

SUMMARY

Long before national boundaries, peoples with different cultures intermingled at the edge of their areas and began to thrive in a dynamic in-between space. That intense interaction continues today in the world's borderlands.

The focus first, is on the unique experience of *core borderlanders* who grow up learning to use the knowledge and abilities of bridging cultures, languages, and networking specific to borderlands. Examples demonstrate how world borderlands are intense laboratories where children and adults develop the perspective, knowledge, observation and interaction skills that make for success in international settings. All sectors can benefit from discovering and examining the continuous 'international relocation' happening on borders that grows mindsets useful in the global workplace.

Secondly, participants explore a newly conceived, research and experience based *Continuum between Heartlander and Global Citizen* that describes becoming a Global Citizen as a journey toward intercultural competence. A structured experience using the Continuum highlights the connections between Core Borderlanders, Third Culture Kids, Adult Third Culture Kids, Global Nomads, Cross Cultural Kids, and Third Culture Adults and Heartlanders. Discussions and feedback lead to personal and professional insights on practical ways to better manage intercultural aspects in families, in counseling, and, in staff selection, orientation, placement, training and supervision.

On borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an "alien" element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being "worked" on. I have the sense that certain "faculties" -- not just in me but in every border resident, colored or non-colored -- and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened. - Gloria Anzaldúa<sup>1</sup>

## **World Borderlanders and the Global Citizen Continuum**

### **I. Introductions**

Kathleen Fairbanks Rubin – My current identities are: Global Nomad/Third Culture Kid US/Mexico, border person, Californian, Laguna Woods Villager with a Mexico to rural Northern Michigan transition. This presentation is the culmination of a lifelong journey of identity discovery- wondering and wandering - set in motion by early cultural experiences in Southern California, Texas/Mexico borderlands, Mexican and USian Heartlands.

#### **Topics:**

**Core Borderlanders and intercultural competence:** Today I want to tell you what I've been learning about the experience of people around the world that live in border areas and why they, like Third Culture Kids and Global Nomads wind up with the talents, skills and abilities that lead them toward intercultural competence.

**The Heartlander-Global Citizen Continuum:** I also want to share with you a kind of cultural compass you can use to help orient yourself or others who are traveling between a more Heartland view of the world, on one hand, and a more Global Citizen view on the other.

During the last part of my journey I've been discovering World Borderlanders, seeing them through my US/Mexico and border life experience. Besides becoming aware of how different my mindset, intergroup and interpersonal skills were from others in my job as first as a probation officer and then, for thirty years, in my own business as an organization development consultant to large private and public organizations, I began noticing as I traveled how much more comfortable I feel in border areas than in the central part of countries. I expanded that understanding meeting with researchers in the Association of Borderland Studies that was rapidly expanding from a focus on the US/Mexico Border to World Borders. I began discussions with researcher/ borderlanders working in their geographic areas in the U.S. Europe, Africa and Asia. My own experience as a TCK/Borderlander and my research on World Borderlanders is the springboard to developing what I call the Global Citizen Continuum. A model that connects all those on the path to improved intercultural relationships.

First I'll talk about borders and the people who live on them and their common experience, and then the model or Continuum. Some lecture, then discussion, a chance to try on ideas and see how they fit individually, in families and in work situations, and some time to consider how to use what you've experienced. You'll be able to take away what you experience along with printed notes. Also available on the FIGT website.

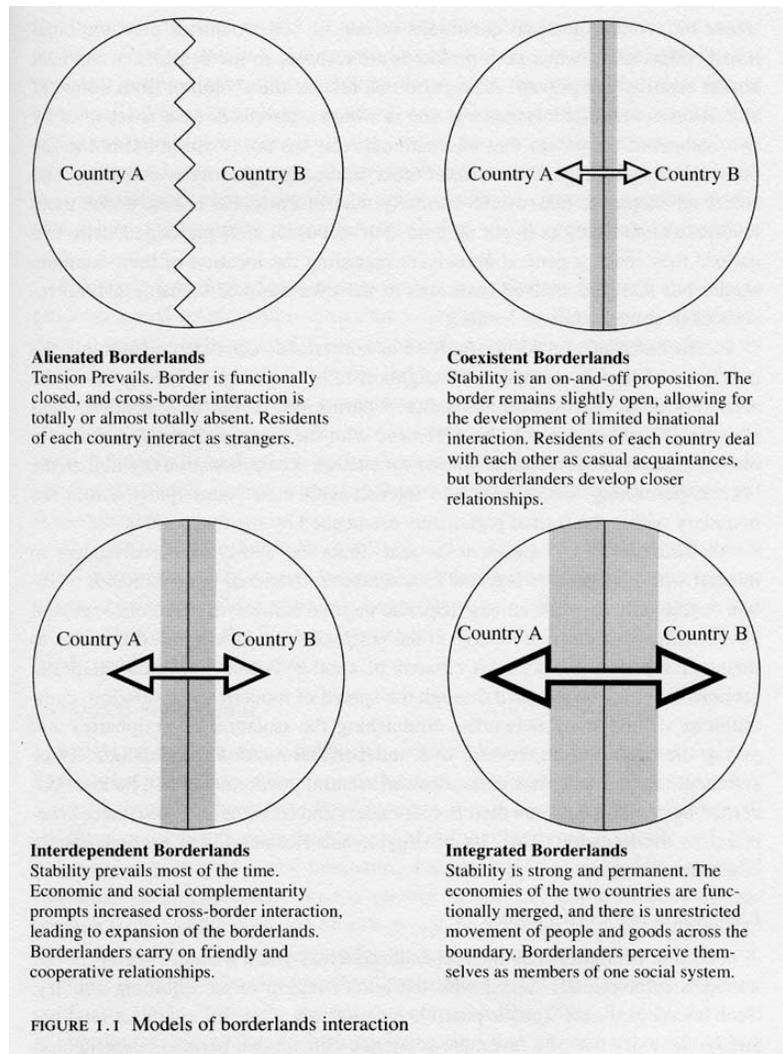
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## II. Borders and People

International borders<sup>2</sup> that are open to a flow of goods and people.



From Oscar J. Martinez, *Border People*, 1994.

### Who are Core Borderlanders?

The heterogeneity of the borderlands population is revealed in the great variation found in the national-transnational dichotomy. At one extreme are individuals who live on the border but who are largely unaffected by it, and on the other are persons whose very lives personify the borderlands milieu. The latter may be referred to as **core borderlanders** and the former as peripheral borderlanders. People at the core are bilingual and bicultural, and they have a high degree of contact with the opposite side of the border.<sup>3</sup>

### III. Three Common experiences of World Core Borderlanders:

#### A. *Bicultural*ity

- **Lives lived in two or more nation-states**
  - Immersion in the edges of two nations gives Core Borderlanders a lived experience of and/or rather than either/or. They develop an acceptance of differences as part of their landscape and are able to manage the ambiguity inherent in their situation.
- **Lives lived in two or more languages**
  - On the border, the mix of languages creates an unstable communication environment. Core Borderlanders learn to clarify meaning. They have many opportunities to make and correct communication errors.
  - Hearing, thinking and acting in more than one language includes – to some extent - walking in another’s shoes, seeing with their eyes, feeling with their heart. Participating in daily language fluctuations contributes to a flexible mindset that accepts multiple world-views.
- **Lives lived using more than one set of social/cultural norms**
  - An external aspect of biculturalism teaches Core Borderlanders that there are a variety of successful ways people develop to manage their worlds.
  - Through daily observance and interaction, people develop awareness of different ways of doing life tasks that stretches their capacity to accept divergence. Over time that experience develops a mindset that accepts multiple world-views.
- **Lives lived with a facility for multiple identities**
  - Core Borderlanders experience biculturalism by living binational and bilingual lives - handling bicultural dilemmas and managing cultural and social identities to fit in. As a result they are able to see issues from more than one point of view, are more open to alternatives - not as apt ‘to know’ what works or how something ‘should’ done. They experience accepting and holding several worldviews with little discomfort.

## B. *Local Mobility*

- **Lives in Local Motion**
  - Harmonizing with the vibration between the tines of two countries' tuning forks is the essence of the oscillating movement of the border experience for Core Borderlanders.
- **Asymmetry**
  - The over and over exposure to contrasting extremes can serve to make people more open or to close them off to certain aspects of their environment. It can give rise to observational skills and a withdrawal or separation from judgment, a sort of witnessing without always concluding.
- **Lives lived by networking**
  - Core Borderlanders build, maintain and use networks. Networking also includes a brokering function performed as they develop and nurture contacts with individuals on both sides of a border.

In many border areas, back and forth movement provides continuous reminders that one is not always in control of the flow needed for life to proceed. Perhaps the countless challenges and frustration placed side by side with strong cross border people connections, fuels creativity and ingenuity.

## C. *Creativity*

- Residents in border areas are well known the world over for being creative in avoiding the encumbrances of laws created by central governments that they feel do not apply to them. The bicultural lifestyle, that includes binational knowledge, language facility, ease with juggling identities and, continuous border crossing and ready networks are a backdrop for unconventional solutions needed for daily living.

## IV. Discussion

Which of your experiences resonate with those of Core Borderlanders?

What particular experiences or behaviors strike you as being important to your life or work? What stands out?

What value can knowledge about Core Borderlanders be to your family, your sector, or organization?

***Experiences leading to Core Borderlanders' skills, knowledge and abilities:***

- ***More than one government, legal, social system***
  - accepting *AND/AND* rather than either/or
  - crossing borders/boundaries successfully
  - having a mindset that accepts multiple world views
  - being comfortable with ambiguity
- ***More than one language***
  - acceptance of divergent thinking patterns
  - flexibility of moving between languages
  - clarifying meaning – verbal and non-verbal
- ***More than one culture***
  - adjusting to external differences in two cultures
  - accepting the way things are in two cultures
  - sorting through cultural differences
  - resolving cultural dilemmas
- ***More than one cultural/social system***
  - appropriate use of identities
  - moving between cultures
  - dealing with asymmetrical borders
  - observing, valuing, creating and maintaining networks
- ***Decisions without local input that affect daily life***
  - encourages ingenuity and creativity
  - looking for 'outside the box' ideas for problem solving

Many of us have had similar experiences and have developed some of these abilities. Perhaps this glimpse into the life world of Core Borderlanders' can help us consider additional possibilities as we cross cultural borders in our own lives: it can increase the numbers recognized as being on the Global Citizen path; it adds experiences to learn from and draw on; it offers possibilities of additional people and places where those on the Global Citizen path are 'understood'; with whom they can share 'kinship' and solidarity.

The world's borderlands are laboratories of the future: living demonstration projects that offer distilled experiences in intercultural living. Borders are crucibles where people are fired by circumstances to create mindsets ready to be Global Citizens.

## V. The Heartlander-Global Citizen Continuum: A dynamic journey not a destination

As Global Nomads and TCKs and TCAs and ATCKs and CCKs we've spent a lot of time differentiating ourselves and creating our identities – trying hard to be or not to be “terminally unique” as Janet Bennett<sup>4</sup> describes it. So I began to explore where we are in relation to ‘others’. We couldn't just be out here by ourselves – individuals. There must be more of a connection between us. That thinking brought me to what I call the Global Citizen Continuum: a place where we all can meet and travel together respecting, learning and supporting each other on our journey.

### **Definitions**

Like between night and day there is a continuum between Heartlander and Global Citizen – realizing that these are “ideal” types that don't exist except in this construct.

Heartlander: The idealized Heartland is the area in the center, an area that is most identified with a particular nation-state, where people have clear ideas about who they are. Heartlanders have no reason to question their allegiance or ask where their heart beats stronger.

They speak one language. They do not deal with change and difference as a daily constant. Their views are shaped more by cultural sameness than cultural differences. They tend not to have culturally varied experiences in school or in their neighborhoods.

Global Citizen: As we saw with the example of Core Borderlanders, people on the Global Citizen path, because of their varied experience *become* more comfortable with strange situations, they tend to *add possible* world views, they *search* for ways of integrating the multi-faceted world and cultural identities they experience. They are more apt to stay in sort of a process mode – a learning mode that is forced on them if they are to survive. This also happens to CCKs, as is so ably pointed out by Ruth Van Reken and Paulette Bethel.<sup>5</sup>

It is possible to have been at various points on this Continuum depending on age, external circumstances and experience.

### **The Global Citizen Continuum Exercise**

I'm drawing an imaginary line between Heartlander and Global Citizen from one side of the room to the other.

This wall/\_\_\_\_ is the Heartlander end of the continuum and the other wall/\_\_\_ is the Global Citizen end.

Signs suggest Points A, B, C, and D along the line. They are just points to orient ourselves along the continuum. Remember there are millions of points along this line. In a minute, I'm going to ask everyone to stand. I'm going to describe several different issues, one at a time. After I describe Issue #1 please arrange yourselves along the line at the point where you feel you are most of the time. Not where you'd like to be... Please STAND and move along the line – just anywhere while I describe the first issue.

Kathleen Fairbanks Rubin

Issue #1: New or ambiguous situations

How do you react when you run into ‘new’ or ambiguous situations? Something very out of the ordinary for you? Think about how you respond using the Heartlander-Global Citizen framework.

Point A: I am *somewhat* upset and nervous and I tend to be slow to adapt to new situations.

Point B: I am *moderately* nervous and but I can adapt in time.

Point C: I react with *some* nervousness and frustration. I adapt fairly quickly.

Point D: I don’t get nervous or frustrated. I adapt rapidly and comfortably.

ARRANGE YOURSELVES ALONG THE CONTINUUM – You can be anywhere on the line between H ABC and GLOBAL CITIZEN

*As you stand in this place, mentally answer the following:*

How does it feel to be here?

Is this where you are now or where you want to be?

Have you been at other places on the continuum at other times in your life?

What judgments do you have about those who stand at other places?

Issue #2: Right/Wrong

What is your approach to issues? For people who are on the Heartland end of the continuum, all issues are simple and clear. Figuring out what’s right or wrong is easy. For those on the Global Citizen end most issues are complex and “what’s right” depends on the situation, the people, the circumstances, etc.?

Point A: To me, most issues are simple– it’s clear what the right answer is.

Point B: I find some issues are black and white – there are a few that I take time to sort out.

Point C: I find that a lot of issues don’t have easy answers.

Point D: Many issues are complex. I consider the circumstances involved before deciding.

ARRANGE YOURSELVES

*As you stand in this place, mentally answer the following:*

How does it feel to be here?

Is this where you are now or where you want to be?

Have you been at other places on the continuum at other times in your life?

What judgments do you have about those who stand at other places?

Kathleen Fairbanks Rubin

Issue #3: Acceptance of Multiple World Views

What is your usual approach to views that are very different from yours?

Your group has been assigned a task. One of the people in your group expresses a strongly divergent view from yours about how to go about it.

Point A: I prefer to disregard their point of view.

Point B: I argue with them about the value of their view.

Point C: With some reluctance, I attempt to use their point of view.

Point D: I think it's important to try to include their point of view.

**ARRANGE YOURSELVES**

*As you stand in this place, mentally answer the following:*

How does it feel to be here?

Is this where you are now or where you want to be?

Have you been at other places on the continuum at other times in your life?

What judgments do you have about those who stand at other places?

**Thank you and please be seated**

**Take a minute to make mental notes or jot down your reactions.**

**Discussion**

What impact did the exercise have on you and your view of the journey toward intercultural competence?

What thoughts did doing this exercise stimulate? Any surprises?

Using the Continuum, describe what happens to some of us when in 'transition'?

What judgments did you find yourself making about other places on the Continuum?

About people at other places on the continuum?

About yourself?

Is the Continuum really a straight line? Perhaps it has additional dimensions...

How can using the GLOBAL CITIZEN Continuum affect how you look at those traveling with you?

Applications of the GLOBAL CITIZEN Continuum.

For individuals at home or at work

In families

In organizations

## The Heartlander - Global Citizen Continuum

### Suggestions for Possible Applications

In *organizations*, the concept of this continuum lends itself to Evaluation, Screening, Selection and Training.

It can be used for quick guestimates about where someone is on the continuum, which direction they are headed at present, how quickly they will be able to do the intercultural aspects of the job, what training is needed.

Could be useful as a module during intercultural training.

Could be helpful in understanding staff conflicts when individuals are at different places on the Continuum

*Therapists or counselors* could make use of the ideas with individuals and families when issues or interpersonal conflicts have an intercultural component by acquainting them with the Continuum, helping them to use it to recognize where each member is, and supporting ways they might deal more successfully with those differences.

Transition: When individuals are in transition, they may move toward more Heartlander ways and views as they try to fit in. The Continuum could be used to help them to understand what a dynamic journey they are on and that they are in charge of the direction they choose at various times in their life.

*As individuals*:

Using the Continuum as an intercultural competence compass can help us, as we think of ourselves and those we live and work with:

- a) To visualize ourselves along a dynamic continuum – in motion, at times, towards a more Heartland view of the world or towards increased intercultural competence.
- b) To be aware of the many gradations there can be on the continuum and that they are all connected
- c) To know that each of us is in charge of our current status and direction
- d) To be conscious of judgments we have and how they affect our relationships and our journey
- e) To be available to others on the continuum – wherever they are and whatever direction they are traveling

To make periodic assessments of our own movements

## VI. Summary

### Value of Core Borderlanders

Knowing about Core Borderlanders can help marshal their perceptiveness and wisdom to enhance global understanding. And like you said in your discussion: [include info from feedback discussion]

They take in stride crossing borders, being at home on both sides, speaking several languages, taking advantage of what each side has to offer, being creative about living between countries, comfortably using the identity that suits the circumstance. People with this background have the capacity to work successfully in multicultural and world environments in many positions. Further research is needed to delve more deeply into this area. It can also yield information to better understand boundary spanning to increase effectiveness in organizations, between levels, between departments, across divisions as well as within communities as well as to improve human relations between different cultural/social groups in communities.

### Value of The GLOBAL CITIZEN Continuum

The Global Citizen Continuum sets up a basis for seeing intercultural-*ism* as a journey - not a destination.

Using this model provides a touchstone when confused about one's own and others' direction on the path. It helps us realize we're not alone on the journey. It encourages communication and an understanding of the fine gradations along the path and promotes acceptance and connection to those who are in different places. It helps us see ourselves in relation to others on or not on the journey –and to move away from using value judgments about them that get in the way of our progress.

As the numbers of those on the Global Citizen path increase, there is the promise of the renewal of a concept like “La Convivencia”, some translate as the ‘Coexistence’ some as “the acts of living together”, as did people of many differences in Spain and parts of North Africa between 700 and 1400 of the CE – a time when Jews, Muslims and Christians lived in relative harmony.

### ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa. (1987) Preface to *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Spinsters/Aunt Lute, San Francisco,

<sup>2</sup> Martínez, Oscar J., (1994) *Border People*, University of Arizona Press. 7

<sup>3</sup> Martínez. 62

<sup>4</sup> Janet Bennett. (1993) “Cultural Marginality: Identity Issues in Intercultural Training,” in *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, Michael Paige, ed., Intercultural Press.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth Van Reken and Paulette Bethel. (2005). Third Culture Kids Prototypes for Understanding other Cross-Cultural Kids, in *Intercultural Management Quarterly*. Fall, 2005.

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