in the cultural intelligence research as role theory also explains why people in certain roles have difficulties adapting in the same role in another culture.

Role theory dates back to the 1930s and since then it has been widely used in various fields, e.g. psychology, social psychology, organizational behaviour (Welbourne et al., 1998). "Role theory concerns one of the most important features of social life, characteristic behaviour patterns of roles, the fact that human beings behave in ways that are different and predictable depending on their respective social identities and situation" (Biddle, 1986). Role theory presumes that the person, in the current case the prime minister, acts in a predictable way depending on his social position and context settings (social norms) causing society to have specific expectations of how people in this certain position should behave (Biddle and Thomas, 1966; Solomon et al., 1985; Biddle, 1986). If the person fails to act in the expected manner, his or her behaviour is considered inappropriate and in more extreme cases can be punishable by law. In the case of prime ministers, the parliament could require the confidence vote.

Role theory uses the term *position* for different roles which involve people who behave similarly in selected areas of life or have another common denominator that is collectively recognized in the society: e.g. mother, son, doctor, redheads (Biddle and Thomas, 1966). Following, four different role positions that have received more attention from the researchers of cultural intelligence will be described: international manager, student, exchange student and military personnel. Those positions are very different which demonstrates the exceedingly multifaceted nature of the entire conceptual framework of roles as well as cultural intelligence.

The most common role position, where cultural intelligence is researched, is international manager (Earley & Ang, 2003; Early & Peterson, 2004; Johnson et al., 2006; Thomas, 2006; Huff, 2013; Townsend et al., 2014). From role theory perspective, international manager's position falls to the category that is needed to be earned, it means - a person was not born for this position but needs to work for it. Nor does the person have this position for life, if he fails to meet the expectations he can lose the position or decide himself to leave. (Biddle and Thomas, 1966) The role of international manager can have some physical attributes, for example most societies expect them to wear formal clothes but this is stricter in some cultures than in others. Mintzberg (1973) came out with ten roles that are common to the work of all managers (e.g. figurehead, leader, spokesman, resource allocator and negotiator). Though those roles remain the same across cultures, the expectations on how they should be acted out, may vary in different cultures. Here, Hofstede's (1983) cultural dimensions can be helpful for understanding what is expected in certain countries from managers. For example, in the countries where power distance (one of Hofstede's cultural dimensions) is small, the hierarchy in organization is flexible depending on the situation (*ibid.*). This means that employers and employees work side by side, they consider themselves as equal who value each other's opinions as contrary to the countries where

power distance is large, hierarchies are rigid and employers talk to their employees giving them commands not consulting. Understandably, when a manager from a country where the power distance is very small, e. g. Austria, moves to work in a country where the power distance is large, e. g. Philippines, he has to change his behaviour. (Hofstede, 1983) Firms need to find capable and competent managers who are able to succeed in different environments and cultural settings. The primary cause for international businesses to fail in foreign countries is its managers' inability to adjust to local culture and business environment (Ricks, 1999; Johnson et al., 2006). Cultural intelligence researchers in this context try to ascertain why some managers do better on overseas assignments than others (Thomas, 2006), and what kind of training is needed to become more culturally intelligent (Early & Peterson, 2004; Rehg et al, 2012). When managers understand what kind of behaviour is expected of them, they will become more confident and successful performing their assignments and more willing to go to foreign countries in future.

Cultural intelligence is also researched from the perspective of student's role: students who meet different cultures in their classroom as they or their classmates are immigrants, or students who decide to study some period of time abroad (Crossman & Clarke, 2009; Ramis & Krastina, 2010). From the role theory perspective, the role of student, is usually not the one a person needs to achieve to get (with an exception of the private school students) as in most first and second world countries, being a student is a child's right guaranteed by law until his age 16-18 depending on the country. However, there are still expectations to their behaviour as a student: to participate in classes, do their homework etc. Those expectations can differ in some aspects, for example, in China students are expected to be very quiet during the lessons while in America they are expected to participate in discussions and take the floor. Similarly to the role of manager, student's role is not for lifetime, either. In the first case, when students meet different cultures in their classroom, knowing about cultural intelligence and its

principles helps students to incorporate different perspectives, skills to their everyday life and work together with people from different backgrounds. Although multicultural classrooms are more challenging for teaching as well as for learning, they potentially provide series of learning processes that normally do not happen in regular classrooms, for example learning how to explain problems to others in a more understandable manner, using alternative explanations and creative examples. It can also promote language learning and sincere interest in other cultures. While international companies have an important role in promoting the cultural intelligence skills of managers, in the case of students it is carried out by their teachers and family members. Here the question is – how to get most out of this opportunity and not only make it possible for students to learn in this challenging environment, but also to get their first experiences from other cultures and become more culturally intelligent (Ramis & Krastina, 2010). Becoming culturally intelligent from early age will not only promote confidence and interest to communicate with other cultures but will also give the person a great advantage in global work market.

In addition to the student role, the exchange student role is considered separately. The exchange student is the student who spends a certain period of time abroad studying outside his home country. In role theory perspective when comparing student role with exchange student role, there is one key difference: becoming an exchange student requires effort and motivation from the person's part. When the experience of learning about different cultures in the classroom can take place at a very early age, then the other aforementioned way – the decision to study abroad – usually takes place a bit later when the students are at least in the high schools or university. In this case, they usually go alone and without immediate family support. Here a student has a direct aim to learn about a new culture and maybe a new language. The need for cultural intelligence is also recognized by universities who offer more and more international exchange programs as well as in-class work with international

experience (Crossman & Clarke, 2009; Ahn & Ettner, 2013). Having an experience of living, working or studying abroad has become a big asset in many fields as it was seen in the aforementioned business context.

As it was stated above, cultural intelligence has been researched in private sectors and in private lives. Additionally, cultural intelligence is also a subject for public sector and can even be a question of safety and survival. Military is another role where the influence of cultural intelligence is examined (O' Conner, 2010; Rehg et al., 2012). Military personnel position is similarly to international manager and exchange student a position that needs to be achieved. The expectations to their look is stricter: they need to wear uniform, have short and groomed hair. Unlike the previous positions, the society sees this position more suitable for men (Eagly & Karau, 2002). US military troops residing overseas interact with local people daily and can determine the success or failure of the operation with their capability to form good relationships at the local level. What is more, poor cultural preparation cannot only cause misunderstandings but can even become fatal in critical situations. Due to the importance of having high level of cultural intelligence, the US military comprehend the need for providing cultural training before sending troops to overseas assignments (Salmoni, 2006). By training individuals for cross-cultural assignments, military organizations can reduce the risk of less effective results, mission failures and fatalities (Rehg et al., 2012).

Despite the research in diverse domains, the role of prime minister and especially his role on foreign assignments has not been explored. It has similarities with previously described roles (Table 1): they all presume international communication. Managers and prime ministers lead their teams according to the goals set beforehand. Military and prime ministers both represent the public sector and stand for their interests. Similarly to military and managers, the prime minister is a role position that can be dismissed from when not performing up to expectations.

Table 1.*Cultural intelligence in various role context (Composed by the author)*

Role position	Role theory	Cultural intelligence theory
International manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The role needs to be earned</i> • <i>Can be lost when not meeting expectations</i> • <i>Might have physical attributes such as formal clothes</i> • <i>Mintzberg's 10 common roles to all managers</i> • <i>Expectations to behaviour vary depending on culture</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CQ can determine the success of company foreign adventure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why some managers do better in different cultures than others? • What kind of training is needed to become more CQ? • How to increase satisfaction with working in foreign cultures? • Training is responsibility of the company
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role is guaranteed by the law • <i>Is temporary</i> • Expectations to behaviour vary in some aspects across cultures (e.g. how the student should behave during the class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the possible positive outcomes (tolerance, interest and confidence to communicate with other cultures, language learning etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to make it possible for students to learn in this challenging environment • Training is responsibility of teachers and family members
Exchange student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Acquiring the role position requires effort and motivation from the person's part</i> • <i>Temporary</i> • Usually are high school or university students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually they are motivated to learn about different cultures • The positive outcomes of becoming exchange student to cultural intelligence and later in life • Universities' part of developing cultural intelligence
Military personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The role needs to be earned</i> • Physical attributes: uniform • Society sees the role more suitable for men • Expectations are more similar across cultures than with other role positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CQ can determine the success of operation • CQ can be the question of safety and survival • CQ training is prioritized • Training is responsibility of the military institutions

*Note: * Role position characteristics that are applicable to prime ministers are written in italic*

However, prime minister's role has certain differences compared to previously described roles. While other role positions presume certain career path and preparation, the prime minister's position may be occupied by people with very different qualifications and previous work experience. What is more, while the previously described roles presume

staying in a host country longer, then in case of the prime ministers, the visits are short-term, frequent and to many different cultures.

Whether the person in current position, military, manager or anyone else, is behaving appropriately, depends on social norms applied to the position. All cultures have minimal set of specifications how a person having a certain role should behave and the role can be carried out by anyone who fits to the cultural selection criteria or norms. Those specifications are called role expectations (Biddle and Thomas, 1966) and they comprise more than guidelines for action, also specified ways how the actions should be performed (Sarbin and Allen, 1968). Role expectations for a specific role are substantially constant within given culture but may vary across cultures (Biddle and Thomas, 1966). Differences in expectations to the same position in different cultures can cause confusion for a person who for some reason needs to change his cultural environment. When role expectations are not clear, the person does not know what behaviour is appropriate and cannot predict the behaviour of his complementary roles. (Sarbin and Allen, 1968; Solomon et al., 1985) This may cause tension, diminish self-perceptions of competence and effectiveness (Kahn et al., 1964, as cited in Matta et al., 2015). What is more, when a person is consistently failing to meet the role expectations, he may be removed from the position, especially when the position has been achieved like a job position (Sarbin and Allen, 1968). Role theory captures the reasons why people, who change their cultural environment, fail to succeed in their host country. Host society's different expectations of similar roles can cause tension and confusion in person's mind and inability to act appropriately. This may lead to the motivation and performance loss causing person's wish to quit or to be dismissed from his position.

2.2. *Cultural exposure*

The prime ministers are the people with diverse backgrounds and career paths which lead to different cultural experiences. Person's experiences as well as interactions with others outside his own culture are defined as cultural exposure (Lund, Scheer, & Kozlenkova, 2013). Those experiences differ from everyday encounters resulting in challenges to person's assumptions and thinking (Earley & Peterson, 2004). It helps to develop understanding of values, beliefs and norms that are appropriate in this region and contribute to higher cultural intelligence (Crowne, 2008). Being culturally exposed provides a person with the ability to choose and implement the tools, and adapt them in necessary situations (Johnson et al., 2006) and lead to higher cultural intelligence.

International experience can affect all CQ facets. It provides inimitable knowledge, worldviews and professional ties thus affecting cognitive CQ (Carpenter et al., 2001). Working with people from different cultural backgrounds offers an individual occasions to reflect on their cultural assumptions, analyse cultural norms and develop metacognitive strategies (Shannon et al., 2008). At the same time, people who have varied international experience are more willing to experience new cultures (Shannon et al., 2008), including willingness to relocate as well as communicate with local people (Tarique & Takeuchi, 2008), hence they are more motivated, it means their motivational CQ is higher. And finally, people who are motivated to seek out new experiences will more likely act on those experiences and extend their repertoire of behaviours (Shannon et al., 2008).

There are several ways how a person can get acquainted with other cultures and some of them do not even assume leaving their own cultural environment. The following is an overview of some cultural exposures. They are presented in two groups depending on their significance, i.e. how valuable a way is to learn about the other culture and then divided into work- and nonwork-related domains.

- More significant ways:
 - International nonwork experiences, such as: travelling, jaunts, being a child who accompanies his/her parent(s) to expatriate assignments (third-culture-kid) and being significant other of an expatriate, studying abroad.
 - International work experiences: expatriate work assignments, individually driven overseas work experience. (Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004; Inkson et al., 1997; Selmer & Lam, 2004; Takeuchi et al., 2005)

Those are more significant ways to learn about another culture that involve short- or long-term visits to host culture. The experience of the culture is gained while being inside the culture, which leads to deeper understanding of norms and values (Crowne, 2008). In this way the learning process can be explained through social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) which states that people learn from others around them. For example, when people travel to foreign countries, they learn appropriate behaviours, norms and customs directly by experiencing new situations or observing the local people's behaviour (Bandura, 1997; Phillon 2002). Experiencing the expected behaviour in its proper context can be more influential and intense making the influence to the person greater.

- Less significant ways:
 - International nonwork experiences: watching foreign television programs, reading foreign books or about foreign cultures, and talking with someone from a foreign culture.
 - International work experiences: before the departure training, communicating with someone from a foreign culture due to work in their own cultural environment. (Crowne, 2008)

Those are less significant ways where the contact with another culture is short-term, shallower and takes place in individual's own culture. The person gets the first impression of

this culture, but cannot get the deeper understanding. (*ibid.*) This means, the person will get cognitive knowledge about the country's norms and culture, but until he has experienced those situations, he cannot be really sure, how he will act.

Although researchers have given less attention to nonwork international experience, it also allows people to attain skills and behaviours that are necessary for living and/or working in different cultural environments (Takeuchi et al, 2005). When comparing nonwork experience with work one, Moon et al. (2012) argued that the positive influence of nonwork experience is actually stronger than international work experience because those situations give the person more time and opportunity to learn about the culture, experience culturally diverse situations and interact with various people while work-related situations tie people with work assignments. What is more, as people tend to focus more on information that goes together with their current goal, then people on work assignments may consciously concentrate on work-related knowledge more, while people who have come to visit the country for getting to know a new culture, would spend more time on learning about local norms and customs.

To summarise the different theoretical benchmarks that the current article draws on, a model which shows the ties between different theories (cultural intelligence, cultural exposure and role theory) was compiled (Figure 3).

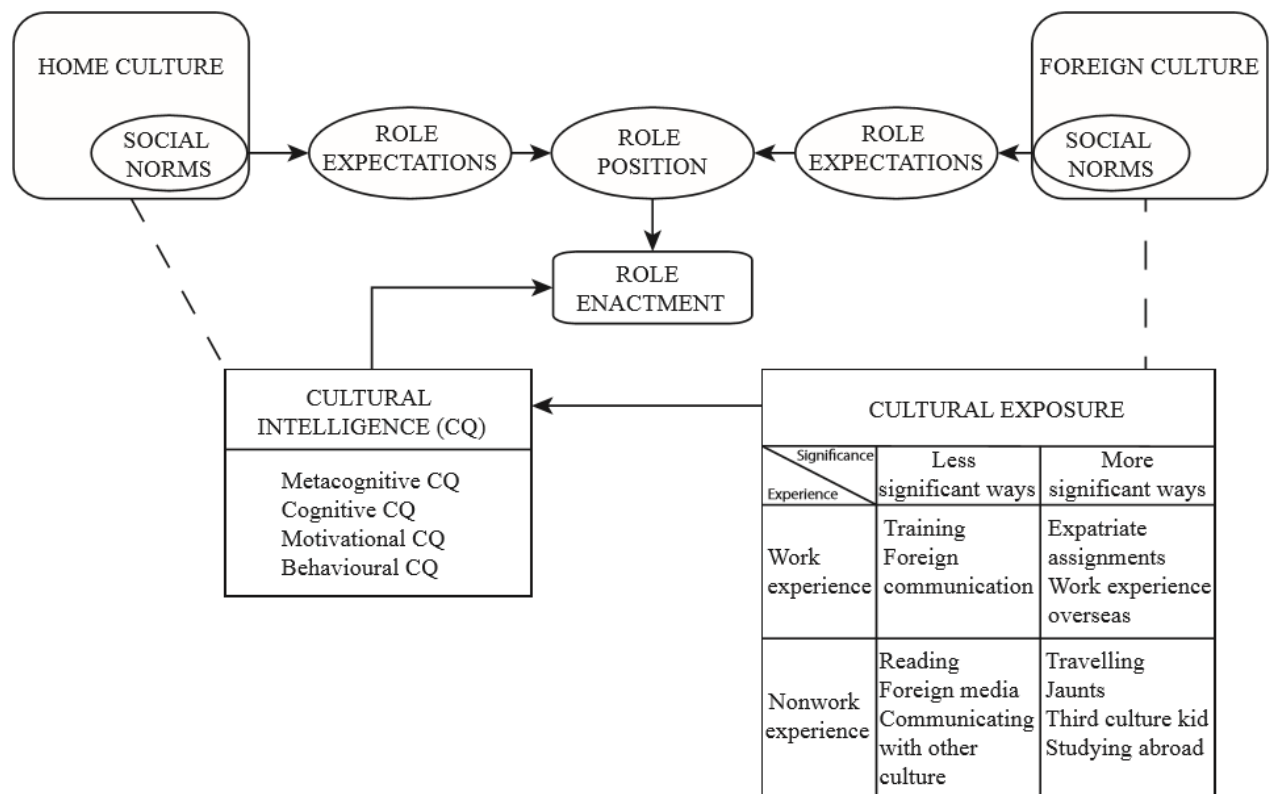


Figure 3. The development of cultural intelligence based on role theory and cultural exposure (Composed by the author)

The model contributes to the development of the field indicating the connections of cultural intelligent, cultural exposure and role theories. Role theory helps to understand why people who change their cultural environment, fail to succeed in the host country. Host society's different expectations of similar roles can cause tension and confusion in person's mind and inability to act appropriately. As a result, his/her intentions may not be understood correctly and wrong conclusions may be made in the host society. At the same time, cultural exposure shows different ways how a person can get culturally more intelligent. Having very different backgrounds and career paths, the model helps to describe and comprehend the development of prime ministers' cultural intelligence. To describe the development of cultural intelligence and the expectations to prime minister's role in different cultures, a more complete model comprising both theories was needed.

As stated above, cultures have certain expectations to every role depending on their cultural standards and social norms. Some of the expectations may coincide, others may differ from the expectations of one's home culture. When a person moves or goes to work in another culture, he has to conform his role enactment to new expectations to become accepted and successful. The required knowledge and person's ability to adapt in another cultural environment is reflected by *cultural intelligence*. Cultural intelligence helps an individual to successfully adapt to a new cultural environment, which differs from his normal cultural setting (Earley & Ang, 2003). It assures that the individual behaves appropriately in the communication situations, can make himself understandable and refrains from rash judgments of the situation enabling the creation of functional partnerships in foreign cultural environments (Plum et al., 2008; Triandis, 2006). Cultural exposure converges different ways to enhance person's cultural intelligence, splitting into less and more significant ways and then to work and nonwork experiences and this way can affect all CQ facets. The patterns of person's CQ development form in the combination of work and non-work experience, and less and more significant ways.

3. Methodology

The study explores cultural intelligence on the new role perspective - the prime minister's. The prime minister's role in foreign settings has got unjustifiably little attention from researchers (Kaarbo & Hermann, 1998), yet they play an important role in representing the country, and developing and maintaining good international relationships. The aim of the current master thesis was to explore how the cultural intelligence of the prime ministers of the newly independent Estonia was formed.

3.1. Participants

The study focused on the prime ministers of newly independent Estonia. After 50 years of Soviet occupation, Estonia regained its independence in August 1991. Since then, the

country has run democratic politics and adopted parliamentary constitution. While being a small country, having good foreign relationships with other nations is of crucial importance. Estonia pays great attention to external relations to ensure its independence as well as to create itself better economic opportunities. This is supported by the fact that since gaining its independence Estonia has made great efforts to be accepted to various important international organizations concerning national security, economics and human rights.

The government of Estonia is led by the prime minister who plays an important role domestically as well as in relations with foreign countries. Prime minister forms governmental delegations for official visits abroad, participation in international congresses, sessions and other international events, mandates authority to negotiate and signs international agreements. Prime minister is the person who represents his/her country in European Council congresses where general topics for the European Union development are discussed.

During the 25 years of independence Estonia has had 9 prime ministers. In this study, four of Estonian former prime ministers were interviewed on their experience of developing their cultural intelligence. All participants were male and between the age of 56-76. Participant A and C have been Estonia's prime minister twice. Participant A's first government introduced the Estonian currency and transformed the country's economy from being centrally controlled to free market economy. His second time was more unstable. He reformed the government twice, survived no-confidence vote but still resigned due to the pressure from his own party. The participant C needed to show that Estonia was a real partner who could be taken seriously and developed diplomatic relationships during this very fragile time for Estonia. The participant B and D have been prime ministers once. During the participant B's administration, Estonia was invited to the European Union and NATO. All four prime ministers have had different educational as well as career paths.

3.2. The empirical method and interview plan

The study used interpretivist paradigm (sometimes also referred as constructionism or anti positivist) which considers reality to be constructed by the individual's own interpretations and therefore can never be objectively observed outside but through direct experience of the subject (Mack, 2010). Interpretivist perspective seeks to understand certain phenomena in its unique context and not to generalize it to the whole population (Tuli, 2010). This is important to remember while exploring different patterns through which the Estonian prime ministers have developed their cultural intelligence, as their experience depended on Estonia's location, history and political situation and are not therefore generalizable to other prime ministers in other countries.

The ontological standpoint of the interpretivist paradigm sees reality and meaning making as socially constructed (Tuli, 2010) and subjective as people interpret and make their own meaning of experiences (Mack, 2010). Those meanings are not more or less true, but depend on the information the person is holding (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This study was guided by the principle, that the truth is constructed through social and contextual understanding and multiple interpretations are possible. Based on epistemological standpoint, knowledge is gained through experience and arises from particular situations (Mack, 2010). The current study used a qualitative research that is considered especially effective for obtaining culturally specific information, e.g. values, behaviors, norms etc. It gives complex textual description on how people experience the respective research issues. The method used in this study was in depth-interviews which is considered to be the best when focusing on people's personal histories and experiences.

The interview plan is in Appendix A and concludes links to the theoretical framework with references to original articles. The themes of the interview were divided into 5 categories. The first one, the background, asked about how the prime ministers define their

cultural background. The second and third one concerned different time periods of their lives: childhood/adolescence which refers to the initial cultural experiences gained when being young, and professional life that refers to the period preceding prime ministers' international work experience and the period of being prime minister. The fourth category, cultural intelligence, explored the ways how the prime ministers have purposely been developing their cultural intelligence (training). The last category, which proceeded from role theory, investigated the understandings on how the prime ministers themselves see the role of prime ministers in foreign assignments and whether they have felt the discrepancies of expectations on their role while being in foreign settings.

The Estonian prime ministers were contacted directly via e-mail and were sent the invitation to participate in the research. Prior to the face-to-face meeting, the prime ministers were sent the interview topics. That ensured that the prime ministers could tune to the topics beforehand. They were not sent the interview questions, only topics because it was important not to influence them with direct questions and limit their free flow of mind. During the interview the prime ministers were let to talk freely and direct questions were only asked when there was confusion with the answer or more information was needed. The interviews were conducted in prime ministers' native language (Estonian).

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, the interview questions were first tested on two people who have no expertise in this field to ensure that the topics and questions were unambiguously understandable for the people outside the research. The questions were adjusted accordingly, e.g. wording was specified. At the beginning of the interview, the purpose and process of the research were explained in detail to the participants as well as the definition of *cultural intelligence* was explained. All interviews were audio recorded with the participants' permission. Afterwards, the conclusions drawn on the results in English were sent back to the participants to ascertain that the interviewer had understood the interviewee

correctly. The personal information was kept and processed confidentially and only on the research purposes.

3.3. Data analysis

For processing the interviews, NVivo qualitative data analysis software was used. 3 of the interviews were conducted face to face and one via e-mail. The 3 interviews lasted on average 49 minutes. Each interview was fully transcribed and then coded and categorized into themes (Figure 3). The combination of deductive/inductive approach was employed as the first interview plan and themes were derived from the theory, but the later coding process was adjusted to interviews. This was necessary because the abovementioned theory was used with other role positions (managers, children, military personnel) but prime ministers, and in different environments.

Data extract	Code applied	Theme
For me, defining my cultural background is relatively easy: I'm from the typical Estonian peasant environment and I own the respective cultural background like most of Estonians. Later on I left to study and work in the city. First to Valga, later to Tallinn. (Interview A)	Self-determination	Cultural background
Estonian but always wanting to be cosmopolitan, not to say international. I want to be a part of the world culture and to understand it. (Interview B)		

Figure 4. Data extract with code applied and theme (Composed by the author)

The questions which did not apply to any participants were removed. For example *living abroad with family* was left out. Some codes changed their original themes. For example, *the first trip to another country/trip that changed the way you think was first in childhood/adolescence* theme, were changed due to the Baltics historical background. This kind of trips were taken by the participants later in their lives when they were already grown up. 3 new topics also rose from the interviews: the participants' own suggestions and notes on

how to communicate with people from certain cultures; military and youth organizations' effect on the development of cultural intelligence. Finally, 3 themes with 13 codes were left. The main themes were: (1) the role of Prime Minister, (2) cultural background, and (3) cultural intelligence. See Appendix B for the final thematic map.

4. Results

4.1. *The Role Theory*

As there is no previous research on the prime minister's role on foreign assignments, it was asked from the interviewees who as former prime ministers are the experts on this question, their perception on the matter. The interviewees said that prime minister's role on foreign assignments essentially depended on two things: country's political system and the current political situation. In Estonia, the prime minister is the head of executive power who is one of the 3 people who own full authority in foreign negotiations. It means that he always has an important role on foreign assignments but those assignments can vary greatly depending on the current political situation. For example, during the first years of independence one of his roles was to create new diplomatic relationships with other countries, later it was about maintaining them and getting into different international organizations and unions, such as NATO and European Union. The majority of visits are ceremonial where friendship is confirmed and support on different matters is asked for. In other times, the subject is more important and may require more serious negotiations. Still, whatever the political situation is, the prime minister always represents his country and stands for its rights. But to be an efficient and successful representative of his country, the prime minister needs to be strong in domestic policy as well.

Big agreements sometimes require big sacrifices. Prime minister must have the freedom to make decisions, also the negative ones. Later, he must be able to justify his

decisions to the parliament and get them ratified. He must know his scope, but when he is not successful, he will be humiliated: he agrees on something with another prime minister, but the parliament will send him packing. When the prime minister goes to a meeting and only reads out bullet points while is not able to withdraw any demands, he is very weak. You must have enough power locally to come back and say shut up, ratify it! (Interview B)

It was also discussed whether interviewees had experienced odd or surprising expectations towards themselves that might have been caused by different cultural background and what could have been the reason behind it. For example one of the participants said that Estonia surprised many of their foreign colleges with their young age that high officials had. Other participants confirmed that there are differences in expectations to prime ministers and those differences come from different principles how the states operate and which roles different positions have. For example compared to USA political system, Estonia's prime minister has more similar role to the USA's president.

And of course, there are always cultural differences, but both A and B had some principles they got help from in those situations. First, one must know the host country's cultural background: their history, literature, music etc. The other participant always tried to find something in common and create a more emotional connection that they understood with his partners.

I try to find something they understand and we have in common. For example, recently I went to Beijing where I was given the floor. I said, I was glad to be back here, I see big development. I was first here in 1992 while I was the prime minister of Estonia. You know with what kind of faces people sighed... (Interview A)

Other principles mentioned were more culture-specific. For example, two of the

interviewees said that while negotiating with Russian people you must never toady to them.

Russians do not like when Europeans start toadying, it is completely out. This is the biggest mistake you can make, trying to be likeable. When you are firm, not provocative, do your thing, then they respect you. (Interview A)

Participant C found that communicating inside Europe or in other Western cultures, is not very complicated, but outside Europe it gets more difficult and then some principles are needed to know. On the other hand, he found that it was wrong to try to mimic local people and act as someone you were not as the locals could see it through. Yet, knowing the culture and background of the people you are communicating with, is always a big advantage.

Though all participants are competent in foreign settings, they were also asked whether they remembered any situations where they felt that they had made a cultural mistake. One of them was able to remember one case.

During my time as a Minister of Foreign Affairs, I gave a speech in Germany. Germans are very sensitive about their history during World War 2. I told them that we were afraid that Russians and Germans would make some agreement on us. They took it harshly and I was later told I shouldn't have said that. I touched a sensitive subject. (Interview B)

Participant D remembered his trip to Taymyrsky where he was offered some tea and unsalted fish. The dishes were not that clean and the unsalted fish was not what he had expected causing him difficulties to eat. He was still able to overcome his unpleasant feeling and succeeded to maintain good relationships.

In general, the respondents had been successful on their assignments, helped to build up independent Estonia and get Estonia into different important organizations and unions such as the European Union and NATO. A good example of being successful in international

meetings is that one of the former prime ministers was cited in “Decision Points” by George W. Bush after having met on NATO negotiations. The other ways of becoming culturally intelligent were explored on the example of four Estonia’s ex-prime ministers.

4.2. Cultural background

When exploring the cultural background, the participants were first asked to describe what kind of cultural environment they saw themselves having come from. As a result, three very different descriptions were received. A and C focused on their upbringing and cultural origin as Estonians while B brought out his values and worldviews. Participant D described himself through his and his ancestors’ educational background.

I’m from the typical Estonian peasant environment and I own the respective cultural background like most of Estonians. (Interview A)

Estonian but always wanting to be cosmopolitan, not to say international. I want to be a part of the world culture and to understand it. (Interview B)

To understand better the participants’ starting point of cultural intelligence, they were asked to talk about their family background and any close contacts with people from other cultural backgrounds in their childhood. The A’s and B’s stories were almost opposing to each other. A’s childhood passed in the rural settings surrounded by other Estonians. He had his first contacts with other cultures when he moved to the town in South of Estonia to study in high school. This was a fairly multinational town: being partly located in Latvia, half of the town was populated by Latvians, the other half was populated by Estonians and Russians. He stayed in the boarding school and met some Russians there. Those Russian boys were also from the countryside which meant they spoke Estonian because most of the population in the countryside was Estonians and therefore it was necessary for them to speak it. The situation was different with town’s local Russians.

The other respondent did not recall having peers from other cultures during his childhood, but his family background was more multicultural. His grandmother, who used to live with them, had Baltic-German roots. So, his parents and grandmother spoke German fluently and they also had some German literature at home. Due to this, he gained good German language skills at home and learned about this country from the stories, magazines and newspapers they had at home. From his mother he also learned about his grandfather, who had belonged to the upper class of that time. This awareness about other cultures and nations from the very early age was probably one of the reasons why he developed interest in world culture and desire to understand it.

Participant D recalled that Russians had a bit negative image due to the war, not because of personal contacts. Yet, he remembered having met a Russian soldier, a very warm-hearted man, who had decided not to return to his home country after the war but stay in Estonia. He also met Russian children at school.

4.3. Cultural intelligence

Under this theme, different ways how cultural intelligence can be enhanced were discussed. Here, the codes were divided into two sub-themes according to the theory: nonwork-related and work-related experiences.

Nonwork-related experiences

The participants were asked about their first trips outside the country and the trips that changed their way of thinking. One thing that was common in the case of A, B and C was that when they were young, they all travelled with their families to the nearby countries inside the Soviet Union but those trips did not affect them culturally so drastically.

/.../ The Soviet system was the same in every state. Leningrad was, like it is today, the city of the world culture. It was interesting and exciting, but not shocking. (Interview B)

All four got a chance to travel outside the Soviet Union later in life. The shock was then somewhat bigger due to the media that had constantly been sending negative messages about Western countries.

/.../ You could only read bad news from the media about those countries back then, but seeing that you can find a lot of positive things too, was definitely a big ideological shock for some of my travel companions. For me as well. /.../ Before leaving for Mediterranean Cruise, we went to Moscow where we were instructed that what will amaze us, is the climate. To some extent it was true, but we were still positively amazed. (Interview A)

Two participants (A and D) also thought that military experience was very valuable for them culturally. Firstly, military offered travel vacations around the Soviet Union. Secondly, the people who came together to military had very different cultural backgrounds.

/.../ I got a first-hand experience about the variety of the multinational Soviet cultures and their different standards. There were representatives from the Baltics to the Far East, from the Far North to Central Asia who I had to live together with and teach for two years. Every one of them had their customs, different behavioural patterns to joy or cope with trouble. (Interview A)

Language learning can be a more or less significant way of becoming culturally more intelligent, depending on whether it takes place in home or a host country. All participants had learned Russian at school. Two of them got to practise it more in the Soviet military for two years, and one also got to practise Russian a lot while being in an expedition in the

Antarctics. The participants said that they had also studied English at school and independently but felt it had been a rather poor preparation and the true learning started after the end of the Soviet period when the first hints came about the new order and more foreigners passed through Estonia. All respondents can speak German in different levels, one of them had learned it at home from his parents and grandparents, and later decided to study it more in depth. Two respondents had learned it in language courses and later practised it while staying in Germany for some period, the forth one during his time in University. Participants B and C and D, who lived in North Estonia, where Finnish television was broadcasted, gained also the Finnish language skills. B and D have always had contacts with many Finnish people and when the borders were opened, the Finnish language skills became even more beneficial. Even though at the official negotiations prime ministers always have to use an interpreter to avoid ambiguity, language skills are still a big advantage.

/.../ I understood what my partner was talking about, and while his sentences were being translated, I could already calmly think about my answer. (Interview A)

All interviewees considered reading an important part of their lives. Especially, while being younger and having considerably less foreign literature available, they used to read everything that they could possibly get their hands on. Foreign movies were not available during the Soviet times. Even when those movies were shown, the selection was very limited and the time delay was big. Participants C and D got to see many foreign movies during their trips to Hungary and Poland where they took advantage of the opportunity and went to see movies every day. The situation got better during the Khrushchev administration when the Soviet Union started to open up to the outside world.

Another very valuable cultural standpoint was foreign media – Finnish television and newspapers from different countries that they were able to get. As mentioned before, Finnish television could only be seen in North Estonia. However, it did not broadcast only Finnish

production but also American, French and others. It was a “window” to the West and opened the whole world to Estonians offering a possibility to see western movies, listen to western music and discover the goods of a capitalist society through commercials. Similarly to many people in North Estonia, three of the participants acquired the Finnish language skills via the television channel. One of the participants (B) had also an opportunity to read German and Austrian newspapers that offered plenty of information from the outer world. Participant D also mentioned listening to different radio channels like Ameerika hääl (Voice of America), Deutce Welle and later while staying in the Antarcitics, BBC World Service.

Work-related experience

Although none of the prime ministers had worked in a foreign country on a permanent basis before their time as a prime minister, they still had plenty of experiences of working with people from other cultures. For one of the participants, it was the experience of building up the monetary system of Estonia that led him to communicate with top politicians globally and convince their skeptical minds that Estonia was ready for monetary reform.

/.../ For me the highlight was working in Estonian Bank and the monetary reform where I immediately dived abroad, different organizations in America and Europe.. They came to Tallinn and I went there. /.../ We had to build up the Estonian monetary system basically from zero and we had to act fast. /.../ If we hadn't made those decisions then, we would not be in the European Union or NATO right now.
(Interview B)

One of the challenges that Estonia faced during its early years was that people had very few foreign experience but this was overcome with a few years.

/.../ It was not that we were less educated, we all had read a lot, seen Finnish television etc., but we were still very local. The international perception was unknown

for us. /.../ Some foreign Estonians came back, but they had completely different ideas that did not work in here. /.../ By the time I went to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was already surrounded by complete professionals and bright thinkers. I learned a lot in there. (Interview B)

The participant A had also a prior work experience communicating with top politicians from other cultures. During his time as the Minister of Transport and Communication, it was him who improved relations with other Baltic States on transport-related issues and tied close relationships with Nordic countries. What is more, he transferred the control of Estonian infrastructure companies (airport, sea ports, and railways) from Moscow to the Estonian authorities. Participant C's experience of working with other cultures came from political youth organizations whose members started visiting Estonia from 1988. This way, he got to know many future leaders as well as already established ones. He valued this experience that helped his political career a lot, and recommended participating in this kind of organizations to all future politicians as it helped to get to know his future foreign colleagues in a more personal level.

When asked whether they had ever had any training that was aimed to develop their cultural intelligence, the answer was negative. But one of the interviewees (A) had had trainings that were related to other subjects but took place in foreign settings and where he was able to learn about those cultures while being there. His first training took him to Czechoslovakia. Even though it was outside of the Soviet Union, it still had strong relationships with the Soviet power and ideology. The country amazed them positively, as the engineering level, the Estonians had come to see, was significantly better. The second training took him to Canada and the USA where he spent 2 months learning about market economy. The third training was in Germany and lasted about 6-7 months. During this time, he travelled a lot around Germany, developed his German language skills and studied about

market economy and German political party programs.

/.../ and we wrote our party's program, went back to Estonia, won the next local and national elections because we knew more about market economy and European parties than others in Estonia.

While being the prime minister, he also spent his vacation in London improving his English skills for a few weeks.

When asking whether and how prime ministers were prepared to operate successfully in foreign settings, they all admitted that the subject was crucially important, but due to heavy work load, it was not possible to arrange long training sessions. That does not mean that prime ministers would go on their assignments without preparation. Before going to foreign assignments the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided prime ministers memos about cultural information of the country. In addition to this, prime ministers had their staff with them to assist them when necessary.

When you are in China or Japan as a prime minister, you are not alone, you have your staff with you. But you must manage yourself. The staff can't represent the country, you must represent the country and the staff will support you in your work.
(Interview A)

Though all respondents grew up in the Soviet Union and their movement and access to other cultures outside the Union was limited, they still had rich experiences with other cultures during and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. They also had strong drive to develop themselves culturally and be able to manage themselves successfully in foreign settings. This was reflected by their interest to learn different languages, read a lot about other cultures, follow the media and travel when possible.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to explore the different patterns through which the newly independent Estonia's prime ministers have acquired their cultural intelligence. In this section, the findings are demonstrated and linked to the previous theoretical knowledge. First, the role of prime ministers are defined and the importance of cultural intelligence in this role determined. Then the four different cases of becoming culturally intelligent are described by the examples of four Estonian former prime ministers.

5.1. The Role of the Prime Minister

As mentioned before, the research on cultural intelligence is rich and has described many different role positions, some of them were discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.2. Though prime minister's role of being successful in foreign assignments is of crucial importance from the national perspective, so far it has been overlooked from the perspective of cultural intelligence. The prime ministers apprehended their role in foreign assignments and in foreign affairs in general, as the one with great responsibility. The prime minister in Estonia is the head of executive power who owns full authority in foreign negotiations and is responsible for representing his country and the country's interests. Here some similarities with the aforementioned military personnel role overseas can be seen. When the cultural intelligence is often researched in private sectors' perspective, then those roles represent public sector and the nation's interests in international arena and could determine the success and security of the country.

At the same time, the prime minister's responsibilities are comparable to the international manager's ones. As it was said by one of the interviewees, most of the prime minister's international assignments are ceremonial where the purpose is to represent the country and maintain good diplomatic relationships with other countries. This corresponds to

Mintzberg's (1973) two roles of a manager - a figurehead and spokesman's role. In the first case, the manager goes to certain events because of his formal authority and it is required by the law or social necessity. The spokesman's role requires the manager to speak on behalf of the organization and keep two the groups informed: the organization and the organization public. (*Ibid.*) In the case of the prime minister, those groups are the country he represents, and the diplomatic partners.

The second kind of international assignments that prime ministers are facing, the negotiations, are more serious. The corresponding role by Mintzberg is the manager as a negotiator. Manager's role in negotiations is vital because of his authority to make decisions and ratify them (Mintzberg, 1973). With prime ministers in Estonia it is a bit more difficult. Though they have full authority to make decisions, due to separation of powers, it is the Riigikogu who ratifies the decisions made. That means the prime ministers have to be strong in domestic politics as well and convince Riigikogu to ratify the decisions.

The difficult situations in foreign assignments are caused basically by two main factors. First, the difference in the nature of the same role positions, e.g. what are the functions of the prime minister's in different countries. As it came out in the interviews, when in Estonia, the prime minister is the head of executive power, then in the USA or in France for example, it is the president who is the head of the executive power. It is important to know exactly who you are talking to, what power they hold and what their functions are. The second set of factors come from the culture they live in and norms they follow. Those influence the role expectations: how is the prime minister expected to act while on an assignment in this specific cultural environment, starting from greeting traditions, e.g. cheek kissing in France, ending with what you should and should not talk about. This includes knowing about this country's history, literature, music etc.

Next, four different cases of becoming culturally intelligent are described by the example of four former Estonian prime ministers.

5.2. The patterns of becoming culturally intelligent in the sample of newly independent Estonian prime ministers

All newly independent Estonia's former prime ministers grew up at the time when Estonia was a part of the Soviet Union (SU). By the time the SU collapsed, they were already adults. However, all four experiences were quite different and revealed various ways how their cultural intelligence was evolved, even if the society was not so opened as we are used to today.

As it appeared in the interviews, the childhood and adolescence cultural experience was determined by which part of the Estonia they grew up and the family background. Growing up in South-Estonian rural area anyone from a different culture was rarely met, but going to a town in South-Estonia, Russians as well as Latvians could be met. Growing up in North Estonia, contacts with other cultures were more frequent. In addition to Russian culture, the Finnish TV provided access to western culture. Some knowledge of the life outside the Soviet Union was also provided through family ties. Though there were many local Russians, the participants did not have any close relationships with them as the Estonian people associated them with war and current regimen.

Like many others in North Estonia, 3 participants watched the Finnish television shows that also broadcasted productions from America, France etc. and acquired the Finnish language skill. One of them had also an opportunity to read German and Austrian newspapers that offered plenty of information from the outer world. The other one mentioned listening to Voice of America, Deutsche Welle and later BBC World Service. The participants' deeper interest in books and movies, despite the small availability of foreign

literature and films in the Soviet Union, was an indicator of their interest in different countries and cultures, and the outer world in general. Though the theory considers books, movies and media as a less significant way to learn about the culture (Crowne, 2008) because of being shallower and taking place in the home country and not in the target environment, it was still an important way at that time to get information from the rest of the world. The impact of foreign cultures was not underestimated by the Soviet authorities, either, who restricted people's access to it and controlled the channels through which people could receive it.

What theory considers a more significant way to learn about the culture, is travelling (Crowne, 2008). The same can be stated in the case of the current study. Despite the instructions given to people by the Soviet authorities before travelling to foreign countries, the reality they faced abroad was shocking on the one hand, and eye-opening on the other. It taught young people to compare different environments, but also to critically evaluate biased information.

Another travel experience that greatly influenced young person's cultural understandings, was connected with the Soviet military that offered a culturally enriching experience with people from different Soviet republics. Living and serving together with people from different cultural backgrounds for two years could not be an easy task. However, being successful and efficient in it was acknowledged with a permanent position in the military. The experience is somewhat comparable with the role of the USA overseas military personnel described in Chapter 1.2, but this experience was even more culturally challenging, as the respondent was not only in a foreign country, all his companions were also with culturally different backgrounds. The communication took place in a foreign language, in Russian, that they had previously learned at school.

None of the participants had ever lived in another country before their time as the prime minister, nor had they had any trainings on cultural intelligence. Still, the other training experiences received abroad had been enriching also culturally. In addition to the content knowledge the trainings provided new knowledge about the context in general, marketing economy and political system. When he got back, it was this knowledge he used for winning the local and national elections and followed it in his second time as the prime minister. So, it can be concluded that a culturally open-minded person with previous knowledge and experience about different cultures, is able to transfer his knowledge into new context and make use of it also in politics.

Some of the participants had proved their ability to perform efficiently on international level with their jobs previous to prime minister's in the first years of independent Estonia. They were successful in tying reliable relationships with their foreign partners and politicians. The first years of independence were definitely challenging to everybody, as Estonians did not have a lot of international experience or global perception. Some foreign Estonians came back, but they had a hard time to understand the local situation. In this context the achievements of our participants are even more impressive. For other participant who conceded not having proper work experience prior to being prime minister, his experience from political youth organization prepared him to communicate with foreign politicians as well as got him valuable contacts with future and current political leaders.

As being culturally intelligent also means the ability to efficiently perceive and communicate with people from different cultures, knowing foreign languages also increases the perspectives of cultural intelligence (Peterson, 2004). Despite their childhood and adolescent years being spent in the closed society, all prime ministers were able to acquire multiple languages as a part of school curriculum, natural communication in multicultural

settings and through media. It is also important to add here the natural interest in the surrounding world and the factor of self-studying.

Knowing many languages also shows how all participants value the ability to be able to communicate with other cultures, and respect for other cultures and nations. Two of them have developed a principle that helps them in communicating with people from foreign cultures. While one participant tries to find something in common and create a more emotional connection with their partner, the other participant finds that knowing about the history, music and literature of the host country, will make a positive impression and ensures there is always something to talk about. All four confirm, that knowledge about where your conversation partner comes from and how he thinks is always a big advantage that leads to better results.

To conclude, it can be said that the genesis of people's cultural intelligence similarly to cultural exposure is a very faceted process which is difficult to describe. However, by now it can be stated that the whole life, starting with early childhood, with all its experiences and perceptions has its role in the formation of this complicated construct.

With this thesis the author contributed with a new model for exploring cultural intelligence in combination with role and cultural exposure theories. In addition, the prime minister's role was described in the context of role theory supported by the experience of four ex-prime ministers.

6. Limitations and future research

Though the author did everything to ensure the quality of the study, it is still important to acknowledge some limitations. For this study, four out of nine of newly independent Estonia's prime ministers were interviewed but as the subject of the study is very personal and all prime ministers have had very different life paths, the conclusions are

difficult to generalize. There might still be some topics that were not covered in this paper but could have come up with other prime ministers.

Similarly, it is not possible to extend the results to other countries' prime ministers. The findings of this study are directly affected by Estonia's historical background, political situation and neighboring countries. Though Estonia is often seen similar to Latvia and Lithuania, the author expects to see different results with them as well. For example, Latvians and Lithuanians could not perceive the effect of the Finnish television which made a big impact to North-Estonians. Differences with other countries could be even bigger.

Even though the conclusions cannot be extended to other countries, the created model to explore the development of cultural intelligence is flexible enough to use with people from other cultures. For future research, the author proposes to conduct a similar study in other Baltic states and do a comparison with Estonian results. From there on, the study could be carried out in the other states of the former Soviet Union and see whether there are any similarities and regularities that could be drawn back to the Soviet regime.

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Appendix A
The interview plan and linkage to theoretical background

Background				
Main question		Follow-up questions (comments, reminders)		Keywords
Which cultural group or groups, if any, do you see yourself as belonging to?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask for country subcultures if the respondent refers to a country.		Cultural background
Were both of your parents from the country where you lived when you were young?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">IF NO: Where were they from?What about your grandparents?		Cultural background, family
Childhood/adolescence				
Main question	Follow-up questions (comments, reminders)	Keywords	Theoretical keywords	References
During your childhood, did you have close relationships with anyone from another country or cultural group (e.g. a classmate, neighbour, relatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where was this person from?Can you tell me something about your relationship with this person? (Repeat for each person the respondent mentions.)	Contacts with foreign cultures as a child	Cultural exposure, less significant way, nonwork experience, student role,	Ramis & Krastina, 2010
Where did you go on your first trip outside of your country that you remember?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How old were you?What do you remember about this trip?Did anything happen during that trip that particularly stood out as being very different from what you were used to?	First foreign trip, first memories of travelling	Cultural exposure, more significant way, nonwork experience	Crowne, 2008
Do you remember any other trip that changed the way you think about the world or some culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How old were you?What do you remember about this trip?How did it change your perception of the world or this culture	Trip that changed his way of thinking	Cultural exposure, more significant way, nonwork experience	Crowne, 2008

Continuation of appendix A

When a child or a teenager, were there any special kinds of foreign movies, TV programs, or books that that you especially interested you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please tell me about them. 	Foreign culture, films, media	Cultural exposure, less significant way, nonwork experience	Crowne, 2008
Other than short holidays, did you ever live with your family in another country besides the one where you were born?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where did you live and for how long? How old were you? Did you live in a community of people from your home country, and international community or among local people? Did the experience affect you to do and see things differently? 	Living abroad as a child/teenager with family	Cultural exposure, more significant way, nonwork experience, third-culture child	Selmer & Lam, 2004
Have you ever studied abroad in high school or college (without your family)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How old were you? Where did you study? Why did you decide to go there? Did the experience affect you to do and see things differently? 	Studying abroad (without family)	Cultural exposure, more significant way, nonwork experience, exchange student	Crossman & Clarke, 2009; Ahn & Ettner, 2013
Did you receive training that helped you prepare for studying abroad?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What topics did it cover? (Ask separately for up to two of the most important training experiences.) How were they useful? What else would you have needed? 	Training	Cultural exposure, less significant way, nonwork experience, exchange student, training	Crossman & Clarke, 2009; Ahn & Ettner, 2013

Continuation of appendix A

Work life				
Main question	Follow-up questions (comments, reminders)	Keywords	Theoretical keywords	References
Which experiences in your professional life do you think have helped you operate successfully with foreign assignments as a prime minister?		Professional experiences, cultural background	Cultural exposure, less significant way/ more significant way, work experience,	Crowne, 2008
Prior to being prime minister did you have any other jobs that required that you frequently travel abroad?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What countries did you visit? • For how long? 	Professional experiences, expatriate assignments	Cultural exposure, more significant way, work experience, expatriate assignments,	Inkson et al.,1997; Shannon et al., 2008
Prior to being prime minister did you work in a position in your home country that required frequently communicating with people from other countries/cultures (without you leaving yours)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where were they from or what was their cultural background 	Professional experiences, contacts with foreign cultures	Cultural exposure, less significant way, work experience	Shannon et al., 2008,
Prior to being prime minister, did you have a job that required you to live and work abroad?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where? • For how long? 	Professional experiences, working abroad before PM time	Cultural exposure, more significant way, work experience	Yamazaki & Kayes, 2004; Crowne, 2008; Shannon et al., 2008, Tarique & Takeuchi, 2008

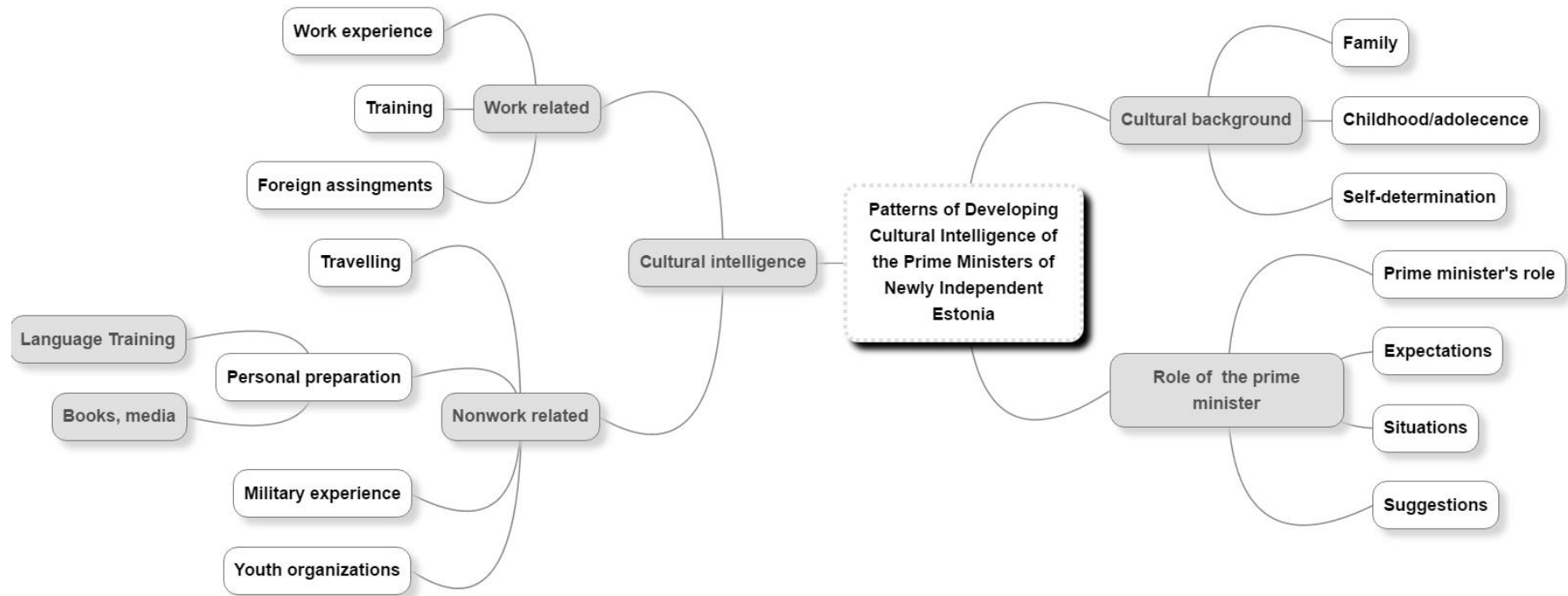
Continuation of appendix A

Cultural intelligence				
Main question	Follow-up questions (comments, reminders)	Keywords	Theoretical keywords	References
Did you ever receive training to work with people from foreign cultures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you receive this training? What topics did it cover? (Ask separately for up to two of the most important training experiences.) • How were they useful? • What else would you have needed? 	Training	Cultural exposure , less significant way, work experience, training	Early & Peterson, 2004; Rehg et al, 2012
Apart from training programs, have you ever tried to prepare yourself on your own to work effectively with people from another culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you prepare yourself? • Was it sufficient/beneficial? • In retrospect, do you think you should have done something else? 	Personal preparation	Cultural exposure, less significant way, nonwork experience	Crowne, 2008
Which experiences in your private life do you think have helped you operate successfully with foreign assignments as a prime minister?		Private life experiences	Cultural exposure, less significant way/ more significant way, nonwork experience	Crowne, 2008
In what languages do you feel comfortable when communicating?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you gain those foreign language skills? 	Foreign language skills	Cultural exposure, less significant way/ more significant way, nonwork experience	Peterson, 2004

Continuation of appendix A

Cultural experiences as a Prime Minister				
Main question	Follow-up questions (comments, reminders)	Keywords	Theoretical keywords	References
In your opinion, what is the prime minister's role in foreign assignments?		Role of the prime minister	Role theory, role position, role expectations	Biddle and Thomas, 1966
While in foreign assignments as a prime minister, have you encountered surprising or odd expectations towards you from people with different cultural background?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the situation 	Odd situations	Role theory, role expectations, cultural background	Biddle and Thomas, 1966; Solomon et al., 1985; Biddle, 1986
Have you ever felt that people from some cultures are harder than others to work with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which cultural groups are harder to work with? What makes it harder to work with people from these cultural groups? How do you usually cope with these difficulties situation? 	More complicated cultures	Cultural intelligence, cultural background	Earley & Ang, 2003; Triandis, 2006; Plum et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2015
Can you remember a difficult situation where miscommunication could have been caused by different cultural backgrounds?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you deal with this situation? 	Complicated situations with other cultures	Cultural intelligence, cultural background	Earley & Ang, 2003; Triandis, 2006; Plum et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2015

Appendix B
The final thematic map



Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

Mina, Maarit Saks,

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose Patterns of Developing Cultural Intelligence of the Prime Ministers of Newly Independent Estonia, mille juhendajad on professor Maaja Vadi ja Mark Peterson.

1.1.reprodutseerimiseks säilitamise ja üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemise eesmärgil, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace-is lisamise eesmärgil kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni;

1.2.üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks Tartu Ülikooli veebikeskkonna kaudu, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace'i kaudu kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni.

2. olen teadlik, et punktis 1 nimetatud õigused jäävad alles ka autorile.

3. kinnitan, et lihtlitsentsi andmisega ei rikuta teiste isikute intellektuaalomandi ega isikuandmete kaitse seadusest tulenevaid õigusi.

Tartus, 24.05.2016