



# Working in a Multicultural World

#### **John Hooker**

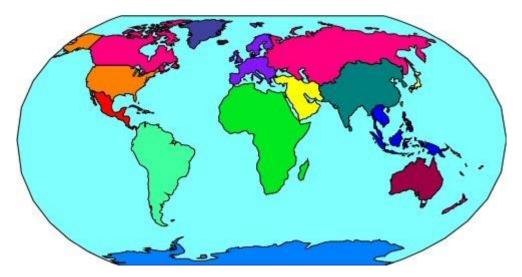
Tepper School of Business, Carnegie Mellon University, USA

Indiana University East March 2022



#### Why understand world cultures?

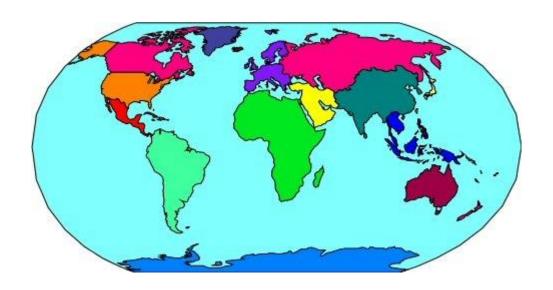
- Business is global.
  - We routinely work with people of **different cultural backgrounds**.
  - **Cultural fluency** is an asset.





#### Why understand world cultures?

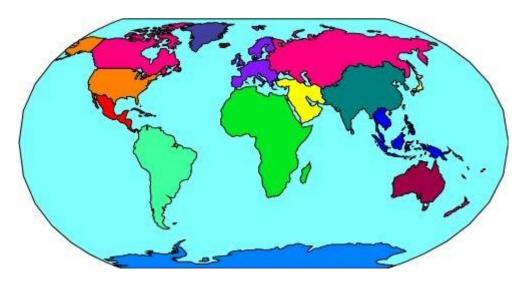
- Cultures are different
  - More so than our own culture leads us to think.
  - Each has a **thought system and logic** of its own.





#### Why understand world cultures?

- Cultures are fascinating
  - We can **learn much** from the wisdom of other traditions.
  - Other cultures give us **a new perspective** on our **own** way of life.



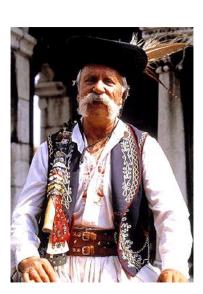


It's not about food, language, dress, holidays, etc.











What if all Chinese ate Sauerbraten and Käsespätzle





...rather than jiǎo zi and bāo zi?







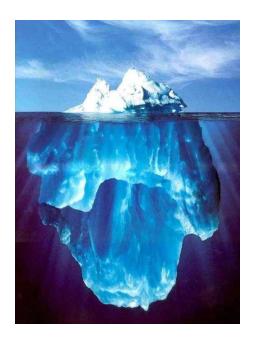
It would be the same culture!





- Culture is the thought system we live in.
  - Culture determines our deepest assumptions, most of which we are **not even aware of**.
    - Like an iceberg, culture lies mostly **beneath the surface**.







- Culture is not ethnic identity.
  - An ethnic group may describe itself in ways that are only incidental to the underlying culture.
    - Often, when the group is **already losing** its cultural distinctiveness.
    - An ethnic group need **not be a subculture** but may only have a common national origin.





## Special note

#### No judgments.

- The aim here is **not** to judge cultures as **good** or **bad**.
- We claim only that they are different.
- One can **describe** a culture without implying a judgment.





### Special note

#### No stereotyping.

- **Culture** is **not about personalities**.
- It does **not** "stereotype" individuals.
- Every culture contains the **full range** of personalities.
  - Some Swedes love noisy parties.
  - Some Brazilians hate Carnaval.
- Culture is about the **system** in which these personalities fit (or don't fit).





### Special note

- Culture is like atmospheric science.
  - It is about the **climate**, not the **weather**.
    - It doesn't predict the weather in every spot.
  - Culture **doesn't** predict the behavior of **every individual**.
    - Alaska can be **hot**.
    - Yet to say Alaska is cold is not an "exaggeration."
    - You have to come **prepared** for the climate... and the **culture**.



Fort Yukon, Alaska, reached 100° in 1915.



- Is the world moving toward a common culture?
  - Due to cheap air travel and information technology?







- Is the world moving toward a common culture?
  - Due to cheap air travel and information technology?
  - No.
  - Relatively few people in the world travel internationally.
  - Information technology reinforces cultural **divergence**.







- Satellite channels...
  - ...are **easy** to set up.
  - ...cater to **every ethnic** group.
    - 400+ Arabic language channels, for example.

































- Culturally-specific websites proliferate.
  - For example, Google search portals support 348 languages.













- Social media are infamous for **isolating** groups in a cultural bubble.
  - The opposite of homogenization.



















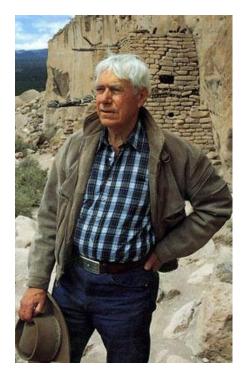






#### Sources

- Intellectual background.
  - Many of the ideas presented here are based on the work of **Edward T. Hall** and **Geert Hofstede**



Edward T. Hall 1914-2009



Geert Hofstede 1928-2020





## Relationships vs. Rules



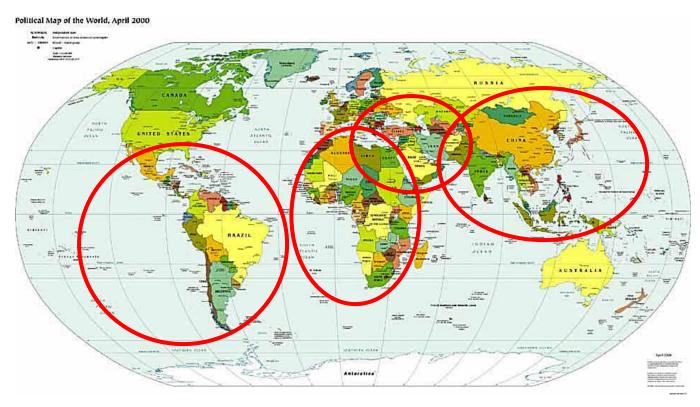
## Two types of cultures

- There are 5000+ cultures in the world, all very different.
- But they can be classified roughly as:
  - relationship-based
  - rule-based.
- Note color code:
  - Red vs blue

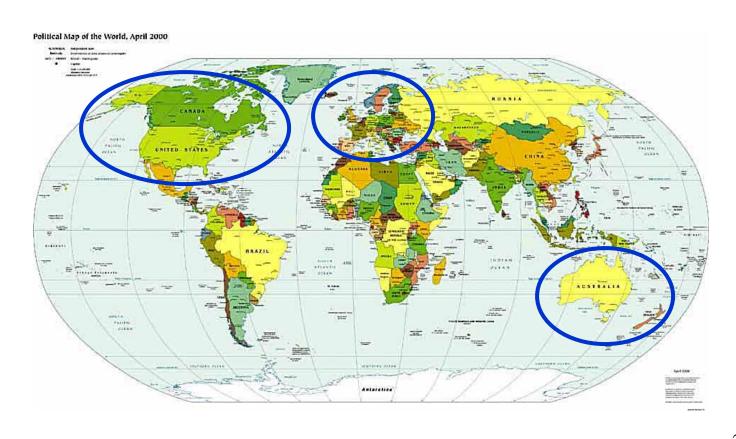




- \* Relationship-based = life is organized primarily around **personal relationships**.
  - Africa, Asia, Middle East, South America

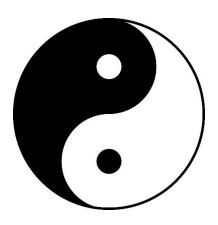


- \* Rule-based = life is organized primarily by rules.
  - Australia, Europe, North America





- No culture is purely rule-based or relationship-based.
  - Nonetheless, one system tends to dominate.





#### Getting things done

- Work through personal connections
- Go by the **book**

#### Business

- It's all about forming a **relationship**.
- Trust the **person**, not the system.
- It's all about making deals.
- Rely on the **system** to enforce the deal.







#### Traffic

- Negotiate your way through it.
- Follow traffic laws.



Intersection in Varanasi, India



- Concept of authority.
  - Authority rests in the person.
  - Authority derives from **rules**.



Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud



Supreme Law of the Land U.S. Constitution



Many cultural traits correlate with the rule-based, relationship-based distinction.

Relationship-Based	Rule-Based
Polychronic	Monochronic
High power distance*	Low power distance*
Shame-based	Guilt-based
High context	Low context
Collectivist*	Individualist*
Masculine*	Feminine*
Uncertainty tolerant*	Uncertainty avoiding*
Dionysian	Apollonian

<sup>\*</sup>Hofstede's categories



#### **Cultural Classification**

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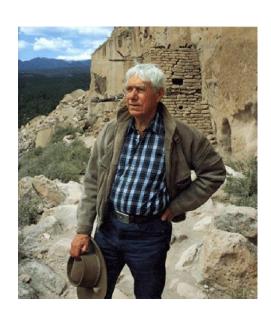
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## Monochronic and polychronic

- A culture's sense of **time** affects every aspect of daily life.
  - Edward Hall classified cultures as monochronic and polychronic.

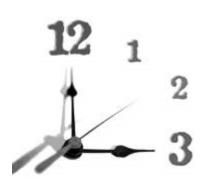






### Monochronic and polychronic

- Monochronic cultures one thing at a time.
  - People like to **finish one task before moving to another**and are generally **punctual**.
  - Rule-based cultures are monochronic.
    - **U.S.** is strongly monochronic.
    - Japan, Singapore and (to some extent) China are **punctual** but **polychronic**.





## Monochronic and polychronic

- Polychronic cultures— juggling tasks.
  - People are comfortable with being involved in several tasks at once.
  - Relationship-based cultures are polychronic.
    - Punctually generally **not important**.
    - Except in Japan, Singapore and (to some extent)
       China.





#### Monochronic cultures

People organize and structure time.

Time is partitioned into **intervals**, each devoted to one task.

Appointments are made and punctuality important.

Orderly **queues** form.





#### Monochronic cultures

- Time is a measurable substance.
  - It can be spent, saved, wasted.
  - Idleness wastes time.
  - Activity **fills time**.
  - Having to wait is boring.





#### Monochronic cultures

- Travel arrangements.
  - Made far in advance.
  - E.g., Scandinavia
- Deadlines.
  - Time is money.
  - People get **nervous** and **speed up** as the deadline approaches.







### Polychronic cultures

- People work on several tasks at once.
  - You may be **kept waiting** 45 minutes for an appointment.
  - But don't keep the boss waiting!
  - Clerk may serve3 or 4 people at once.
  - No orderly queues, except at international airports, hotels, etc.





## Polychronic cultures

- Time is **not measured**.
  - Idleness stops time.
  - Activity makes time.
  - Having to wait is no big deal.







# Polychronic cultures

- Travel arrangements.
  - Made at the last minute.
  - E.g., India.
- Deadlines.
  - People switch to another task when delayed.
  - No one speeds up as the deadline approaches.

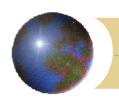




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## Power distance

- Power distance is the degree to which less powerful people accept their subordinate position.
  - Fundamental problem: how do people get power?
  - At some point, others must **grant** them power.





- Relationship-based countries tend to be **high** power distance.
  - Behavior is regulated by **people** with authority.
  - Rules are legitimated and enforced by authority figures.
  - Leaders are expected to be wise and caring.
  - Example: Deng Xiaoping



Deng Xiaoping
De facto leader of China
1978-1992



- Rule-based countries tend to be **low** power distance.
  - People respect the **rules** more than superiors.
  - Example: Sweden.



Karl XVI Gustaf Swedish King since 1973



## High power distance:

- Children obey and respect parents, teachers.
- Employees are **reluctant to challenge** the boss or discuss problems.
- Ideal boss is benevolent but authoritarian.
- Possibly large differences in salary/skills.
- Possibly class differences, limited upward mobility.
- Because authority must reside in the **person**, certain individuals have authority based on who they are.



## Low power distance:

- Children are allowed to **contradict** their parents.
- **Two-way** discussion in classroom.
- Discipline may be a problem; parents side with child rather than teacher.
- No corporal punishment.
- Positions of authority are typically **temporary** and **earned** in some way.





### Low power distance:

- Consultative management.
- Employees bring **concerns** and grievances to the boss.
- Ideal boss inspires workers.
- Possibly smaller salary differences; workers may resent executive perks.
  - Scandinavia & U.S. (salary & offices)
  - Power distance higher in U.S. business





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# Shame and guilt

Shame and guilt are mechanisms for enforcing behavior norms.







# Shame and guilt

- Relationship-based cultures enforce behavior norms by shame.
  - Loss of face.
  - Humiliation.
  - Punishment on the spot.
  - Direct and constant supervision.



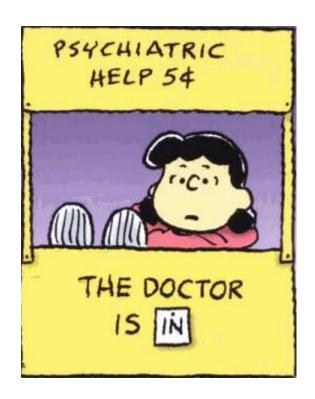
# Shame and guilt

- Key point for shame-based cultures:
  - Failure to supervise **gives permission** to break the "rules."
    - Exam proctoring.





- Guilt is more important in rule-based cultures.
  - Guilt encourages obedience to rules **without supervision**.
  - But it may be a poor motivator and carry high psychological cost.
    - Ein gutes Gewissen ist an sanftes Ruhekissen.
  - Guilt is **reinforced** by fear of punishment.
  - Support for **monochronic** time consciousness.





#### # Humor...

- Based on **jokes** and **irony** in guilt-based cultures.
  - Relief from rules, logic
- Based on **amusement** in shame-based cultures.
  - Diversion from daily routine.







Mr. Bean breaking the rules

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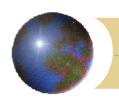


- In low-context cultures,
  - There any many signs, timetables, maps.
  - Contracts are written, long, and detailed.
    - Fixed once signed.
    - Disputes resolved by lawsuits.
  - People pay attention to written rules.
    - Example: restroom sign.





- In high-context cultures,
  - People already know what to do.
  - Contracts are vague, verbal, or nonexistent.
    - Agreements evolve with the situation.
    - Legal system weak.
    - Disputes resolved by negotiation.
    - Contracts important in Middle East.
  - People may not pay attention to written rules or memos.



- In low-context cultures,
  - Disagreements are resolved by open discussion.
  - It is OK to say "no".
  - Employees can express **disagreement** with company policy.





- In high-context cultures,
  - Communication is indirect.
  - One rarely says "no," may say "yes" to be polite.
  - It may be improper to **criticize company policy** in the presence of the boss.





- First rule of international business:
  - In a low-context culture,

Nothing is agreed upon unless it is part of the contract.



In a **high-context culture**,

Nothing is agreed upon unless it is part of the relationship.





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## Collectivist and individualist

#### Collectivist cultures

- Primary loyalty is to the group.
  - Usually the **family**, sometimes the village, company, or nation.
- People rely on the **group** for support, security, predictability.
- Focus on **cooperation**.
  - Example: noncompetitve students.





## Collectivist and individualist

#### Individualist cultures

- Primary loyalty is to **oneself**.
  - People are held **individually responsible** for their own welfare.
  - People are expected to show **individual initiative**.
- People rely on **themselves** and an impersonal **system** for support, security, predictability.
- Focus on **competition**.



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# Masculine/feminine

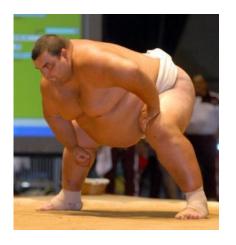
The distinction can be understood in two ways...





# Masculine/feminine

- Attitude toward masculine values.
  - Masculine: Men are expected to be tough.
  - Feminine: Men & women more similar.



- Attitude toward competition.
  - Masculine: competition valued.
  - Feminine: cooperation valued.





#### Masculine values

Masculine

**Feminine** 

Masculine *Competitiiveness* Feminine Mascu

Japan USA, UK, Ireland Philippines	
India	
East African	Scandinavia
cultures	Western Slavic
Arab cultures	cultures
Eastern Slavic	Thailand
cultures	
<i>Machismo</i> cultures	



# Case study

#### Scandinavia

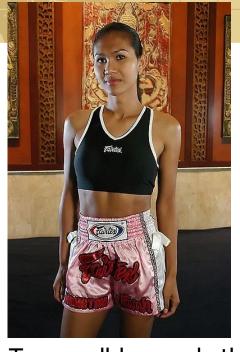
- Feminine culture
  - Men and women very **similar**
  - Emphasis on cooperation.
  - Negotiation is **not** a poker game...
     show all your cards.



# Case study

#### Thailand

- Feminine culture?
  - Transgender and "3rd gender" individuals accepted
  - Velvet coups d'état.
  - In negotiation, show all your cards.



Nong Tum, well-known kathoey



Thai soldier during 2006 military coup



But... military crackdown on protestors in Bangkok, May 2010 65



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Attitudes toward unpredictability in life...





- Uncertainty tolerant:
  - Willing to take risks.
  - Entrepreneurial in business.
  - **Comfortable** with travel, relocation.



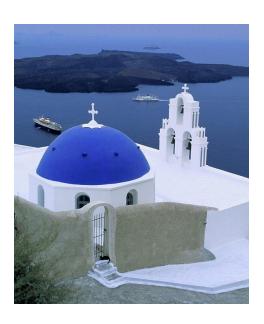


- Uncertainty avoiding:
  - Prefer familiar surroundings.
  - Risk-averse in business.
  - Dysfunctional bureaucracy serves as ritual.





- Some uncertainty avoiding cultures:
  - Greece.
  - Latin America.
  - Western Slavic cultures.
  - Belgium.
  - France.





- Some uncertainty tolerant cultures:
  - ₩ U.K.
  - **USA**
  - Hong Kong & coastal Chinese
  - Singapore





- Case study: United Kingdom
  - Masculine culture
    - Militaristic
    - Stiff upper lip
    - Competitive
  - Uncertainty tolerant culture
    - Love to travel, resettle anywhere.
    - Former British colonies tend to be more livable than most, because the British lived there themselves.
    - Former colonies include U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Hong Kong, Kenya, Zimbabwe.





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# Dionysian/Apollonian

- Introduced by Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*.
  - To describe two sides of classical Greek culture.





### Dionysian/Apollonian

- Anthropologist Ruth Benedict used the distinction to describe native American cultures.
  - Patterns of Culture (1934).
  - Pueblo vs. Mandan (e.g.)
    - Pueblo: orderly lifestyle
    - Mandan: extreme experience
  - Two ways of handling stress, uncertainty, joy, and grief.





# Dionysian/Apollonian



Funeral, Norway Apollonian



Funeral, Palestine Dionysian



### Conclusion

Cross-cultural understanding is as vital as ever!





Questions?

Comments?

```
日 Zapytaj Sor
Acyy Poser Iarr Pergunte
お願いします Ask Chiedi
Jautāt Kérdezd meg Kysy
Pitajte 부탁드립니다 (Final Potthote Spør
Питаjте
```



### Hofstede's Classification

- The best known classification.
  - From Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2010).
    - Based on a worldwide survey of employees of IBM subsidiaries in 50 countries.



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# Hofstede's Classification

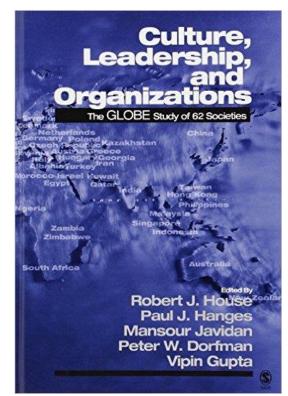
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  - From Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2010).
    - Based on a worldwide survey of employees of IBM subsidiaries in 50 countries.
  - Often covered in executive workshops.
    - See as legitimate in the West due to its basis in quantifiable responses to surveys.

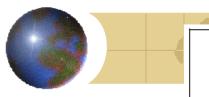




## Hofstede's Classification

- More recent surveys in *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*.
  - These are summarized here, in case you are curious.
  - Hofstede's original classification seems more useful.





Power Distance (Hofstede)

4	East Asia	Latin America	Other	Southern Europe	Other Western
	Malaysia Philippines	Guatemala Panama Mexico Venezuela	Arab		
			countries		
	Indonesia	Ecuador	India		
	Singapore	Brazil	West Africa	Yugoslavia	_
	Hong Kong	Colombia	- 1		France
		El Salvador Peru	Turkey East Africa	Rolgium	
	Thailand	Chile	East Africa	Belgium Portugal	
	S. Korea	Uruguay	Iran	Greece	
	Taiwan	Oragady	Pakistan	Spain	
	Japan	Argentina	S. Africa	Italy	
		<b>3</b>	Jamaica		USA
					Canada
					Netherlands
		Costa Rica			Australia
					W. Germany
					U.K.
					Switzerland
					Finland
					Norway Sweden
					Ireland
					New Zealand
			Israel		Denmark
					Austria



Collectivism (Hofstede)

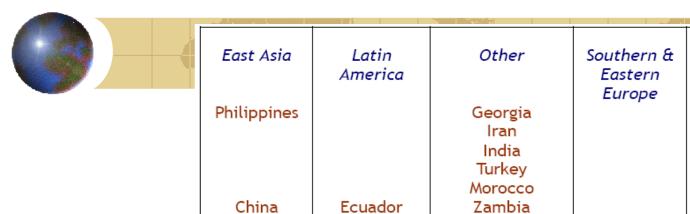
East Asia	Latin America	Other	Southern Europe	Other Western
Indonesia Taiwan S. Korea Thailand	Guatemala Ecuador Panama Venezuela Colombia Costa Rica Peru El Salvador	Pakistan		
Singapore	Chile	W. Africa		
Hong Kong Malaysia Philippines Japan	Mexico Uruguay Brazil Argentina	E. Africa Turkey Arab countries Jamaica Iran India Israel S. Africa	Portugal Yugoslavia Greece Spain France Belgium	Austria Finland W. Germany Switzerland Norway Ireland Sweden Denmark
			Italy	New Zealand Netherlands Canada U.K. Australia USA



Sweden

	East Asia	Latin America	Other	Southern Europe	Other Western
	Japan	Guatemala Uruguay El Salvador Peru Chile Costa Rica		Greece Portugal Belgium Yugoslavia France Spain	
Uncertainty	S. Korea	Panama Argentina	Turkey		
avoidance		Colombia Venezuela	Israeĺ		
(Hofstede)	Taiwan Thailand Indonesia	Brazil Ecuador	Pakistan Arab countries Iran W. Africa E. Africa S. Africa	Italy	Austria W. Germany  Finland Switzerland Netherlands Australia Norway New Zealand
	Philippines Malaysia Hong Kong		India		Canada USA U.K. Ireland
	Singapore		Jamaica		Sweden Denmark

	East Asia	Latin America	Other	Southern & Eastern Europe	Other Western
			Morocco		
		El Salvador	Nigeria		
	Thailand	Argentina	Zimbabwe		
	S. Korea	Guatemala	Ziiiibabwe		
		Ecuador	Turkey	E. Germany	
		Colombia		Hungary	
			India	Spain	
Power			Russia	•	
rowei	Philippines		Iran	Portugal	
Distance				Italy	
		Venezuela		Greece	
(GLOBE)		Brazil	Zambia	Slovenia	
(GLODE)			Kazakhstan		
		Mexico	Namibia	France	W. Germany
	Taiwan		Georgia		
	Indonesia				
	Malaysia		S. Africa (white)		England
	Japan		Kuwait	Poland	Ireland
	China				
	Singapore				
	Hong Kong		Egypt		Austria
					Switzerland
					Sweden
					Canada
		Costa Rica	Qatar		Australia
		Bolivia	Israel	Albania	Netherlands
			S. Africa (black)		Denmark



Thailand Indonesia

Singapore Taiwan

S. Korea Malaysia

Hong Kong

Japan

In-group Collectivism (GLOBE)

Latin America	Other	Southern & Eastern Europe	Other Western
	Georgia	,	
	Iran		
	India Turkey		
	Morocco		
Ecuador	Zambia		
Colombia	Kuwait	Albania	
Mexico			
	Egypt		
Guatemala	Russia		
Venezuela	Zimbabwe Nigeria	Poland	
Argentina	Migeria	Portugal	
Bolivia		Spain	
El Salvador		Slovenia	
Costa Rica	Kazakhstan	Greece	
Brazil	S. Africa (black)	Hungary	Ireland
	Qatar Israel	Italy	Austria
	Namibia	E. Germany	
	S. Africa (white)	France	Canada
	` ′		USA
			Australia
			England
			Finland W. Germany
			Switzerland
			Netherlands
			New Zealand
			Sweden
			Denmark

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Male domination (GLOBE)

East Asia	Latin America	Other Southern & Eastern		Other Western
S. Korea		Kuwait	Europe	
J. Norca		Egypt		
		Morocco		
		Zambia		
		Turkey		
		India		Switzerland
		Iran	Spain	
	Guatemala	Nigeria		
China	Ecuador	Zimbabwe	E. Germany	Austria
Taiwan	El Salvador	Israel	W. Germany	
Japan			_	Ireland
Indonesia	Brazil	S. Africa (white)	Italy	New Zealand
Thailand				USA
Hong Kong	Argentina		Greece	Australia
Malaysia	Bolivia	Georgia		Netherlands
	Costa Rica	Onton		
Dhilinnings	Venezuela	Qatar	France	
Philippines	Mexico	S. Africa (black)	France	Codland
Singapore	Colombia		Portugal Albania	England Canada
		Kazakhstan	Albailla	Sweden
		Namibia	Slovenia	Denmark
		Russia	Poland	Defillark
		Rassia	Hungary	

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	East Asia	Latin America	Other	Southern & Eastern Europe Albania	Other Western
			Nigeria	Hungary	
	Hong Kong	El Salvador	S. Africa (white)	E. Germany Greece	Austria W. Germany
			Turkey	0.000	USA
			Morocco		Switzerland
Assertiveness	S. Korea	Mexico	Kazakhstan	Spain	
(CL ODE)		Venezuela	S. Africa (black)		Netherlands
(GLOBE)		Argentina Brazil	Israel		Australia
	Singapore	Colombia	Georgia	France	England
		Ecuador	Qatar Zambia	Italy	
			Zimbabwe	Poland	Canada
	Philippines		Iran	Slovenia	Ireland
	Taiwan		Namibia		
	Malaysia	Guatemala	Egypt		
	Indonesia				Finland
	China	Bolivia			Denmark
	Thailand	Costa Rica	India	Dortugal	
	Thailand		Russia Kuwait	Portugal	New Zealand
	Japan		Nuvvait		Sweden

Performance
oriented
(GLOBE)

_	East Asia	Latin America	Other	Southern & Eastern	Other Western
		Ecuador Colombia	Philippines	Europe	USA Canada Ireland
	Indonesia	Brazil	Israel	E. Germany Spain	England Australia New Zealand
		El Salvador Argentina		Italy	Austria
		3	Zimbabwe	Portugal	
		Costa Rica	Namibia	Hungary	
	Singapore	Mexico	Zambia		W C 2552255
	Malaysia	Guatemala	Zambia Kuwait		W. Germany Switzerland
		Venezuela	Navvaic		Denmark
		Bolivia	S. Africa (white)		Finland
	Thailand		Nigeria		
			Kazakhstan India		Sweden Netherlands
			Georgia		Netherlands
			Russia		
	Hong Kong		Turkey	Poland	
			Egypt	Greece	
	Japan			Slovenia	
	Taiwan China		Iran	Albania	
	S. Korea		S. Africa (black)	Acount	
			Morocco	France	
			Qatar		90



Uncertainty avoidance conceived as orderliness and/or high context and/or high power distance (GLOBE)

East Asia	Latin America	Other	Southern Europe	Other Western
Singapore				Switzerland Sweden Denmark W. Germany
China Malaysia			E. Germany	Austria Finland New Zealand Netherlands
		S. Africa (black)	Albania	England Canada
Taiwan			France	Australia
Hong Kong		Nigeria		Ireland
Indonesia	Mexico	Kuwait Namibia Zimbabwe		
		India		USA
Japan		Zambia S. Africa (white) Egypt Israel		
Thailand		Qatar	Spain	
Philippines	Costa Rica		Portugal Italy	
	Ecuador	Iran Kazakhstan	Slovenia	
	Argentina	Morocco		
	El Salvador Brazil	Turkey	Poland	
S. Korea	Colombia Venezuela Bolivia	Georgia	Greece	
	Guatemala	Russia	Hungary	