

# 9 INTP Women Across Cultures

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We are presenting the beginning of a research project—our attempts to formulate how we might do research on psychological type and culture. Because this area of research is so new, we are presenting our approach and information at an early point so that we can benefit from the suggestions of people gathered here. We very much want your perspectives and questions as we design future steps in this project.

## BACKGROUND

Two events stimulated our project:

- a conversation between Nancy Barger (U.S.) and a man from Korea about their experience of growing up as extraverts in very different cultures (February 1992);
- a conversation between Linda Kirby (U.S.) and a woman from Great Britain about their experience of being an INTP woman in their respective cultures (May 1992).

These confirmed our belief that people with similar type preferences but different cultural identities can talk meaningfully about similarities in their experiences based on an understanding of psychological type.

Why did we choose to start with INTP women?

According to Isabel Briggs Myers, the preferred type for women in U.S. culture is ESFJ (Myers & McCaulley, 1985, pp. 155-157). Women with preferences for INTP are thus the opposite of the culturally-preferred type for women. Examining the experience of the least-preferred group provides a sharp picture because of the contrast between their natural ways of being and the culturally-prescribed model.

What is the evidence for a preference for ESFJ women in U.S. culture?

It is well-known that there is a significant difference between reported preferences of men and women in U.S. culture on the thinking-feeling dimension, with 60%-65% of women reporting a preference for feeling, while only 35%-40% of males do so (Myers & McCaulley, 1985, pp. 148-150). Estimates of type preferences for females within U.S. culture show that women are also more likely to prefer E, S, and J than are males in the same large samples (McCaulley, Macdaid, & Kainz, 1985). While the differences on the

other three scales are smaller and must be interpreted cautiously, the trend for reported type for females in the U.S. is clearly ESFJ.

The impact of cultural preferences on type distributions has not been resolved or even much discussed. However, Eduardo Casas, in his work with the MBTI and anglophone Canadians, francophone Canadians, and French students suggests that differences in reported type between different cultural groups provides evidence for cultural values in relationship to type (Casas, 1992). Thus, the fact that women in the U.S. report preferences for E, S, F, and J more than do males in the same culture would provide evidence of cultural values.

Another kind of evidence comes from *Portraits of Type* (1991), by Avril Thorne and Harrison Gough. Their study analyzes 30 years of data collected about participants at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research (IPAR) at the University of California at Berkeley. IPAR assessors (trained psychologists) conducted intensive individual interviews, observed group problem-solving tasks and social interactions, and assessed creativity and personal adjustment to arrive at their evaluations of individuals. They then used such instruments as the *Adjective Check List* (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983) and the *California Q-Set* (Block, 1986) to describe participants. The observers did not know individuals' types when they recorded their observations.

Thorne and Gough compiled the words and phrases observers used to describe/assess different types and then reported those most highly correlated with a particular type. According to Thorne and Gough, "a large number of correlates were significant for both male and female INTPs, making this type one of the most clearly depicted" (1991, p. 86).

The words and phrases used most often to describe INTP women were entirely negative. Those used most often to describe male INTPs were mixed—some positive and some negative. INTP females were depicted more negatively than women in general and than women of any other type. Female INTP descriptions were also more negative than those for any male type.

It is important to note that Thorne & Gough's sample was a selective group—well-educated and creative. The samples included undergraduate students at the University of California at Berkeley, senior-year students at a liberal arts women's college, students in the law school at Berkeley, mathematicians, architects, creative writers, business executives, and other professionals. Participants were generally chosen for their creative accomplishments or potential (1991, pp. 4-5). The INTP women were predominantly mathematicians, law students, and undergraduate students (p. 86).

### **THORNE & GOUGH'S CORRELATED DESCRIPTORS FOR FEMALE INTPS**

#### **Phrases most often used to describe:**

- is basically distrustful of people in general; questions their motivations
- keeps people at a distance; avoids close interpersonal relationships
- is subtly negativistic; tends to undermine and obstruct or sabotage
- tends to be self-defensive
- extrapunitive; tends to transfer or project blame

#### **Adjectives most often used to describe:**

- distrustful
- sulky
- evasive
- indifferent

- resentful
- defensive
- wary
- unfriendly
- tense

**Phrases least often used to describe:**

- emphasizes being with others; gregarious
- has social poise and presence; appears socially at ease
- has a clear-cut internally consistent personality
- appears straight-forward, forthright, candid in dealing with others
- is turned to for advice and reassurance

**Adjectives least often used to describe:**

- tolerant
- appreciative
- helpful
- cooperative
- honest
- warm
- pleasant
- sincere
- sympathetic
- understanding (1991, p. 87)

It may be that this particular group of INTP females was especially poorly developed in type terms, though the percentage of students and successful professionals was similar to the makeup of women in other type groups. Descriptors chosen may also (and we think they do) provide important information about American cultural values for women.

### **INTP WOMEN AND CULTURAL VALUES**

Our interpretation is that characteristic behaviors of INTPs when displayed by women in the U.S. are interpreted by others in negative ways because of cultural assumptions about how women should be and behave. Whether the descriptors for women in this study were significantly influenced by the cultural biases of the observers, or the behavior and adjustment of these women was influenced by their life experience with cultural/family values is impossible to judge from the evidence. Either may be true or, more likely, the negative picture of INTP women is the result of both these factors. Thus, our beginning hypotheses about INTP women are:

- characteristic behaviors/attitudes of INTPs are viewed in a negative light when they are observed in women in the U.S.;
- this cultural bias may impact the development of INTP women and their ability to express their type preferences in positive ways.

What happens when a culture does not accept or support some types? How is the development of individuals affected by the type biases of family, co-culture, or culture?

We have developed the following hypotheses as a basis for exploring questions related to the impact of culture on type and the interaction of psychological type preferences and cultural values. They underlie our project:

- Every culture has preferred types. Those types will find support and encouragement for developing their preferences.
- People with preferences different from the preferred type may find it more difficult to develop and demonstrate their type.
- People with non-supported preferences may find it difficult to find a place to utilize their gifts.
- People with non-preferred types may disguise or mask their preferences and operate less effectively than they otherwise could.
- Self-esteem is affected positively and negatively for preferred and non-preferred types.

### **THIS STUDY**

We decided to begin exploring our questions and hypotheses by conducting open-ended interviews with INTP women in different cultures, asking if their type preferences were supported in their family/culture and how their experience impacted their self-esteem and their development (see Appendix). Two were actual interviews (Japan and Poland) conducted by third parties; the others were taped or written responses to our questions which were sent by the interviewees. The length of tapes varied from 1 to 2 hours.

The women whose interviews provide the data for this paper have all validated their type as INTP, and all have at least a beginning knowledge of MBTI type. They are not, in any way, intended to be a representative or random sample. What we were hoping is that patterns, commonalities, and differences will emerge from these interviews which can provide the basis for more structured, wider research on these questions.

Interviewees were recruited through our contacts with psychological type practitioners within their cultures. We thank our friends around the world for their assistance in identifying potential interviewees and in facilitating our study—Peter Walsh (New Zealand); Danielle Poirier (Francophone Canada); Laurie Lippin (Mexican-American). We want especially to thank Jody Nishimoto of HRR (Japan) and Czeslaw Nosal (Poland) for identifying appropriate women and for their time in translating interviews into English. And, of course, we thank all of the INTP women who took the time and energy to talk about themselves and their experiences.

### INFORMATION ABOUT INTERVIEWEES

1. Japanese, late 20s, married, 1 child. Middle class family, middle of three sisters. University education. Creates psychological tests using statistical procedures.
2. Polish Catholic, 39 years old, divorced, 2 children. Professional family, youngest of three children. University education, lawyer.
3. Great Britain, 45 years old, never married, no children. Middle class family, youngest of three children. Commercial course. Now pursuing University degree. Industry, computers, consulting.
4. New Zealand, 54 years old, separated, 4 grown children. Middle class family, oldest of 5 children. University education as adult. Involved in education and training, first as volunteer, then as paid worker.
5. New Zealand, 46 years old, never married, no children. Middle class family, only child. University education. Teaching, vocational guidance, management development.
6. Francophone Canadian, 39 years old, divorced, 1 child. Middle class family, 2nd of 4 children. University education. Organizational and management training.
7. Barbados, British colonial family, lived in Canada since 18 years old, late 30s, married, 3 children. Middle class family, part of white power group in a country 90% black. Nursing education. Part-time nurse, volunteer in adult education.
8. Anglophone Canadian, mid-30s, never married, no children. Grew up on farm in Ontario, small town, oldest of 5 children. University education, with some graduate school. Librarian.
9. U.S. Mormon, 35, married, 4 children. Middle class family, grew up in Mormon Utah. University education. Professional in computer/communications.
10. U.S. African-American, 37, married, no children. Middle class family in upper Midwest. University education. Human resources professional, in-house training design and delivery.
11. U.S. Mexican-American, early 20s, no children. Middle class Catholic family, 6th of 8 children. Currently a student, anticipating becoming a family counselor.
12. U.S. white, 49, divorced, 2 children. Middle class family, middle of 3 children with 2 brothers. Teacher in high school and university, self-employed editor and writer.

### FAMILY, FAMILY'S REACTION TO INTERVIEWEE

Of the 12 women, 10 reported feeling "different" within their families, feeling unsupported, feeling like an outsider. All recalled numerous ways in which they did not "fit." Half reported strong feelings of rejection and lack of support from families.

#### Some characteristic statements about their families

Japan: "Everyone thinks I was strange compared with other people such as my sisters." "For example, I would rather read than play outside with friends."

Poland: "I... felt a lack of appreciation from my parents."

Great Britain: "I loved reading; my parents would say, 'You shouldn't be off by yourself.' I was rebellious, got in a lot of trouble." "My extraverted sister took all the space—she didn't invade my space, she took it." "My father was very introverted; mother was ESFJ. I always did my own thing." "I was very independent."

New Zealand: "My mother was an extreme F. We never bonded. We learned in university about naturally cuddly babies and naturally uncuddly babies. I was naturally uncuddly." "My family found me frustrating—I was disassociated, detached. They

could not understand me and I felt totally unacknowledged, like I didn't exist for them."

New Zealand: "I did things my own way." "I was always contrary."

Francophone Canada: "I was and still am the black sheep of the family." "My mother says I was born outraged, angry, and independent." "All my life I have felt, what planet did I land on? How did I end up on this planet? How did I land in this family?" "I could not understand my family—what kinds of games they were playing. I could not understand their world."

Barbados: "My parents supported my thinking part, but not my intuitive and perceiving parts—my family and culture was very sensing and judging. It was a very traditional culture, very British."

Canada: "I'm very different from the sister closest in age to me. I felt that I couldn't measure up and I always felt bad about that. I couldn't seem to do the accepted thing."

U.S. Mormon: "My life has been a daily battle to find my niche. I had little interaction with my siblings. My father tried to get me to be more 'friendly' to people."

U.S. African-American: "I was too independent. I always knew what I thought, made my own decisions. My mother is an ENTJ, but she still has trouble with my thinking judgment."

U.S. Mexican-American: "I was an independent tomboy. My sisters didn't want me to play with them and their dolls because I did not play the right personality. This was okay with me because I liked to play with Hot Wheel cars in the mud with my brothers instead."

U.S.: "I used to think the hospital had mixed up babies when I was born—I certainly didn't belong in my family. My family—at least my father, mother, and older brother—are all dominant Fs, and they always wanted a sweet little girl who would wear frilly dresses and play with dolls. Later, I realized that I didn't belong much of anywhere except when it came to academic pursuits."

## CHILDHOOD

Of the 12 women, 9 reported being smart or especially good in school; none reported academic difficulties. Three different behavior patterns were reported, with several indicating more than one of these: 1) being a leader; 2) being a good girl; 3) being aggressive/rebellious—"contrary." The "aggressiveness/rebellion" generally took the form of rejecting statements/rules which were "not logical" and reading books in class which were not assigned.

### Some characteristic statements about childhood

Japan: "When I was in elementary and junior high, I was always an outstanding student not only in academia, but also in writing, drawing, etc." "Compared with my sisters, I was pretty aggressive. I was the only one who was rebellious. I used to fight with my parents until I was in junior high." "I was in the middle, and I pretty much fought with both sisters, but I was the leader whenever we did things together."

Poland: "I always belonged to the class leaders. I always represented the class outside—the one who was reliable with a good elocution, memory, hearing, etc. I could manage it, but each public performance caused nervousness."

Great Britain: "I was rewarded for being smart and quick. My peers sometimes saw my thinking as critical. I was bored in school. I've never been able to accept anything I couldn't see a rational basis for; that got me in trouble sometimes."

New Zealand: "I didn't do very well in elementary and secondary school, did better at University. Teachers said, 'Could do better if she tried.' I was always doing things differently than the way the teacher thought I should."

New Zealand: "In general I was well behaved. Often I just wasn't there; I was reading or doing history. I did things my own way—teachers had a problem with it. I was especially good at history and English."

Francophone Canada: "I did not feel I had enough air to breathe. I felt like being on my own all the time, to have my own experiences, but I was restrained from that. I was overprotected." "I was good at school. "I was very good at maths."

Barbados: "We were allowed to participate in adult conversations; it was encouraged. A thinking preference was supported." "Imagination was not encouraged." "I did well in the things I wanted to do."

Canada: "I was always searching for the truth, never being on time, embarrassing my family by sticking out, sticking my mind into things, arguing with a variety of authority figures including the minister." "I had a few good friends—we went for long walks, pretending."

U.S. Mormon: "I did well, skipped a grade. I was often the teacher's pet, got to do extra things. We moved every couple of years, which was good for me. I wasn't close with my classmates."

U.S. African-American: "I did very well in school—excellent grades, good at sports, everything. Teachers liked me but I did feel different. I thought it was because I was the only black kid in a white suburb, but then I went to a black women's college and I was still different." "I've spent my life finding out how different I am."

U.S. Mexican-American: "I thought of myself as being the strong, mean child in the family. I always picked fights with my younger brother and sister. I was somewhat of a bully." "I attended a Catholic school, a one-story brick structure that reminds me of a cold prison. I felt like a prisoner within it. Looking back, I feel much pain and isolation." "I always felt that my hair, clothes, and my whole body image was 'ugly' in comparison to my classmates." "I had very few friends and felt somewhat like a social outcast."

U.S.: "I was a star in school—very good in every subject, good in athletics, good in music, often the teacher's favorite. I was a leader—elected class president and all, but I didn't have close friends. The whole social thing puzzled me—I couldn't figure out why I couldn't be relaxed and easy with people, like others could."

## ADOLESCENCE

Most reported increased feelings of being different, separate, during their adolescence. They generally described themselves as being independent and thinking for themselves, but having difficulty with social relationships and gender expectations. Only 2 dated or had romantic relationships with males. Academics were important, and they were successful. Several described participation in social activities, always in the form of belonging to clubs or sports teams, but they reported few friendships. Especially noteworthy: No one reported close intimate friendships with males or females.

### Some characteristic statements about adolescence

Japan: "When I reached junior high, I started thinking I was different from my sisters." "I never listened to lectures. I thought I should read and think by myself. During a class, I would be reading a textbook which had not been covered, or I would be thinking about something else." "I had a pretty good academic record. I did not stand out in the class—I was pretty quiet, so the teachers were not upset about my attitude." "I envied those who were a good child or a popular person in class. I made an effort to become a good person, but I did not succeed at all [laughing]."

Great Britain: "I never accepted authority." "I always disassociated—was detached and watchful. This came across as, and often was, critical and judgmental." "The T part caused difficulty in relationships. I had to decide to be myself or be popular and have friends—it seemed I couldn't do both."

New Zealand: "I was very physical, liked the social experience of being on teams—I organized dances, was in scouts and clubs." Tells of "baiting a teacher"—she feels guilty now, but "I thought he deserved it—he was a silly man."

New Zealand: "I was involved in sports like swimming." "I loved history and geography—that's what I went to school for. I was a walking disaster at practical things."

Francophone Canada: "I had just a small number of friends and did not relate to the rest of the class. I didn't have much self-esteem or self-confidence." "I was at war with my mother for all of my adolescence." "I had a boyfriend when I was 17."

Barbados: "Very untraumatic. I just did everything I was supposed to do, I never rebelled." "I had a few friends." "I did join a Baptist Church [Methodist parents]."

Canada: "I couldn't do the socially accepted thing. I truly felt there was something I somehow didn't know. Another part of me felt, 'Oh, who cares about all that tedious stuff anyway.'" "I did really well in school. I was really interested in ideas and in challenging various people—that was exciting. Some teachers I found really boring." "I liked standing out intellectually, being really bright. I liked proving I was bright. I stood out for my sharp humor, which actually hurt people."

U.S. Mormon: "There was one year when the bright kids were the popular kids. Other than that, I wasn't popular. I was in a lot of activities—debate, drama club, chess club, ROTC, 4-H. But I had few peer relationships, no close friends." "I got high grades. I used to wish there were more periods in the day so I could take more classes. I took summer school so I could take more subjects." "I didn't date much. Really, my husband was the first man I dated."

U.S. African-American: "I didn't date much in high school. There were only 2 or 3 black kids in the school. I did have a good friend in the 9th grade—a black girl who was 'bad,' a bully." "I always knew what I thought. I didn't accept my parents' rules—I

would just tell them that I was going to do such-and-such. They basically didn't argue with me."

U.S. Mexican-American: "In high school, things did not work out much different than grade school. I still saw myself as being ugly and an outsider from other kids. Throughout my freshman and sophomore years, I went through many different phases. I changed my hair color, style of dress, and attitude about every six months—one month I would play the role of a book worm and the next month I would not study at all and be a punk rebel. I guess you could say that I was trying to find a role in which people would like me." "When I was 15, I joined a boating club called the Sea Scouts of America. It is designed for kids in high school to get experience with working aboard ships and boats, an introductory program for people who want to join the military, the Coast Guard.... I began to make real friends for the first time. It was a strange experience.... I began to take a leadership role and really work with others in getting goals accomplished, learning different activities, and really liking myself."

U.S.: "I was still really smart. I had read more than anyone else. I was in the college prep classes along with a lot of kids from wealthier homes, fathers were college professors. I could compete academically, but I wasn't at ease socially. I was in the choir, drama, Pep Club, was selected girl of the month, etc., but I still felt very different. I didn't date much and I never did the things girls did together—go shopping for clothes, fix your hair, talk about boys." "I sometimes made remarks which I thought were clever or humorous and other people experienced as sarcastic and hurtful. I was surprised to find I had this reputation." "Most of the time, I felt like an outside observer."

## COLLEGE

Many reported not being able to make free choices about college/careers because of family finances and expectations. A few "came alive" in college or university. Most found it a continuation of their previous experience—small circle of friends, little dating, feeling different. There was also continuing evidence of, as several put it, "being contrary."

### **Some characteristic statements about college/training**

Japan: "I was disappointed in college—it was boring. My favorite subjects were anthropology, animal morphology, psychology." "Others saw college as a step to get a good job. I wanted to study and learn." "I was involved in being social in my first year because I was disappointed in college." "After that, I preferred being by myself."

Poland: I went to technical secondary school, leaving home at 15. "I had a feeling of incompleteness. I knew and I believed that if I had attended another kind of school, I could have developed myself much more." "I wanted to study something which would be a contradiction to the technical school. I chose Faculty of Law." "My contacts with men were purely matey."

Great Britain: "There was enough money for my brother to go to Cambridge, but not enough for me to go to University. I took a commercial course. It has always been a tremendous drive inside of me to correct not having a degree. I continually wanted to do something about it."

New Zealand: "I always had a very strong sense that I wanted to have children, would be a good mother." (She did not attend University until after her children were grown.)

New Zealand: "I spent a lot of time reorganizing classes at university. I would sit and analyze and watch and reorganize classes." "I took a perverse amount of pleasure out of doing something successfully that people said couldn't be done."

Francophone Canada: "I was very interested in movie-making. I dropped out very early, when I realized it was a male world. If you wanted to be a secretary, OK. If you wanted to do something, it's still a male place."

Barbados: "The family didn't have enough money for me to go to University. At that time, nursing school in Canada was completely free."

Canada: "I told my father I was going to University. He said, 'Why don't you take a 2-year course in something; you'll just get married; that's what women do.' I said I wasn't going to do that. There was no 2-year course I wanted to take." "I told Dad I wasn't going to get married; he said that was selfish."

U.S. Mormon: "I had to work my way through college. I was very goal oriented, goal driven." "I had a few good friendships, though some people saw me as too critical." "I went to lectures, often attended ones that no one else went to."

U.S. African-American: "I consciously chose a black women's college, but my friends there were all the outsiders—gay women. I never fit in." "Most of the women were very concerned about clothes, hair, boys, etc. I was rebellious—thought they were stupid."

U.S.: "I had to go to a church school because of money. I got scholarships and worked. I got married at the end of my sophomore year and had a baby the next year, but I managed to finish on time, graduating as valedictorian. Professors generally liked me, though I got in trouble in Biblical Theology (a required course) because I raised questions, pointed out positions of the church that were not logical. The professor told me to stop coming to class—to do reading on my own and turn in a paper."

## CAREER DECISIONS, EXPERIENCE

Few found a good-fit career quickly; most tried several areas before finding one in which they could use their abilities and in which they felt comfortable. All expressed the importance of having jobs which allowed freedom and flexibility. All mentioned the importance of their careers to their self-identity. All reported few friendships, fairly formal relationships with colleagues.

### Characteristic statements about career/work

Japan: "I knew I wouldn't enjoy a simple job. Even if I was a trainee, I would rather think and take action by myself." With colleagues—"I guess I look like a cool/cold person. I don't need many friends with whom I can share my private life. I do have a few close special friends." "I don't express myself well; people may have a difficult time understanding me." "People ask me for advice on work-related problems and issues."

Poland: "I involved myself with problems I was really interested in.... I never wanted to pass sentences—so I chose to join the Law Faculty."

Great Britain: "I worked in industry (computers/communications) for twenty-five years and was unhappy." "When I was a senior manager, I had to make the rules—that was uncomfortable because I'd always rebelled against rules." "It was easier to work with/supervise people I respected. Those who I thought were incompetent, I had no respect for."

New Zealand: "In my volunteer work, I always ended up designing training for volunteers." "When I was staying home with my children, I was desperate for adult

conversation. I moved through the cake-baking, etc., stage very quickly into classes." "TV helped..., gave me something to think about."

New Zealand: "I taught for 2 years in New Guinea and then at a Catholic Boys School. I realized I wanted to teach people who wanted to learn and who were older." "I've moved on from several jobs because of a lack of flexibility, too many rules!"

Francophone Canada: "In the last two years, I have finally been doing what I like and am good at." "What I'm doing now, I'm still in a man's world. I have to fight even more because I'm a woman—getting contracts, getting people to respect me."

Barbados: "I quit full-time nursing after 6 months because the schedule was too restrictive—since then, I've worked part-time." "My real interests are my avocation—adult education programs at Church." The very best experience—"a committee which developed adult curriculum. There were theologians, college professors. I made new friends, learned so much—it was probably the first time I had done anything I just enjoyed doing."

Canada: "Doing the work of a librarian can be terribly boring. What I like is when a person comes in and needs help with a question—finding the right book, getting the answers—I like that kind of problem solving." "I have difficulty with authority. I hate the bureaucratic stuff. I hate working 9-5." "I have trouble at work with people who don't know what they're doing. I don't have much patience for people's mistakes or for rules." "Now I'm a very good manager/administrator. I've made a lot of changes, introduced the idea of a 'learning organization' into my library. My department is totally different from the others. I like that. But I am totally exhausted by this kind of work." "I need to move into an area where I can use my creativity, have more freedom."

U.S. Mormon: "I am a very thorough perfectionist at work. I have a very quiet style, but have been in and continue to take leadership roles." "My bosses accept me, but I seem to scare or threaten others. They are uncomfortable with me. I'm not 'nice.' I work too hard. I'm an outlier." "I never regret a decision, don't have second thoughts."

U.S. African-American: "I spent a year after college lying on the couch in my aunt's house, reading and trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life." "My dad offered me a job as a head-hunter (he'd started his own business). Talking with people all the time was exhausting, but I loved learning about different jobs. I loved it when the engineers would assume I had an engineering degree." "I've been in organizational training for 10 years, but I've had trouble everywhere I've been. People can't deal with my intelligence and honesty. Is that because I'm black, a woman, or an INTP? Honestly, I think now it's the INTP." "I'm always striving to be the best—other people resent it."

U.S.: "I taught high school for 4 years and surprised myself by being good at it and liking it. But I always wanted to go to graduate school. I ended up doing very well and getting a Ph.D. Actually, that's what I'm best at—being a student. But it doesn't pay very well." "I taught at a university for 10 years, which I also liked and was good at. I especially liked the freedom to set my own schedule, my own classes, etc." "Now I'm self-employed, writing at home—I love it."

## PARENTING

Of the 12 women, 7 have children, 5 do not. In general, they stated that parenting was important to them but that they were not like most mothers: they were more detached, had few rules, and liked their children better as they get older. Several expressed frustration at the limitations motherhood placed on them.

### Characteristic statements about parenting

Japan: "After I had a baby, I had a dilemma which was how to take care of my baby and do what I want to do. Before I had a baby and after, too, I feel frustration that I am not able to accomplish 100% what I want to do."

Poland: "I have developed maternal instincts. I find bringing up children as one of the most responsible duties." "I am different from my parents."

Great Britain: "I'm a good aunt."

New Zealand: "As a parent, I gave broad rules, left everything else open. When they had difficulties, I stayed out of it." "Friends and neighbors criticized me for not making my kids do homework, have chores. My kids had to arrange their own activities and transportation."

New Zealand: "As an aunt, I identify with the children who are left out." "I could hardly wait for my nephew to get old enough so I could do things with him—sports and camping."

Francophone Canada: "I'm the opposite of how a mother is supposed to be. My son says his mother is a 'strange one,' not a regular mother." "The early years were tough for me—it was hard for me, meeting his physical needs—having supper on time, having clean clothes, etc." "I don't want to have control—I have more of a friendship with him now than a mother-son relationship."

Barbados: "My parents thought I gave my children too many options. They said, 'Tell them what to do, don't give options.'" "I like children better when they learn to talk, and, as they grow, I like them better and better." "Live and let live." "I have a 14-year-old boy—I think it's exquisitely wonderful to see his mind developing."

U.S. Mormon: "I tend to be more flexible than strict. My husband is a house husband. He takes care of things. He was the only person I ever really dated. I'll fight anything for my kids."

African-American: "I'm just now [age 37] ready to think about being a parent. I've always known I wouldn't make a good mother. I have a lot of trouble with my step-son, who is an F."

U.S.: "I was not a traditional mom, but parenting was very important to me. I saw it as a duty I had taken on and I was determined to fulfill my responsibility." "I was more detached than other mothers I knew. I tended not to take my children's side, but instead ask them to be reasonable, look at things objectively. I did my best to help them be logical and detached like me."

### "MALE" PERSPECTIVE

This is a question we did not think to ask, but all 12 stated that people saw them as having a "male" perspective, that their primary identifications were with males, or that they felt most comfortable interacting with males. Nine expressed finding it difficult to relate to other females, feeling very different from them.

### Some characteristic statements

Japan: "My friends ask me for advice about their boyfriends. Other friends give female-type answers, but mine is different. Mine are not very female oriented answers,... they are in between male and female." "I think that being sort of in-between male and female seems my strength."

Poland: In childhood, "I had matey relationships only with boys." "I limit my relationships with colleagues to work. I strongly prefer to cooperate with men; I do not keep any informal contacts with women I work with."

Great Britain: "I had much stronger bonding with my dad—we had a lot more in common." "Until recently, all my working relationships and all my friendships were with men. I was not sympathetic to women at all." "In the last 12 months, I have become interested in developing my female side. I see it as a Jungian mid-life journey."

New Zealand: "I wanted to talk with males, spar with them. Girls were not to be trusted. I was my dad's daughter—we discussed politics, issues." "I thought women were stupid and silly and twitty." "Now I'm seeking women's company, trying to develop my female side."

New Zealand: "Boys seemed to be more straightforward. Girls asked questions that were none of their business. Men talked about more interesting things." "Women do small talk, which is not easy for me." "I saw my mother's and father's relationship and arguments from my dad's perspective."

Francophone Canada: In elementary school, "my female friends would be playing girls' games. I would kind of protect them from the boys games. I would deal with boys the way the boys were dealing." "I felt I was talking the same language that boys were." "I deal better with men than with women in the workplace—men have good logic."

Barbados: "I've always found it easier to relate to boys' and men's conversations than to females. It's only recently I've enjoyed women." "In nursing, I've always found it easy to interact with doctors (mostly male), difficult to relate to nurses (women). They were just so limited in their interests."

Canada: "I identified with my dad. I felt closer to him." "I like men; my friend Doug is an INTP—we argue, I bounce ideas off of him. Finding someone who is exciting intellectually makes all the difference in the world."

U.S. African-American: "I identified with my dad. It's kind of funny because he's the only F in the family, but we would argue about politics and social things. I would get frustrated, would say, 'Dad, where's your logic?' But we could talk about important things. My mom says I never asked her anything." "I have a real pull toward men—our conversations are more interesting. And men feel comfortable with me, even though sometimes they don't like my challenging them."

U.S. Mexican-American: "I always got along better with my brothers than my sisters." "I have many more friends that are boys than I do girls.... I hang around mostly males, I have always been closer to males than females." "I seem to interact with males more than females because of the subjects and activities that I like—to play pool, watch science fiction films, books, etc."

U.S.: "When I was very young, I identified with my father. I became a sports fan. Later, I had very friendly relationships with boys. Girls I found something of a mystery—kind of silly. I hated playing with girls' toys or girls' games—always played boys' games. In college, graduate school, and as an adult, almost all my good friends were males—we seemed to have more in common. I had a few really good friends (males) that I spent a lot of time with." "It was only when I was in my mid-thirties that I began to develop female friendships."

### FEELING FUNCTION

All reported some degree of difficulty in recognizing or expressing feeling judgment. Most reported relationship difficulties related to this.

Some characteristic statements about the feeling function and emotions

Japan: In college, "I had a very first fight with my friend, she asked me why I don't understand someone's feeling. I was extremely shocked by her words." "I don't show my feeling in front of others, and I would rather close my feeling inside of myself." "I do show my feeling with my immediate family."

Poland: "I am moderate in words. I am positively driven by reason. I deal with emotions in quite a simple manner—I limit my interpersonal contacts to a narrow circle of people who I can be open with and I can have a confidence in."

Great Britain: "My feelings feel out of control, irrational, childish, so it's always been important to me to control them." "I've gotten involved in group sessions. I find the expected hugs very difficult, talking about feelings difficult."

New Zealand: "I'm trying to get in touch with my feelings, so I write things down in a journal. Later I go back and read them and say, 'Yuck, what utter mush! This is too much.'" "If my T is not acknowledged or respected, I get into feelings. I feel most invalidated by Fs. People see me as a cold place, and then they put me in a colder place than I want to be."

New Zealand: "When I'm writing letters, I go back and put in the F stuff." "I talk feelings away, sometimes make decisions that are bad for me because I don't pay attention to what I want." "My mom (dominant F) said putting yourself first is selfish."

Francophone Canada: "When relationships get hard, I just feel like leaving. I find close relationships very tough."

Barbados: "I've always been calm, in control. I have had these lash-out experiences of anger." "I use my feeling function in a self-protective way."

Canada: "I leave relationships when they get difficult."

U.S. Mormon: "As a child, whatever feeling I had, I cried. I still find it hard to differentiate what feeling I'm having." "The people who are critical of me are not people I respect. I can write people off."

U.S. African-American: "I really have a lot of trouble with Fs. My mother-in-law is an F, and she doesn't understand me at all." "My main problems with Fs—the truth is not important to them." "When I try to do F stuff, my husband says, 'You're taking out the chalk now, time for a chalk talk' (like I'm leading a training workshop)." "The feeling stuff really pisses me off sometimes. Its subjectiveness bothers me."

U.S. Mexican-American: "I seem not to express my feelings or problems as much as most females do.... I deal with my feelings by thinking what makes sense. If my feelings disagree with what I think, I ask myself why. If there is a valid reason why my feelings are stronger than what I am thinking, I go with my feelings because I usually will have a hunch that my feelings are right."

U.S.: "feelings were always very difficult for me. They made me feel out of control and confused. Later, I could logically explain them to you, but when I was feeling them it was awful. For a long time, I would try to analyze my feelings, figure them out, see if they were logical. If they weren't, I would ignore them, not feel them. Part of my mid-life transition has been coming to recognize the absolute reality of feelings, to stop requiring them to be logical or to fit in. I'm still not good at my own feelings, but I can accept and support other people in using their feeling judgment."

## GENDER EXPECTATIONS

All except two expressed discomfort with gender expectations and an awareness of acting outside their culture's gender roles.

Some characteristic statements about gender expectations

Japan: "Sometimes people at work treat me as a female. Now, I am married so a female role is probably being a good wife or mother. I ignore the good wife part [laughing]."

Great Britain: "It's difficult for me to accept the expected role in relationships with men. Men find the real me very threatening. I used to play the role—flirting, etc."

New Zealand: "Girls were discouraged from doing maths in secondary school—I feel quite cheated."

New Zealand: "I was told, 'Girls don't do that' about various careers I was interested in. I would ask why. If people can't give a logical reason why not, I say, 'Why shouldn't I do it,' and do it."

Francophone Canada: "I also resented very early that girls were expected to be kind and helpful to others, and quiet, and not climbing trees and building houses in the woods. Not being active, being passive, being expected to come home earlier than boys."

Canada: "I had a lot of trouble with the way things were done. For instance, girls weren't supposed to ask boys to dance—I thought that was silly. But the boys let me know I shouldn't have asked!" "I don't like the idea of any gender expectations at all. Marriage seemed awfully restrictive to me—being captured by a man in rubber boots and being made to do dishes and care for children the rest of my life. I wanted to run a farm, not be a farm wife."

Mormon: "In college, I had my first interaction with a teacher who did not think that girls belonged in the sciences. I totally discounted him, thought he was a crummy teacher, stupid."

U.S. African-American: "My husband is an INFJ, does the cooking, house keeping, but he has traditional black male beliefs about women. He wants me to care more about the relationship, to be less interested in my work. He wishes I would be more nurturing."

U.S. Mexican-American: "I have had a problem with gender roles. I am still somewhat of a tomboy.... I also seem to want to be in control of a relationship and this usually makes males feel inferior in my relationships. However, I do not see any valid reasons to change my behavior or view points about this subject, for this is who I am and how I feel." "I feel that my gender role agrees with males more than females, because I think more than I feel."

U.S.: "Well, I never fit in here. The expectations were fairly clear, I got angry about them, I struggled with them, but for the most part I've just gone my own way."

## TIME ALONE AND INDEPENDENCE

Without exception, the women portrayed themselves as being independent in their thinking and actions. They also consistently stated the importance to them of time alone. Most indicated that these characteristics caused difficulties for them in relationships.

### Some characteristic statements about themselves

Japan: "It's very important for me to have time alone." "When I was little, I did not pay attention if I was accepted or not, and I kept my own way."

Poland: "I'm an independent woman. I am perceived in such a way. Hermetic [reclusive, solitary—impervious to outside influence]."

Great Britain: "Independence is the strongest thing in me. People don't know what to do with that. I want to take care of things myself (like my car)—I know I can do it better!" "I need to be alone in order to get energy to be playful. I need a lot of time alone. Other people find it disconcerting. It seems to them cruel, arrogant, unfriendly, patronizing, superior."

New Zealand: "Time alone is quite important. I don't want to get into another live-in relationship." "I love having my own space [after 35 years of marriage]. It's a sanctuary, health-giving. I come home from work exhausted and as soon as I walk in I feel good."

New Zealand: "The perfect relationship would be living in two separate houses and visiting each other on weekends."

Francophone Canada: "I don't want to live with a person, so I can keep my independence. Being solitary doesn't frighten me at all."

Barbados: "In terms of my job, I've always been independent. People don't have power over me." "Time alone is very important to me; it's one of the most difficult things about having a small child."

U.S. Mormon: "I often work on Saturdays when no one is around. At home, I have a room in the basement where I can be alone—it's the only thing that keeps me sane."

U.S. African-American: "Time alone is very important to me. People think I'm too independent. I travel a lot in my work, and my husband travels in his. It bothers him that we're apart, but actually I love it. I don't mean I don't miss him. I do. But I always love being alone."

U.S.: "I have always been independent, made my own decisions, set my own rules. My mother says she quit telling me what to do when I was 3 or 4 because it didn't work. It's been a problem in relationships." "I can't tell you how important time alone is. People think, if I've had an afternoon to myself, that's time alone. I need days and days!"

### **CULTURE'S PREFERRED TYPE FOR WOMEN**

All who expressed an opinion (11) agreed that their culture preferred extraverted feeling in women—that is, the combination of feeling and judging (or the inferior function for these dominant introverted thinkers). ISFJ and ESFJ were most commonly suggested by these INTP women.

#### **Characteristic statements about their culture's preferences for women**

Japan: "That's what is commonly called, 'a woman who behaves like a woman'; like, a woman who is attentive and kind and nice."

Great Britain: "Probably ISFJ. But my degree of introversion or the way I express introversion causes problems."

New Zealand: "F definitely; S definitely. E/I? In my work with pre-schools, parents are very worried about their children's sociability."

New Zealand: "I think SFJ—not sure about the E/I."

Francophone Canada—"E, F, and J for sure—not sure about S/N."

Barbados: "I suppose the best was ESFJ, but being ESTJ was OK, as long as you also thought about people."

Canada: "ESFJ."

U.S. Mormon: "The Mormon culture for women is E and F and a clean house!" "I couldn't live the way I live now if we were still in Utah—it wouldn't be acceptable."

U.S. African-American: "E, S, and J, that's pretty clear. African-American women get a lot of support for being tough and strong, self-reliant, but we're also supposed to be nurturing. I suppose, a strong, self-reliant F."

U.S. Mexican-American: "INFJ? I think my culture focuses on females being responsible, organized, and very personal in how they are constantly feeling. I chose I over E because I think my culture wants a strong, independent female, but one that is reserved in what she says."

U.S.: "I think ESFJ is probably right. I can guarantee you it's not INTP."

Overall—have you experienced support from your culture?

All those who addressed this question (7) indicated that their culture had not supported their development and expression of their preferences.

### **Some characteristic statements**

Japan: "I don't think I have been supported in my development and way of going about things. I think I fight with people because of my attitude."

Great Britain: "I had to do it all for myself. I'm very bad at asking for help. I will not admit defeat, ever. I'm quite separate in my views. I never fit in to any traditional model."

Francophone Canada: "I create my own norms and my own effects, which is very important to me."

Barbados: "It's somewhat reassuring to know that the experiences I've had are not such isolated ones [since finding out about being an INTP]." "I adapted and fit the culture, rather than fit me."

Canada: "I always felt I was pushing the edge." "I'm seen as someone who doesn't fit the mold." "I don't fit in with this culture. I don't want to fit in with this culture."

U.S. Mexican-American: "I felt... an outsider who was constantly struggling to fit in."

U.S.: "It has always been clear to me that I was not the way a woman was supposed to be. And if I ever forgot, there was someone around to remind me." "Being myself was not so hard—I didn't feel I had much choice. Coming to accept and even appreciate myself was much harder. And the MBTI had a lot to do with that."

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The amount of agreement among these 12 women about the experience of being INTP was notable. Though there were differences, they described playing similar roles within their family, receiving similar messages from cultural institutions such as schools, having similar reactions to gender definitions/expectations. Their sense of the environment they needed to be their best was similar (independence, time alone, work flexibility). They clearly expressed their sense of being quite different from what their society expected and wanted from women and being identified—by others and by themselves—as fitting more into male patterns of thought and behavior.

The work we have done to this point has supported the hypotheses with which we began our study and encouraged us to pursue further research in this area. Some possible avenues for future research are

1) to structure a questionnaire which can be more readily filled out and evaluated by a larger number of INTP women in these and other cultures.

2) to ask the same questions of SFJ women in the same cultures to see if, as we hypothesize, they have had different experiences with their cultures.

3) to extend the research to other presumably non-preferred types. Current indications are that every culture we know about has a predominance of sensing-judging types; all intuitive-perceiving types, then, could be examined as non-preferred types.

In addition we believe the approach we have taken may provide valuable information and a resource for writing type descriptions which will cross cultures. In-depth interviews like these allow us to observe types from the inside out in a variety of cultures and to identify commonalities.

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## APPENDIX

### *Questions used for interviews:*

#### **Conversations with INTP women**

We are gathering information about the experience of being an INTP woman in different cultures. Please discuss the following topics as fully or as little as you would like. All information is for research purposes; individual responses will remain confidential. If you would like a copy of any papers or research reports we do on this topic, please send us your name and address with a request. Thank you for your time and your frankness.

Nancy Barger (ENFP) and Linda Kirby (INTP)

The culture in which I grew up (national, ethnic, racial, religious, etc.—whatever describes it best).

The family in which I grew up—parents, grandparents, occupations, siblings

My cultural identification(s) as an adult

my job/career?

my avocations?

married? in an on-going relationship?

children? what ages?

my age? other important information?

Growing up

family—acceptance/rejection, support of my preferences

how family saw me/how I saw myself

siblings—interaction, roles

my experience of gender expectations, how I dealt with

school—how I did academically—exams

how I behaved

teachers reactions to me

peer relationships

self-esteem, self-confidence

adolescence—others' expectations

parents & family

peers

my expectations, my experience

friendships, relationships

academics

self-esteem

gender issues

college/career preparation

my goals, favorite subjects, activities

others' reactions

helps/hindrances

dating, social activities

## Adulthood

- career decisions

- interaction with colleagues, employees, bosses

- relationship decisions, experiences

- interactions/ experiences with males

- interactions/ experiences with females

- stances toward people—roles I play

## Parenting (if applicable—may be with nephew, niece, friend's child)

- feelings about impending parenthood, birth

- interactions with child—at different ages?

- parenting compared to spouse, my parents, others I know

## General

- how I deal with feeling function—how others' experience it

- independence—room for? how do I experience it? how do others?

- gender expectations, roles?

- importance of time alone?

- what is your culture's preferred type for females?

- (if you're not sure, identify any preferences you can)

Overall, how did you fit in/ deal with the culture(s) in which you grew up and in which you live as an adult? Do you feel that you were supported in your development and expression of your way of going about things?