

# G. HOFSTEDE

Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind McGraw-Hill (1997)

Cultures Consequences, Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)  
Sage, Thousand Oaks, Calif. (2001)

# Hofstede

In 2000, the author belonged to the group of the most cited, according to the "SSCI – Social Sciences Citation Index", which comprises the areas of Anthropology, Economy, Political Science, Psychology, Law, Sociology and Business Science, covering some 2000 regular scientific publications, mostly in English and from the United States

# CULTURE - Kluckhohn

'Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts;

the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values;

culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action.'

Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952: 181;

# Culture - Hoecklin

## What culture is:

- a shared system of meanings
- relative. There is no cultural absolute.
  - learned
  - about groups

## What culture is not:

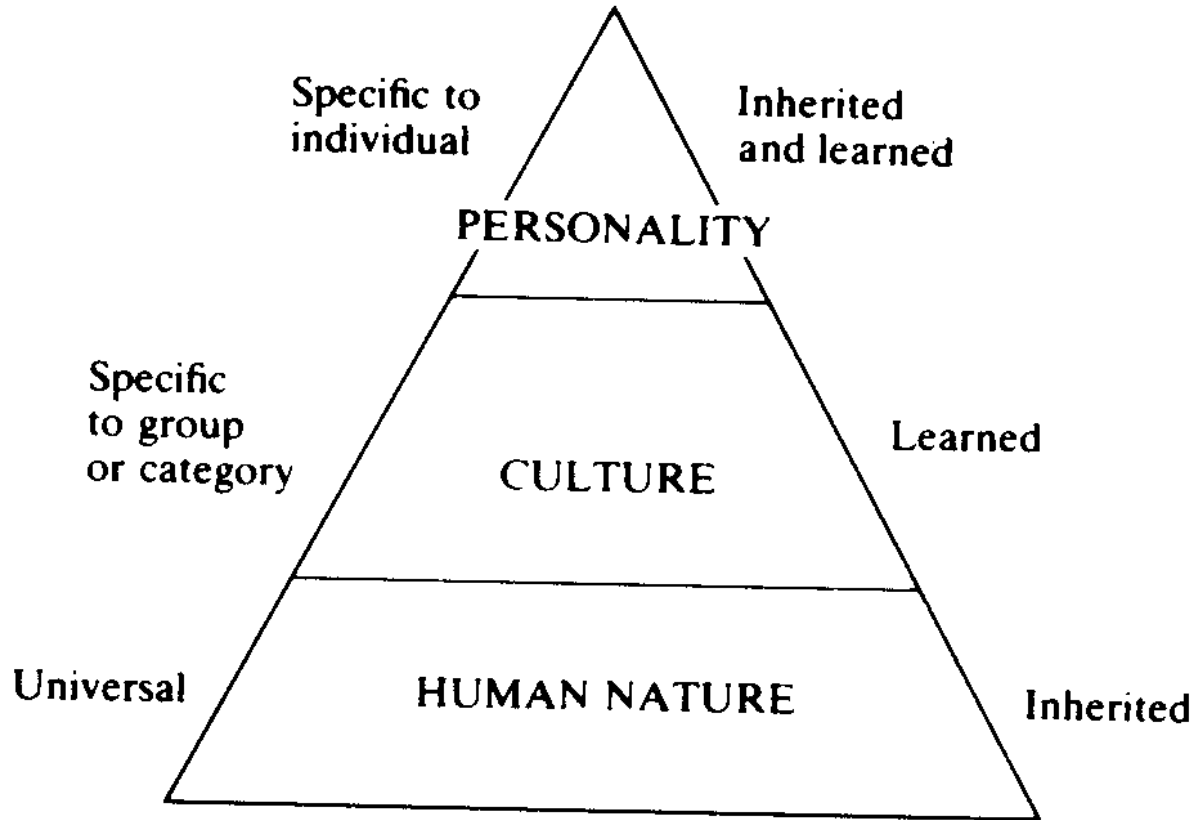
- right or wrong
- inherited
- about individual behaviour

(Source: Lisa Hoecklin: Managing Cultural Differences)

## CULTURE - Hofstede

**It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.**

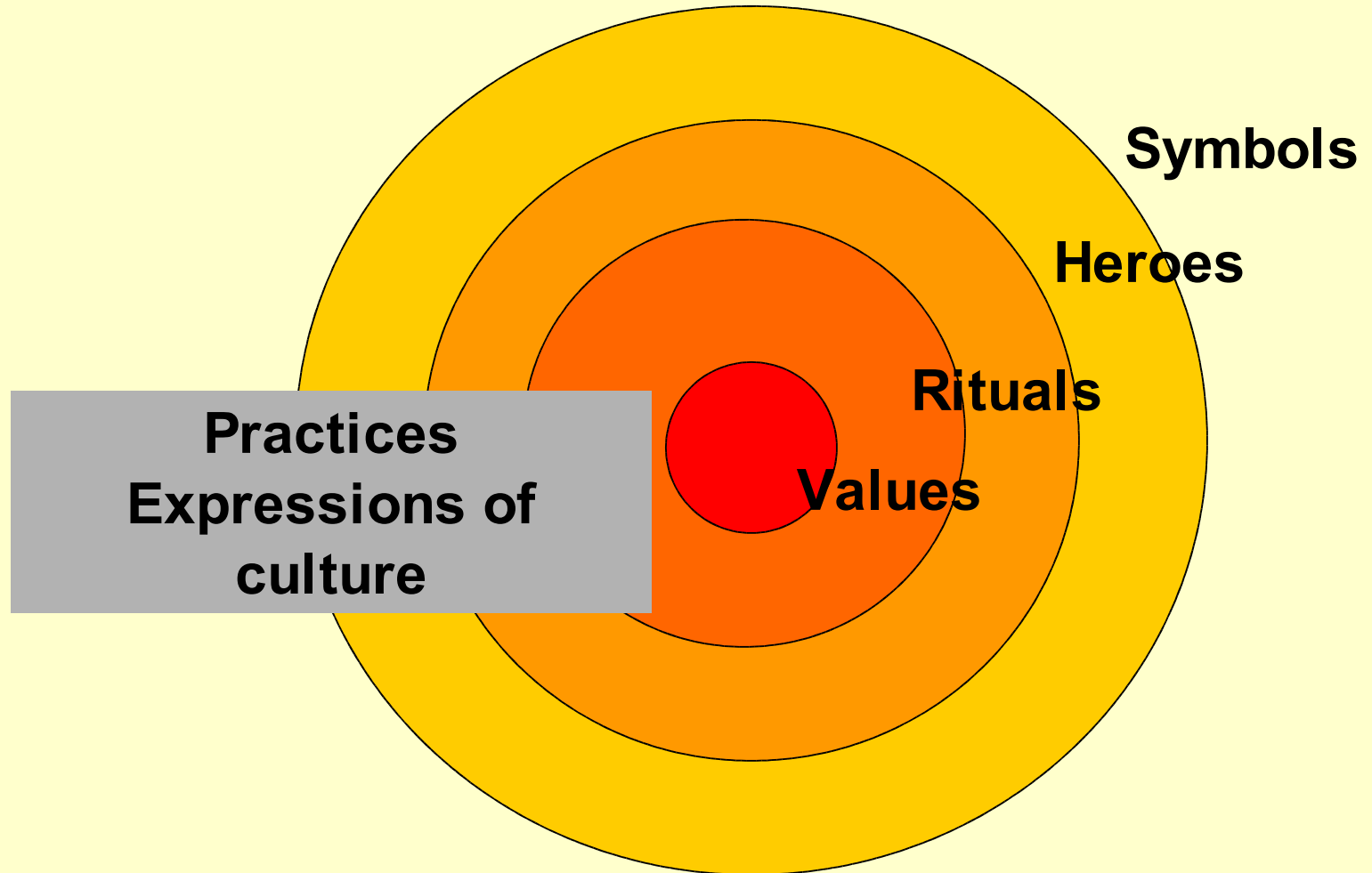
# Human Mental Programming: Levels



Three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming

# Culture as an onion – Hofstede

Manifestations of culture at different levels of depth



# Layers of culture

- a national level
- a regional and/or ethnic and/or religious and/or linguistic affiliation level
- a gender level
- a generation level
- a social class level
- for those who are employed, an organizational or corporate level



# Hofstede's Research

Hofstede used information gathered from two large “surveys” he was involved in and conducted during 1967-69 and 1971-73 with members of IBM subsidiaries in 72 countries (with 20 languages). From these surveys a total of 116,000 individual answers were obtained covering more than 30 topics.

In the first phase , results were obtained on the basis of information gathered in 40 countries<sup>[1]</sup>, later this number was increased to 50 countries and three regions.

From the individual responses to each question average values were obtained for each country and these typical values were subjected to a factorial analysis resulting in four dimensions, which are described below.

<sup>[1]</sup> Countries with more than 50 individual responses.

# Social anthropology

... all societies, modern or traditional, face the same basic problems; only the answers differ ...

1. Relation to authority
2. Conception of self, in particular:
  - a. the relationship between individual and society, and
  - b. the individual's concept of masculinity and femininity
3. Ways of dealing with conflicts, including the control of aggression and the expression of feelings.

# DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL CULTURES

## HOFSTEDE

- power distance (from small to large ),
- collectivism versus individualism,
- femininity versus masculinity, and
- uncertainty avoidance (from weak to strong).
- More recently, a fifth dimension of differences among national cultures was identified, opposing a long-term orientation in life to a short-term orientation

# Power distance

can be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

'Institutions' are the basic elements of society like the family, school, and the community; 'organizations' are the places where people work.

## POWER DISTANCE

Key Differences between small and large power distance societies.  
I: general norm, family, school, and workplace

### Small power distance

- 1 Parents treat children as equals
- 2 Teachers expect initiatives from students in class
- 3 Teachers are experts who transfer impersonal truths
- 4 Students treat teachers as equals
- 5 Hierarchy in organizations means an inequality of roles, established for convenience
- 6 Decentralization is popular
- 7 Narrow salary range between top and bottom of organization
- 8 Subordinates expect to be consulted
- 9 The ideal boss is a resourceful democrat

### Large power distance

- Parents teach children obedience
- Teachers are expected to take all initiatives in class
- Teachers are gurus who transfer personal wisdom
- Students treat teachers with respect
- Hierarchy in organizations reflects the existential inequality between higher-ups and lower-downs
- Centralization is popular
- Wide salary range between top and bottom of organization
- Subordinates expect to be told what to do
- The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat or good father

## POWER DISTANCE

# Key differences between small and large power distance societies: politics and ideas .

### Small power distance

- 1 The use of power should be legitimate and is subject to criteria of good and evil
- 2 The middle class is large
- 3 Powerful people try to look less powerful than they are
- 4 Power is based on formal position, expertise, and ability to give rewards
- 5 The way to change a political system is by changing the rules (evolution)
- 6 The use of violence in domestic politics is rare
- 7 Political spectrum shows strong center and weak right and left wings
- 8 Prevailing religions and philosophical systems stress equality
- 9 Prevailing political ideologies stress and practice power sharing

### Large power distance

- Might prevails over right: whoever holds the power is right and good
- The middle class is small
- Powerful people try to look as impressive as possible
- Power is based on family or friends, charisma, and ability to use force
- The way to change a political system is by changing the people at the top (revolution)
- Domestic political conflicts frequently lead to violence
- Political spectrum, if allowed to be manifested, shows weak center and strong wings
- Prevailing religions and philosophical systems stress hierarchy and stratification
- Prevailing political ideologies stress and practice power struggle

# Individualism

pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family.

Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive ingroups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

# INDIVIDUALISM

Key differences between collectivist and individualist societies.

I: general norm, family, school, and workplace

	Collectivist	Individualist
1	People are born into extended families or other ingroups which continue to protect them in exchange for loyalty	Everyone grows up to look after him/ herself and his/her immediate (nuclear) family only
2	Identity is based in the social network to which one belongs	Identity is based in the individual
3	Children learn to think in terms of 'we'	Children learn to think in terms of 'I'
4	Harmony should always be maintained and direct confrontations avoided	Speaking one's mind is a characteristic of an honest person
5	High-context communication	Low-context communication
6	Purpose of education is learning how to do	Purpose of education is learning how to learn
7	Diplomas provide entry to higher status groups	Diplomas increase economic worth and/or self-respect
8	Relationship employer-employee is perceived in moral terms, like a family link	Relationship employer-employee is a contract supposed to be based on mutual advantage
9	Hiring and promotion decisions take employees' ingroup into account	Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills and rules only
10	Relationship prevails over task	Task prevails over relationship



# INDIVIDUALISM

Key differences between collectivist and individualist societies.  
II: politics and ideas

	Collectivist	Individualist
1	Collective interests prevail over individual interests	Individual interests prevail over collective interests
2	Private life is invaded by group(s)	Everyone has a right to privacy
3	Opinions are predetermined by group membership	Everyone is expected to have a private opinion
4	Laws and rights differ by group	Laws and rights are supposed to be the same for all
5	Low per capita GNP	High per capita GNP
6	Dominant role of the state in the economic system	Restrained role of the state in the economic system
7	Press controlled by the state	Press freedom
8	Ideologies of equality prevail over ideologies of individual freedom	Ideologies of individual freedom prevail over ideologies of equality
9	Harmony and consensus in society are ultimate goals	Self-actualization by every individual is an ultimate goal

# Masculinity

indicates the extent to which the dominant values of a society are "masculine" (e.g., assertive and competitive).

Masculinity pertains to societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct (i.e., men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life).

Femininity pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap (i.e., both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life).

## FEMINISM

Key differences between feminine and masculine societies.  
I: general norm, family, school, and workplace

### Feminine

### Masculine

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Dominant values in society are caring for others and preservation    | Dominant values in society are material success and progress                       |
| 2 | People and warm relationships are important                          | Money and things are important   |
| 3 | Everybody is supposed to be modest                                   | Men are supposed to be assertive, ambitious, and tough                             |
| 4 | In the family, both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings | In the family, fathers deal with facts and mothers with feelings                   |
| 5 | Both boys and girls are allowed to cry but neither should fight      | Girls cry, boys don't; boys should fight back when attacked, girls shouldn't fight |
| 6 | Sympathy for the weak  | Sympathy for the strong  |

FEMINISM Key differences between feminine and masculine societies.  
I: general norm, family, school, and workplace

Feminine

Masculine

7	Average student is the norm	Best student is the norm
8	Failing in school is a minor accident	Failing in school is a disaster
9	Friendliness in teachers appreciated	Brilliance in teachers appreciated
10	Boys and girls study same subjects	Boys and girls study different subjects
11	Work in order to live	Live in order to work
12	Managers use intuition and strive for consensus	Managers expected to be decisive and assertive
13	Stress on equality, solidarity, and quality of work life	Stress on equity, competition among colleagues, and performance
14	Resolution of conflicts by compromise and negotiation	Resolution of conflicts by fighting them out

# FEMINISM

Key differences between feminine and masculine societies. II: politics and ideas

## Feminine

## Masculine

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Welfare society ideal   | Performance society ideal   |
| 2 | The needy should be helped  | The strong should be supported  |
| 3 | Permissive society  | Corrective society  |
| 4 | Small and slow are beautiful  | Big and fast are beautiful  |
| 5 | Preservation of the environment should have highest priority  | Maintenance of economic growth should have highest priority   |
| 6 | Government spends relatively large proportion of budget on development assistance to poor countries | Government spends relatively small proportion of budget on development assistance to poor countries |

# FEMINISM

Key differences between feminine and masculine societies. II: politics and ideas

## Feminine

## Masculine

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 7  | Government spends relatively small proportion of budget on armaments     | Government spends relatively large proportion of budget on armaments            |
| 8  | International conflicts should be resolved by negotiation and compromise | International conflicts should be resolved by a show of strength or by fighting |
| 9  | A relatively large number of women in elected political positions        | A relatively small number of women in elected political positions               |
| 10 | Dominant religions stress the complementarity of the sexes               | Dominant religions stress the male prerogative                                  |

# Uncertainty avoidance

can be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations and try to avoid such situations.

This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules.

# UNCERTAINTY

Key differences between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance societies. I: general norm, family, school, and workplace

## Weak uncertainty avoidance

- 1 Uncertainty is a normal feature of life and each day is accepted as it comes
- 2 Low stress; subjective feeling of well being
- 3 Aggression and emotions should not be shown
- 4 Comfortable in ambiguous situations and with unfamiliar risks
- 5 Lenient rules for children on what is dirty and taboo
- 6 What is different, is curious
- 7 Students comfortable with open-ended learning situations and concerned with good discussions

## Strong uncertainty avoidance

- The uncertainty inherent in life is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought
- High stress; subjective feeling of anxiety
- Aggression and emotions may at proper times and places be ventilated
- Acceptance of familiar risks; fear of ambiguous situations and of unfamiliar risks
- Tight rules for children on what is dirty and taboo
- What is different, is dangerous
- Students comfortable in structured learning situations and concerned with the right answers



# UNCERTAINTY

Key differences between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance societies. I: general norm, family, school, and workplace

	Weak uncertainty avoidance	Strong uncertainty avoidance
8	Teachers may say 'I don't know'	Teachers supposed to have all the answers
9	There should not be more rules than is strictly necessary	Emotional need for rules, even if these will never work
10	Time is a framework for orientation	Time is money
11	Comfortable feeling when lazy; hard-working only when needed	Emotional need to be busy; inner urge to work hard
12	Precision and punctuality have to be learned	Precision and punctuality come naturally
13	Tolerance of deviant and innovative ideas and behavior	Suppression of deviant ideas and behavior; resistance to innovation
14	Motivation by achievement and esteem or belongingness	Motivation by security and esteem or belongingness

# UNCERTAINTY

## Key differences between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance societies. II: politics and ideas

### Weak uncertainty avoidance

- 1 Few and general laws and rules
- 2 If rules cannot be respected, they should be changed
- 3 Citizen competence versus authorities
- 4 Citizen protest acceptable
- 5 Citizens positive towards institutions
- 6 Civil servants positive towards political process
- 7 Tolerance, moderation
- 8 Positive attitudes towards young people

### Strong uncertainty avoidance

- Many and precise laws and rules
- If rules cannot be respected, we are sinners and should repent
- Citizen incompetence versus authorities
- Citizen protest should be repressed
- Citizens negative towards institutions
- Civil servants negative towards political process
- Conservatism, extremism, law and order
- Negative attitudes towards young people

# UNCERTAINTY

Key differences between weak and strong uncertainty avoidance societies. II: politics and ideas

Weak uncertainty avoidance

Strong uncertainty avoidance

9

Regionalism, internationalism, attempts at integration of minorities

Nationalism, xenophobia, repression of minorities

10

Belief in generalists and common sense

Belief in experts and specialization

11

Many nurses, few doctors

Many doctors, few nurses

12

One group's truth should not be imposed on others

There is only one Truth and we have it

13

Human rights: nobody should be persecuted for their beliefs

Religious, political, and ideological fundamentalism and intolerance

14

In philosophy and science, tendency towards relativism and empiricism

In philosophy and science, tendency towards grand theories

15

Scientific opponents can be personal friends

Scientific opponents cannot be personal friends

# Confucian dynamism or 'Long-term orientation'

On the pole which could be labeled 'Long-term orientation' :

Persistence (perseverance )

Ordering relationships by status and observing this order

Thrift

Having a sense of shame

On the opposite pole 'Short-term orientation':

Personal steadiness and stability

Protecting your 'face'

Respect for tradition

Reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts

# Index Scores for Countries and Regions From the IBM Set

	Power distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Individualism/ Collectivism	Masculinity/ Femininity
Country	<u>Index</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Index</u>	<u>Index</u>
Chile	63	86	23	28
Denmark	18	23	74	16
<b>France</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>86</b>	71	43
Germany	<b>35</b>	<b>65</b>	67	66
Great Britain	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	89	66
Guatemala	95	101	6	37
Hong Kong	<b>68</b>	<b>29</b>	25	57
Italy	50	75	76	70
Japan	54	92	46	95
Korea (South)	60	85	18	39
Malaysia	104	36	26	50
Mexico	81	82	30	69
Netherlands	38	53	80	14
Portugal	63	104	27	31
Spain	57	86	51	42
Sweden	31	29	71	5
Switzerland	34	58	68	70
Thailand	64	64	20	34
United States	40	46	91	62
Arab countries	80	68	38	53
West Africa	77	54	20	46

# Index Score Estimates for Countries Not in the IBM Set

<b>Country and Part</b>	<b>Power Distance Index</b>	<b>Uncertainty Avoidance Index</b>	<b>Individualism Index</b>	<b>Masculinity Index</b>	<b>Long-Term Orientation Index</b>
Bangladesh	80	60	20	55	40
Bulgaria	70	85	30	40	
China	80	30	20	66	118
Czechia	57	74	58	57	13
Estonia	40	60	60	30	
Hungary	46	82	80	88	50
Luxembourg	40	70	60	50	
Malta	56	96	59	47	
Morocco	70	68	46	53	
Poland	68	93	60	64	32
Romania	90	90	30	42	
Russia	93	95	39	36	
Slovakia	104	51	52	110	38
Surinam	85	92	47	37	
Trinidad	47	55	16	58	
Vietnam	70	30	20	40	80