

From "The Cultural Dimensions of
International Business"

- Gary P. Ferraro

CHAPTER

5

Contrasting Cultural Values

It is not unusual for anthropologists to speak of people from different cultures as having different sets of assumptions or different value systems. A *value system* represents what is expected or hoped for in a society, not necessarily what actually occurs. Values deal with what is required or forbidden, what is judged to be good or bad or right or wrong. Thus, in any given society, values represent the standards by which behavior is evaluated, not necessarily the actual behavior.

If communication between people from different cultures is to be successful, each party must understand the cultural assumptions—or cultural starting points—of the other. Unfortunately, our own values, the result of cultural conditioning, are so much a part of our consciousness that we frequently fail to acknowledge their existence and consequently fail to understand that they may not be shared by people from other cultures. When that occurs, cross-cultural cues can be missed, communication becomes short-circuited, and hostilities can be generated.

To maximize our chances for successfully understanding the cultural environment of international business, it is imperative that we examine cultural values—theirs as well as our own. It is necessary to recognize the cultural influences on our own thinking and how they conform to or contrast with those of culturally different people. Before we can conclude that the Calcutta street vendor is repulsively smelly, we must first realize how much emphasis U.S. culture places on eliminating odors of *all* types. Before concluding that the Peruvian carpenter is either too lazy or too stupid to be on time, we must first come to grips with the importance Americans place on the *exact* reckoning of time. In short, before we can begin to understand other cultures, we must first understand how our own culture influences our thinking and behaviors.

Any attempt to analyze American values is bound to be a tricky business at best. Part of the difficulty stems from the inherent bias of analyzing one's own culture. Since we are all influenced to some degree by the experiences of our own culture, any attempt

to describe that culture will inevitably be distorted. Equally vexing is the enormity of the task. Whenever we make descriptive statements about the nature of American culture, we are implying that other (non-American) cultures possess the opposite traits. For example, to say that people in the United States place a high value on the individual is to imply that other cultures—Tanzanians, for example—place a higher value on the group. Such comparative statements presuppose that we are dealing with two unified, monolithic cultures: the United States and Tanzania. In actual fact, the many cultures of the world cannot be sorted out into neat and tidy categories. Many of the non-American peoples that we tend to contrast with our own are linguistically and culturally heterogeneous. For example, in the East African country of Tanzania, approximately 120 mutually unintelligible languages are spoken. It must be assumed that this level of linguistic heterogeneity brings with it an equal level of cultural variability as well.

Similarly, it may be argued whether it is legitimate to speak of *the* American culture. Despite the often heard claims that the United States is a great “melting pot,” many subcultural groups, particularly in major urban areas, have retained a good deal of their ethnic distinctiveness. There are, for example, appreciable numbers of Latinos in Los Angeles, Arabs in Detroit, Japanese in Seattle, Chinese in San Francisco, and Italian Americans in Boston, New York, and Baltimore. In fact, over 60 percent of the people living in Miami do not speak English as their first language. Approximately 20 million foreign-born people live in the United States, and over 31 million (roughly 14 percent) do not speak English as their primary language. As an indication of this considerable diversity, the United States is a country in which both the late Mother Teresa (a nun who ministered to the needs of the poor in India) and Madonna (the sexually explicit “bad” girl of popular music) appear on the same list of “most admired women.” Moreover, it is not unusual to observe at a Haitian street festival in New York City a Chinese woman eating a slice of pizza in front of a green grocery run by a Korean family. Owing to this cultural complexity, it might be more reasonable to think of the United States as less of a “melting pot” and more of a “salad bowl,” whereby the individual subcultures retain their own identity and integrity.

While acknowledging the difficulties inherent in generalizing about values in such heterogeneous societies as Tanzania and the United States, some contrasting of value patterns certainly is possible. In fact, the dual processes of making generalizations and comparing are imperative if we are to enhance our understanding of other cultures as well as our own. Whether we live in Massachusetts or California, Oregon or Florida, in a small town or a large metropolis, some common American values stop abruptly at the Rio Grande and somewhat less dramatically at the Canadian border. Over the last several centuries, the United States has woven together threads of culture from all over the world into a quite distinct and recognizable cultural tapestry. Owing to certain common experiences in their enculturation, most Americans share a body of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior patterns. As Edward and Mildred Hall have suggested, “You can pick out Americans any place in the world, often very quickly, because of their behavior. Among their most observable traits are openness, friendliness, informality, optimism, creativity, loudness, and vitality” (1990, 140).

In this chapter we look at the approach taken in discussing the *value orientations* suggested by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck in the 1950s (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1956). These orientations address universal problems and conditions that have a number of solutions to the same problems are present in all cultures. Members of a particular culture believe that these different value orientations are the best solutions to these problems in questionnaire format. Once we understand a particular culture, dominant values (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1956, 11) put forth for all cultures must find solutions:

1. *Human nature orientation*: Human nature includes innately good, in
2. *Man-nature orientation*: Human nature includes master-servant options include master-servant
3. *Time orientation*: What is the most important? What is the least important? What is the future?
4. *Activity orientation*: What is the most important? What is the least important? What is the future?
5. *Relational orientation*: What is the most important? What is the least important? What is the future?

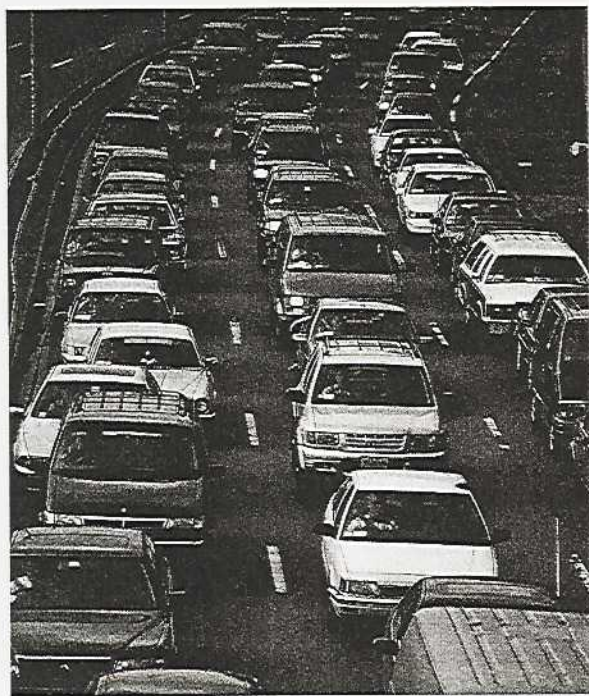
Since Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's work, scholars have built upon their framework. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck essentially launched the field of value research. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1956) and Fathi Yousef (1975) expanded the original five, by looking at social structure (democracy vs. authoritarianism), social formality (low vs. high formality), and social change (change vs. stability). Kluckhohn (1980) derived four major value orientations from a multinational corporation. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1956) ranked (1) individualism, (2) collectivism, (3) power distance, and (4) masculinity. Walker (1995) developed a framework for business situations, which includes individualism, private space, high vs. low power distance, versus inductive thinking. The Center for Creative Leadership (1996) called a Learning Framework. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1956, 36–37) and Dalton (1996, 36–37).

tations used by some of the theorists since the groundbreaking work of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck in 1961.

In this chapter we present a conceptual framework of value differences found in various parts of the world. This framework is designed to help you better understand the value preferences of people from different cultural groups. It will enable you to see how your cultural values compare with other cultural values on a number of important dimensions. It will also give you a set of "hooks" on which you can hang (and better understand) the various cultural traits that you may encounter in the future. This framework assumes that cross-cultural awareness can take place only when you view other cultural values in relation to your own. Since cultural values lie behind breakdowns in cross-cultural communication, such a framework will help you diagnose and hopefully avoid potential miscommunications.

THE INDIVIDUAL-COLLECTIVE DIMENSION

All cultures must ask and answer the following question: To what extent should people pursue their own individual activities and agendas rather than contributing to the success and well-being of the larger group, such as family, neighborhood, clan, team, or compa-



Individualism is so highly developed in North America that most people prefer to drive their own cars rather than rely on public transportation.

ny? Some cultures—such as those in the United States—place a high value on the individual and the individual's freedom. In these cultures, the individual is relatively free to pursue his or her own goals and interests, and to express his or her own opinions. In contrast, in some cultures, the individual is expected to conform to the group's norms and values, and to subordinate his or her own interests to those of the group.

Individual-Oriented Societies

Individuals are major units of social organization. They explain others' behavior. Success is attributed to one's own efforts. The self is defined as individual. One knows more about self than about others. Achievement is for one's own goals. Personal goals are over group goals. Values are self-assuredness, autonomy, and individualism. One fears dependence on others. Casual connections to many people. Few obligations to others. Confrontation is acceptable. Task completion is important.

How This Value

Individual-Oriented Societies

- The ideal of the individual is the ideal of such societies. The individual is the source of power, totally responsible for the behavior of the individual, and not the group or traditional authority.
- Family ties tend to be weak. The family is unimportant. The individual is the primary unit of social organization. In most American cultures, the individual is the primary unit of social organization. A wider variety of social organizations exist in the individualistic unit—the nuclear family.
- The physical layout of the city clearly reflects the individualistic orientation. The focus is on the individual and his or her possessions. The individual's freedom of movement is considered important.

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ny? Some cultures—such as the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and the Netherlands—place a high value on individualism. These cultures emphasize the worth and dignity of the individual over the group, independence rather than interdependence, and relatively few social obligations. Other cultures—such as Guatemala, Japan, and Taiwan—tend to emphasize the larger group. These cultures encourage people to put the interest of the group above their own, maintain strong ties and obligations to group members, and value long-term social relationships above short-term accomplishments. The individual-collective dimension can be summarized as follows:

Individual-Oriented Societies

Individuals are major units of social perception
 Explain others' behavior by personal traits
 Success attributed to own ability
 Self defined as individual entity
 Know more about self than others
 Achievement for one's own sake
 Personal goals over group goals
 Values self-assuredness
 Values autonomy and independence
 Fears dependence on others
 Casual connections to many groups
 Few obligations to others
 Confrontation is acceptable
 Task completion is important

Collective-Oriented Societies

Groups are major units of social perception
 Explain others' behavior by group norms
 Success attributed to help of group
 Self defined in terms of group
 Know more about others than self
 Achievement for benefit of group
 In-group goal over personal goals
 Values modesty
 Values interdependence
 Fears ostracism
 Strong connections to a few groups
 Many obligations to others
 Harmony is expected
 Relations are important

How This Value Plays Out in the Two Types of Society

Individual-Oriented Societies

- The ideal of the individual is deeply rooted in the social, political, and economic institutions of such societies as the United States and England. The individual is the source of moral power, totally competent to assess the effects of his or her own actions, and is expected to be responsible for those actions. Since society is seen as an instrument for satisfying the needs of the individual, a political philosophy advocating freedom from coercion by church, state, or traditional authority has developed.
- Family ties tend to be *relatively* unimportant. That is not to say that in the United States the family is unimportant in any absolute sense, for the family remains the primary group to which most Americans have their strongest loyalties. Nevertheless, when compared with other cultures, Americans divide their time and emotional energy between family and a wider variety of social groupings, including church, school, labor union, workplace, and a host of voluntary organizations. Moreover, the constant preoccupation with self has resulted in the truncation of extended family ties, reducing the notion of family to its smallest possible unit—the nuclear family.
- The physical layout of the typical American house, designed to maximize individual space, clearly reflects the emphasis placed on individualism and personal privacy. There are doors on bathrooms and bedrooms, parents are expected to acknowledge the private space and possessions of their children's rooms, and children are usually restricted in their use of space that is considered the domain of the parents.

- The concept of individualism is instilled from an early age in the United States by constant encouragement of children to become self-sufficient. Children are taught to make their own decisions, clarify their own values, form their own opinions, and solve their own problems. Children are encouraged to search out answers for themselves, rather than relying on the teacher or adult. We often tell children, "Go look it up for yourself," a statement that most often reflects our desire to instill the personal qualities of individualism and self-reliance.
- The aim of education is not to serve God or country but to enable the individual to maximize his or her human potential—or in the words of the U.S. Army recruiting campaign, "Be all that you can be!"
- Most U.S. bookstores today have entire sections devoted to literature popularly known as "self-help" books, designed to help the *individual* improve and get ahead. This self-help genre, dating back to Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* of 1759, includes books with such cryptic titles as *How to Take Charge of Your Life*, *Looking Out for Number One*, or simply and directly, *How to Be Rich*. The basic theme of individuality is unmistakable: personal success depends on activating the forces that lie within the individual.
- In the United States, the Bill of Rights protects people against infringement of their individual rights by the state, thus allowing them to express their ideas freely, practice whatever religion they choose, assemble freely, and generally control their own lives to as great a degree as possible.
- The emphasis on individualism in the United States can be seen in the large number of words (approximately 150) found in an American English dictionary that are compounded with the word *self*.
- That such cultures as the United States emphasize individuality can be seen in the American love affair with the automobile. Most Americans express their individuality by becoming fully mobile, capable of traveling in any direction and at any time, rather than being dependent on the schedules and routes of public transportation facilities.

Collective-Oriented Societies

- People tend to identify or define themselves primarily as members of a group rather than as individuals. When asked "Who are you?" most Americans would give their name, profession, and where they live, probably in that order. When asked the same question in Swaziland or Kenya, for example, a person is likely to give his name, his father's name, and his extended family (which may number in the hundreds of people).
- Property, such as land or livestock, is controlled by the larger group rather than being individually owned. Whereas Americans *own* property (to the extent that they have total control over it), people in collectivist societies have only limited rights and obligations to property that is ultimately controlled by the larger group.
- Basic life choices, such as who you will marry or what profession you will follow, are not made exclusively, or even primarily, by the individual. For example, marriages in some parts of the world are arranged by parents and other influential members of the two family groups involved.
- Collectivist societies have a strong sense of responsibility to the group (e.g., country, family, company). In Japan, for example, if an individual does not give his or her best effort, it is seen as letting down the entire group. In other words, both success and failure are "team affairs" in Japan.
- There is considerably less privacy. Children, even in those homes with ample room, frequently share the same sleeping areas with their parents and siblings until well into adoles-

cence. Clearly, they are "disadvantaged" if they must

Implications for Business

Suggestions for Dealing with Individualism

1. In highly individualistic cultures, individuals are seen as a way to achieve success. Thus, to single out an individual to embarrass the individual is the only way to do it.
2. Be aware of the need to spend time and energy.
3. Americans need to develop a sense of time and effort.
4. Be careful about using pressure that Americans are speaking for.
5. Expect that rules, policies, and procedures are not universal.
6. Do not discount family or your own.
7. Use third parties to negotiate.

While on a short-term assignment for a U.S.-based company, Harry was offered him a job in the some increase in sales. surprise, the Venezuelan to think that he had said

What Harry did making a perfectly in Venezuelans tend to f considering their own sel not be the most comp lan manager will thin many of whom proba sider the interests of working in Caracas. I deciding to take a ne

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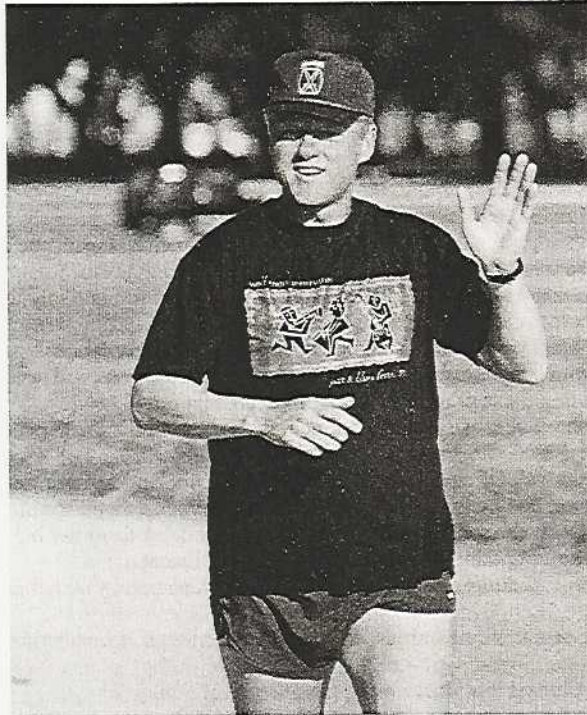
Implications for Business

Suggestions for Dealing with Collectivist Societies

1. In highly individualistic societies such as U.S. society, it makes sense to hold out incentives to individuals as a way of motivating them. But in collectivist societies, such as Japan, one's primary responsibility is to one's work group, not one's own professional advancement. Thus, to single out an individual member of a Japanese work team for praise is likely to embarrass the individual and demoralize the others on the team.
2. Be aware of the need to build long-term relationships. If building long-term relationships is the only way to do business with people in collectivist societies, then Americans will need to spend time and energy nurturing these relationships.
3. Americans need to develop patience because building the necessary relationships with people takes time and effort. Be patient.
4. Be careful about using the pronoun *I*. Often Americans use the pronoun *I* much more frequently than they use the word *we*. People from collectivist societies sometimes get the impression that Americans are "loose cannons" (John Wayne types, shooting from the hip) and are speaking for themselves rather than the organizations they represent.
5. Expect that rules, policies, and procedures are to be applied in a particularistic way rather than universally.
6. Do not discount family, tribal, or national loyalties, for they may be much stronger than your own.
7. Use third parties to make contacts and introductions.

While on a short-term assignment to Venezuela, Harry Dalton, an upper-level manager for a U.S.-based multinational corporation, was extremely impressed with the performance of one of the local managers. In fact, Harry was so impressed that he offered him a job in the home office in Chicago, which involved a promotion, a handsome increase in salary, and a generous moving allowance. But, much to Harry's surprise, the Venezuelan thanked him but turned down the job offer. Harry began to think that he had seriously misjudged this man's intelligence.

What Harry did not realize, however, was that the Venezuelan manager was making a perfectly intelligent career decision. Coming from a collectivist society, Venezuelans tend to first consider the needs of their family or company before considering their own self-interest. Being offered a promotion and higher salary would not be the most compelling reason for taking a new position. Rather, the Venezuelan manager will think primarily about the interests of extended family members, many of whom probably would not want him to move. Then the employee will consider the interests of the local company, which probably needs him to continue working in Caracas. People are not always motivated by individual benefits when deciding to take a new job.



In the United States, the value of informality extends even to our heads of state.

8. Take extra precautions to safeguard intellectual properties (which are not taken as seriously as in more individualistic societies).
9. Communicate respect for the wider good (for example, environment, whole society) rather than simply the good of the organization. Collectivist societies tend to be more publicly conscious.
10. Emphasize your own sense of loyalty and that of your company because loyalty and the meeting of obligations are important in collectivist societies.

THE EQUALITY-HIERARCHY DIMENSION

This value dimension raises the following question: How should people with different levels of power, prestige, and status interact with one another: equally or unequally? Those cultures that emphasize the equality polarity—such as Canada, Sweden, Australia, and the United States—tend to minimize power and status differences. Power tends to be more diffused, people in higher positions can be questioned, and subordinates want their superiors to consult with them and be accessible. This egalitarian orientation leads to relative informal relations between people of high and low status, a general disregard of protocol, and a high level of delegation of authority. At the other

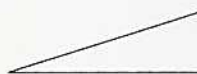
end of the continuum—Philippines—people expect fact, hierarchical inequality satisfies a need for structure hierarchy are treated with authority should not step c and there is little or no c the following way:

Egalitarian Societies

Low-status differences
Power diffused to many people
Delegation of authority
Informal social relations
Minimum deference for superior
Superior can be questioned
Little respect for old age
Mechanisms to redress grievances

Alfred Trompenaars
dimension diagrammatically by distance. Hierarchical societies (relatively long sides) in which the status difference is considerable:

More egalitarian societies in which there is relatively



end of the continuum—represented by such countries as Malaysia, Panama, and the Philippines—people expect that status and power hierarchies will be maintained. In fact, hierarchical inequalities are seen as essential for the society's well-being because it satisfies a need for structure, order, and security. People at the higher levels of the hierarchy are treated with great deference by those lower down the ladder. People in authority should not step out of their privileged roles, bosses should not be questioned, and there is little or no delegation of authority. This dimension can be represented in the following way:

Egalitarian Societies

Low-status differences
Power diffused to many people
Delegation of authority
Informal social relations
Minimum deference for superiors
Superior can be questioned
Little respect for old age
Mechanisms to redress grievances

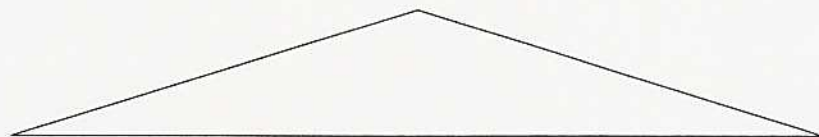
Hierarchical Societies

High-status differences
Power concentrated with few people
Little delegation of authority
Formal social relations
Maximum deference for superiors
Superior cannot be questioned
Great respect for old age
No mechanisms to redress grievances

Alfons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner (1993) represent this dimension diagrammatically by using a series of triangles illustrating varying degrees of social distance. Hierarchical societies are represented by tall triangles (with a small base and relatively long sides) in which the distance between those at the top and those at the bottom is considerable:



More egalitarian societies, on the other hand, are represented by very flat triangles in which there is relatively little social distance between the various levels of the society.



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How This Value Plays Out in the Two Types of Society

Egalitarian Societies

- The playing down of status differences, an important theme running through American culture, has its roots in our nation's early history. By moving onto the American frontier, the early settlers gave up much of the formality found in Europe. The hard work required for survival on the frontier was hardly conducive to the preservation of pomp and circumstance.
- Early Americans developed much less formal customs of dress, speaking, etiquette, and interpersonal relationships than found among their European ancestors. To a large extent, this informality and reticence to "stand on ceremony" persists to the present time.
- Americans assume that informality is a prerequisite for sincerity. They become uncomfortable when faced with the type of ceremony, tradition, and formalized social rules found more widely throughout Europe. Moreover, they are likely to feel uneasy when others treat them with too much deference.
- Americans generally take considerable delight when those in particularly high or powerful positions behave just like the everyday person on the street. For example, we are quite reassured when we saw Ronald Reagan chopping wood in his Levi's or Bill Clinton jogging through the streets of Washington in his running shorts.
- Authority figures—such as priests, professors, and supervisors—are often called by their first names rather than their official title and last name.
- In many egalitarian societies, informality (for example, de-emphasizing status differences) is reflected in the structure of everyday language. The distinction between the formal and informal *you*, found in such languages as German and French, requires speakers to make linguistic choices that reflect the social status of the people being addressed. In contrast, the English language makes no such distinctions.
- Authority figures, such as supervisors or college professors, are allowed to admit that they don't have all the answers. They will not lose respect because they admit fallibility.

Hierarchical Societies

- Upper-status people are expected to maintain their high-status and prestige at all costs. Don't expect to see Queen Elizabeth of England wearing Levi's in public or the Emperor of Japan running through Tokyo in his jogging outfit.
- Languages are structured in such a way as to ensure that one's relative status is reflected in the very construction of a sentence.
- High-status people are expected to be addressed by their formal title followed by the last name ("Hello, Dr. Evans") rather than the first name ("Yo, Stan").
- Children defer to their parents, younger defers to older, women defer to men, employees defer to employers, students defer to teachers, sellers defer to buyers, and everyone defers to the head of state.
- Professors (or highly respected authorities) would give a false answer rather than admit they don't know.
- Social rank in hierarchical countries, such as contemporary Japan, is displayed in a number of subtle ways, including the relative depth of the bow, clothing, and seating positions at meetings. In a Japanese office, the type of chair a person sits in reveals his or her status. The chair that carries the highest social status is the one with armrests. Most of the rank-and-file workers sit in chairs without armrests.

- Social order for the Japanese society and avoiding any cards (*meishi*) are so important that they do not know each other and do not interact.

Implications for B1

Suggestions for Dealing

1. In egalitarian societies, high-status people will play down their status to conform to the mainstream. In contrast, in status-conscious societies, high-status people will tout what your status is and flaunt it in a showy fashion. Thus, communication in egalitarian societies should be without arrogance or condescension.
2. Don't impose equality on status-conscious societies. Communicate democratically. In the United States, we are used to democratic communication.
3. The decision-making process in status-conscious societies is hierarchical. Don't insist on consensus. In hierarchical societies, consensus is not expected.
4. To what extent should status-conscious societies be wise or productive? In hierarchical societies, status-consciousness is a functional hierarchy in that it motivates people to work hard.
5. To what extent should status-conscious societies not appreciate hierarchy? In hierarchical societies, hierarchy is a functional hierarchy in that it motivates people to work hard.
6. Pay attention to differences in status. In status-conscious societies, lower-status people are not expected to speak to higher status people.
7. Don't assume that all status-conscious societies are the same.
8. Use high-status individuals to communicate with high-status individuals.
9. Expect that there will be differences in status and low-status people will not be expected to speak to high-status people.
10. Realize that subordination is a functional hierarchy in that it motivates people to work hard.
11. Expect that subordination is a functional hierarchy in that it motivates people to work hard.

THE TOUGH-TENDER I

The tough-tender dimension defines success in terms of jobs? Or do they define success in terms of relationships with friends and family, personal growth? This value is more important than achievement, assertiveness, social relationships, and so on. Do you value achievement more rigidly than do tenders?

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- Social order for the Japanese depends on everyone knowing their relative ranking in the society and avoiding any behavior that would threaten that order. The reason that business cards (*meishi*) are so important in contemporary Japan is that they enable individuals who do not know each another to learn the other's relative status so that they will know how to interact.

Implications for Business

Suggestions for Dealing with Hierarchical Societies

1. In egalitarian societies such as the United States, it is expected that high-status people will play down their superior rank. In hierarchical societies, people need to know from the outset what your status is so that they will know how to interact with you in an appropriate fashion. Thus, communicate your status, authority, credentials, expertise, and the like, but without arrogance or boasting.
2. Don't impose equality on your hosts, for it is not expected that all people will be treated democratically. In those societies, the boss is the boss and should be treated as such.
3. The decision-making process takes longer in egalitarian societies where all levels are asked for input. In hierarchical societies, decisions are made more rapidly because some measure of consensus is not expected from all levels.
4. To what extent should you honor, recognize, or respect hierarchies? It is not particularly wise or productive for a manager from an egalitarian society to play down the organizational hierarchies in other countries.
5. To what extent should the boss's decisions be questioned? In hierarchical societies, a boss does not appreciate having his or her decisions or judgments called into question. You exercise your democratic inclinations at your own peril.
6. Pay attention to different levels of social status when dealing with people. Don't expect that lower-status people in your organization can negotiate or conduct business with those of higher status.
7. Don't assume that all people have equal access to information.
8. Use high-status individuals as your agents, contacts, and intermediaries.
9. Expect that there will be a greater level of tension in everyday interactions between high- and low-status people (or between young and old or between men and women).
10. Realize that subordinates expect to be closely supervised.
11. Expect that subordinates will more frequently smile and repress negative emotions.

THE TOUGH-TENDER DIMENSION

The tough-tender dimension helps people define success. Do people in a particular society define success in terms of high-status, material accumulations, and well-rewarded jobs? Or do they define success in terms of less tangible rewards, such as quality time with friends and family, good working relationships, or opportunities for spiritual or personal growth? This value dimension pertains to the extent to which a culture prefers achievement, assertiveness, power, competition, and material possessions versus nurturing, social relationships, and cooperation. Tough societies tend to define gender roles more rigidly than do tender societies. To illustrate, tough societies are more likely to re-



In such 'tender' societies as Sweden, it is not unusual to find 'house husbands'.

strict various occupations to a single gender—for example, male truck drivers and female homemakers; in tender societies, it would not be unusual to find female truck drivers and male homemakers. Tough societies place a high value on doing, achieving external, measurable goals; and accomplishing one's objectives. Tender societies emphasize affiliations, character, personal qualities, nurturing, the quality of life, and the maintenance of social relationships. At the workplace, people in tough societies are primarily interested in task accomplishments, whereas people from tender societies are more concerned with issues of job satisfaction, such as relationships with superiors and peers, the work environment, and how interesting and challenging the job may be. The tough–tender dimension can be represented as follows:

Tough Societies

High occupational segregation by gender
Gender inequality
Careers for males are mandatory
Few women in powerful jobs
Accomplishments highly valued
High level of job-related stress
Highly competitive
Task oriented
Values the art of combat
Bigger is better
Separates family and work life
Live to work

Tender Societies

Little occupational segregation by gender
Relative gender equality
Careers for males are optional
More women in powerful jobs
Nurturing highly valued
Low level of job-related stress
Highly cooperative
Relationship oriented
Values the art of compromise
Smaller is beautiful
Concern for family issues in workplace
Work to live

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Tough Society

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Elements of the tough-tender dimension have been discussed by a wide range of scholars who have chosen a number of different terms:

1. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) distinguish between *doing* (emphasis on accomplishing tasks) and *being* (emphasis on social relationships), a distinction also made by Condon and Yousef (1975) and later by Brake and colleagues (1995).
2. Hofstede (1980) uses the terms *masculine* and *feminine* to refer to this value dimension. Even though Hofstede's research in this area has been considerable, we choose to avoid his terminology, in large part because it overstates the importance of gender. In fact, the use of these gender terms implies, either correctly or incorrectly, that women in whatever culture lean toward one polarity and men toward another. Although gender roles do come into play here, it is misleading to suggest by the use of these terms that gender is the only, or even the major, aspect of this dimension.
3. Another important element of the tough-tender dimension involves varying levels of competition, recognized by Condon and Yousef (1975), Brake and colleagues (1995), and particularly the early studies of anthropologist Margaret Mead (1961) on cooperation and competition among different cultures of the world.
4. The tough-tender dichotomy also incorporates elements of the ascribed versus achieved distinction discussed in the work of Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils (1951), David McClelland (1961), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993).

Those societies associated with toughness—such as Austria, Italy, Japan, and Mexico—believe in achievement and ambition, judging people on the basis of their performances, and the right to display the material possessions one is able to acquire. Moreover, people in tough cultures believe in ostentatious manliness and the capacity to be both assertive and decisive. The more tender societies, such as most Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, are less interested in shows of manliness and are more concerned with making life choices that will improve the quality of life, such as service to others and working with the less fortunate. Countries that scored high on Hofstede's masculinity scale have fewer women in the workforce, have only recently granted women the right to vote, and tend to be more tolerant of wife rape (Seager and Olson 1986).

How This Value Plays Out in the Two Types of Societies

Tough Society

- There is a great deal of gender-role segregation, for women do certain jobs and men do others.
- Fewer women will be in high government positions. To illustrate, in Morocco less than 1 percent of national legislators are women as compared with 43 percent in Sweden.
- Adult women in certain African and Middle Eastern countries cannot receive a driver's license, bank account, passport, or contraceptive without the explicit permission of either their fathers or their husbands.
- People (particularly men) tend to be defined in terms of what they do for a living; that is, one's occupation defines the individual. Consequently, when people retire, they have great problems of adjustment because "who they are" has been taken from them.
- Competition is considered a good thing, even though sometimes the competition can be so fierce that it becomes aggressive and unethical.

In such 'tender' societies as Sweden, it is not unusual to find 'house husbands'.

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- People take relatively few vacations or allow themselves much leisure time with friends and family. When vacations are taken, the phone and laptop are often taken along.
- Teachers reward and praise their best students because academic achievement is highly valued. Male students in particular are highly competitive, assertive, and task oriented.
- The priorities of family and work life are kept as separate as possible. Corporations generally disregard the well-being of employees' families in their strategic planning. For example, employees are transferred without consideration of the disruptive effects on children's education or the workers' obligations to aging parents.
- People (particularly men) display high levels of stress and frequent incidence of high blood pressure and heart disease. Ross Buck (1984) found that men may be generally less healthy physically because they cannot express their emotions as openly as women. This internalizing of emotions, both negative and positive ones, leads to higher blood pressure and higher levels of stress.
- People place a high value on growth for its own sake. Increases in market share take precedence over quality of life, social programs, or environmental protection.
- A strong emphasis is placed on achievement, with the greatest respect given to those who are the high achievers.

Tender Societies

- Employers will likely provide parental-leave programs for both mothers and fathers.
- Survey data have shown that people prefer shorter working hours to higher salaries (Hofstede 1998, 14).
- Men and women are more likely to study the same subjects in college than are men and women in tough societies (Hofstede 1998, 15).
- Students are not praised for their accomplishments because cooperation with others is considered the most important goal. Male students strive to be accommodating and work to develop a sense of community and solidarity with their classmates. Friendships, obligations, and loyalty are all more highly valued than academic brilliance or accomplishments. Courses are selected because of their inherent interest rather than because they might lead to a better job.
- Survey data show a preference for smaller companies over increasingly larger companies (Hofstede 1998, 14).
- People in general and managers in particular acknowledge personal success and accomplishments much less frequently than in tougher societies. It is generally thought that noteworthy achievements in an organization are seldom due to the efforts of a single person. People tend to play down their own strengths and assets while praising those of others.
- Family issues are taken into consideration as part of the corporate decision-making process. Thus, the sanctity of family vacations is preserved at all costs, maternity and paternity leaves are generous, and persons who work abroad are selected, at least in part, with an eye toward family responsibilities. In short, as Wilson and Dalton put it, "The role of the employee as a family member is more clearly recognized and respected" (1996, 11).
- Tender societies spend much more money per capita on foreign aid than do tough societies (Hofstede, 1998, 15).
- Governments lean more toward a welfare state (helping the needy). Progressive income taxes are used to support a wide range of social entitlement programs.
- Dominant religions stress complementarity of the sexes, not male dominance.

Implications for

Suggestions for Dealing

1. Be sensitive to gender differences.
2. Don't assume that all cultures value work and vacation time the same way.
3. Be prepared for people who may be "hard to get" rather than helpful.
4. The "hard sell" is likely to be ineffective.
5. Try to suppress your own emotions when you want to spend an evening with family.
6. Be aware that your own physical environment may be different from the one occurring.
7. When negotiating with people from other cultures, be aware of their own physical environment.
8. Don't be fooled into thinking that people from other cultures are weak.
9. When conducting business, be aware of the need to build relationships.
10. Don't be shocked to find that people from other cultures are not as concerned with achievement.

THE UNCERTAINTY-AVOIDANCE

The cross-cultural value dimensions measured by Hofstede (1998) so far, Hofstede's uncertainty-avoidance, albeit from different perspectives, Hofstede's uncertainty-avoidance (Strodtbeck (1961), Corley (1996) of the dimension under study use the "order versus flexibility" dimension (1996, 15-17) use to explain cultural differences. For people from uncertainty avoidance.

According to Hofstede (1998), ambiguity and the need for predictability of the future are part of human experience. New situations, ambiguity, cope with uncertainty measure indicates whether comfortable or uncomfortable situations. Those societies

Implications for Business

Suggestions for Dealing with Tender Societies

1. Be sensitive to gender issues and the expectation of greater gender equality.
2. Don't assume that all people are motivated predominantly by material gain. When managing employees, understand that issues revolving around general working conditions, hours, and vacation time may be more important than issues of salary.
3. Be prepared for people and the government to be more interested in helping the "underdog" rather than helping the wealthy and powerful.
4. The "hard sell" is likely to meet with less success than the "soft sell."
5. Try to suppress your winner-take-all competitiveness. Don't be offended if people don't want to spend an evening with you playing Monopoly.
6. Be aware that your marketing or management decisions may have a negative impact on the physical environment. Then do everything possible to prevent those negative effects from occurring.
7. When negotiating with people, looking for a win-win situation is always best.
8. Don't be fooled into thinking that men who are nurturing and supportive are necessarily weak.
9. When conducting business of any type, be willing to spend time, demonstrate empathy, and build relationships.
10. Don't be shocked to find women in important positions within the company or within government.

THE UNCERTAINTY-AVOIDANCE DIMENSION

The cross-cultural value dimension of uncertainty avoidance is one of the four original dimensions measured by Hofstede in 1980. Like most of the other dimensions mentioned so far, Hofstede's uncertainty-avoidance measure has been discussed widely in the literature, albeit from different perspectives and by using different sets of terms. Although Hofstede's uncertainty-avoidance dimension is not addressed in the work of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Condon and Yousef (1975, 99–102) discuss significant components of the dimension under the heading of "mutability"; Brake and colleagues (1995, 68–69) use the "order versus flexibility" dichotomy as part of their model; and Wilson and Dalton (1996, 15–17) use the terms *dynamic* and *stable* to make a similar distinction in cultural differences. For purposes of our discussion here, we use Hofstede's terminology of uncertainty avoidance.

According to Hofstede, uncertainty avoidance refers to the lack of tolerance for ambiguity and the need for formal rules and high-level organizational structure. The unpredictability of the future, and the resultant anxiety that this produces, is part of the human experience. Nevertheless, cultures differ in the degree to which they can tolerate ambiguity, cope with uncertainties, and adapt to the future. Hofstede's uncertainty-avoidance measure indicates the extent to which a culture conditions its members to feel either comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured, ambiguous, and unpredictable situations. Those societies with high uncertainty avoidance—such as Greece, Portugal,

and Japan—try to minimize these unstructured situations as much as possible by (1) maintaining strict laws and regulations, (2) providing safety and security measures, (3) adhering to absolute truths, and (4) rejecting unorthodox ideas. At the other end of the continuum—for example, Singapore, Denmark, Hong Kong, and the United States—people from cultures with low uncertainty avoidance tend to be more tolerant of unorthodox opinions, are comfortable with fewer rules and simpler organizational structures, and are more relativistic in their beliefs, philosophies, and religions.

The critical components of the uncertainty-avoidance dimension can be depicted in the following way:

Low-Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

Willingness to live day-by-day
Less emotional resistance to change
More risk taking
Willingness to change employer
Hope for success
Little loyalty to employer
Sometimes rules can be broken
Conflict is natural and to be expected
Initiative of subordinates encouraged
Differences are tolerated
Low stress
Little emotional expression
Superordinates may say "I don't know"
Less formal organizational structures

High-Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

Greater anxiety about the future
More emotional resistance to change
Less risk taking
Tendency to stay with same employer
Fear of failure
Considerable loyalty to employer
Rules should not be broken
Conflict is undesirable
Initiative of subordinates discouraged
Differences are considered dangerous
High stress
Emotional expression is acceptable
Superordinates have all the answers
Formal organizational structures

There is considerable variability across cultures in terms of the extent to which people feel that behavior should follow formal rules. In those societies with high uncertainty avoidance, behavior is rigidly prescribed, either with written laws or unwritten social codes. Even if individuals within such a society occasionally break the rules, they generally believe that it is a good thing that the rules exist. In short, people feel anxious in the absence of formal regulations. At the other polarity, societies with low uncertainty avoidance also have rules and regulations, but they are considered more of a convenience than an absolute moral imperative. People in such societies can live comfortably without strict conformity to social rules and in fact often appreciate their freedom to "do their own thing." In terms of engaging in negotiations, people from societies with high uncertainty avoidance are not very good negotiators because the outcome of negotiations is never predictable. People from societies with low uncertainty avoidance are much more comfortable in negotiating situations in which the outcome is not a foregone conclusion.

A major contribution of Hofstede's work is that it has stimulated an entire body of research from subsequent scholars. One such area has been the examination of the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and innovation. For example, Scott Shane (1995), working with a sample of over 4,400 individuals from sixty-eight countries, found that

four different types of people from uncertainty-avoidance societies. More specifically, more likely people were against the inherently conservative approach to support innovation, (3) providing rules, and (4) providing study, Shane (1993) found that such cultural values decision of where innovation is physically located.

Another study that examined the relation between uncertainty avoidance and innovation level managers (holding organization. They found that control that leaders had of the leader and his or the level of uncertainty avoidance, the less approach. In the same study, Offenbach's leadership and another study found that the Equality-Hierarchy index, the less likely team building.

How This Value

Low-Uncertainty Avoidance

- Employees are willing to bear a low interest-bearing rate
- Employees are more likely to accept change
- Employees are not likely to avoid uncertainty
- Employees are better at negotiating
- Employees have more confidence in company for security
- Employees have a more relaxed attitude toward regulations
- Bosses, professors, and others answer to that question
- Employees are more likely to accept change
- Leaders are more likely to accept change

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four different types of innovation-championing roles are significantly more preferred by people from uncertainty-accepting societies than by people from uncertainty-avoiding societies. More specifically, Shane found that the greater the uncertainty acceptance, the more likely people were to prefer the championing role of (1) defending innovators against the inherently conservative organizational hierarchy, (2) persuading others to support innovation, (3) providing innovators with opportunities to violate organizational rules, and (4) providing innovators with the freedom needed to be creative. In an earlier study, Shane (1993) found that uncertainty-accepting societies are more innovative than uncertainty-avoiding societies. These two studies provide empirical evidence to suggest that such cultural values as uncertainty avoidance should be considered in the strategic decision of where innovation efforts (such as research-and-development facilities) are physically located.

Another study that was spawned by Hofstede's conceptualization of uncertainty avoidance, conducted by Lynn Offermann and Peta Hellmann (1997), examined the correlation between uncertainty and leadership. This research drew on a sample of 425 mid-level managers (holding passports from thirty-nine countries) from a single multinational organization. They found that uncertainty avoidance varied positively with the level of control that leaders had over their subordinates and negatively with the approachability of the leader and his or her willingness to delegate authority. In other words, the higher the level of uncertainty avoidance, the greater control leaders had over their subordinates, the less approachable they were, and the less likely they were to delegate power. In the same study, Offermann and Hellmann found a significant correlation between leadership and another one of Hofstede's dimensions, *power distance*, which is equivalent to "the Equality-Hierarchy Dimension." They found that the higher the power distance index, the less likely the leader would be to either delegate authority or encourage team building.

How This Value Plays Out in the Two Types of Societies

Low-Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

- Employees are willing to have their pension funds invested in the stock market rather than a low interest-bearing money-market account.
- Employees are more willing to experiment with new techniques and procedures.
- Employees are not as threatened by workers from other countries as are those from high-uncertainty avoidance societies.
- Employees are better able to function in meetings with a loose agenda.
- Employees have relatively little loyalty to employers because they do not depend on the company for security.
- Employees have a preference for a broad set of guidelines rather than a formal set of rules and regulations.
- Bosses, professors, and other authority figures are not reluctant to say "I don't know the answer to that question." (But, they will take the initiative to find out the answer.)
- Employees are more likely to function effectively in work teams.
- Leaders are more likely to be innovative, creative, and approachable.

High-Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

- Employees would prefer to keep their pension funds in a safe low interest-bearing account (or under the mattress).
- Employees are not likely to want to try anything new because its results are highly unpredictable.
- Employees are likely to resist the hiring of immigrants or others seen to be "outsiders."
- People feel much more secure with a highly structured set of policies, rules, and regulations. Moreover, they have little tolerance for bending the rules under any circumstances.
- Employees have a generally high level of loyalty to their employers and expect the same in return. For this reason, relatively little job turnover will occur.
- Fewer members of the workforce are willing to travel abroad for overseas assignments.
- Employees prefer a manager who they perceive to be competent and whose authority cannot be questioned.
- Employees are considerably less comfortable working in problem-solving teams.
- Leaders are not likely to be innovative or approachable.

Implications for Business

Suggestions for Dealing with High-Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

1. When working with people, try to minimize their anxieties about the future. In other words, build into your proposals and decisions as much predictability about the future as possible.
2. Anticipate and reward your employees for their loyalty to the organization.
3. Make modest proposals for change, not radical ones.
4. Be careful not to appoint managers who are too close to the age of most employees.
5. To help overcome the inherent fear of failure, provide structured work experiences for your employees that are likely to produce successful outcomes.
6. Make certain that organizational guidelines (rules/regulations) are in place, explicitly stated, and followed.
7. Avoid being too unorthodox in your opinions and recommendations.
8. Expect people to be highly rigid during negotiations. Whatever proposal you put on the negotiating table should contain built-in protections that will make the future somewhat more predictable.
9. Don't have unrealistic expectations about your employees' personal initiative, creativity, or ability/willingness to work in teams.
10. Be aware of the fact that most employees are not likely to appreciate a manager who delegates authority.

THE TIME DIMENSION

A major component of any constellation of values is how a particular culture deals with time. We consider this time dimension from three specific perspectives:

1. The importance of a precise reckoning of time
2. The degree to which a culture uses sequential or synchronized time
3. Whether a culture is past, present, or future-oriented

Precise versus Loose

For those cultures in the United States, time is seen as a commodity. In this, people are expected to be precise. Much like money, time is a scarce resource. Punctuality is highly valued in the expression "Time is money" as the Middle East and South America. Schedules and deadlines are taken seriously. Negotiations. Rather than react, people are more likely to respond. People from cultures with a loose time sense are more likely to be seen as being rude because of keeping their next appointment. The following way:

Precise-Reckoning-of-Time

Punctuality
Rigid schedules
Time is scarce/limited
"Time is money"

Even though people in the United States (hours, minutes, and seconds) have a fast pace of life. In one rather than another. E. Wolfe (1985) compares the time sense of Italy, Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. Five measures for quantifying time are included (1) the accuracy of time on a clear day to walk 100 yards, (2) the age length of time it took to walk 100 yards, (3) the age length of time it took to walk 100 yards, (4) the age length of time it took to walk 100 yards, (5) the age length of time it took to walk 100 yards. A quick pace of life and a fast pace of life followed closely by the United States. extreme.

Sequential versus Simultaneous

In some respects, people in the United States are more sequential in their messages about time. In some societies having a sequential time sense.

Precise versus Loose Reckoning of Time

For those cultures that reckon time precisely, such as Switzerland and the United States, time is seen as a tangible commodity that must be used efficiently. To ensure this, people are expected to make schedules, establish timetables, and meet deadlines. Much like money, time can be saved, spent, or wasted. In the United States, where punctuality is highly valued, the relationship between time and money is summed up in the expression "Time is money." At the opposite end of the spectrum, in such places as the Middle East and South America, people take a looser, more relaxed approach to time. Schedules and deadlines are seen more as expressions of intent rather than obligations. Rather than reacting to the arbitrary positions of the hands on a clock, people are more likely to respond to social relationships that are occurring in the present. People from cultures with relaxed notions of time see those who deal with time very precisely as being rude because they are willing to cut off social relationships for the sake of keeping their next appointment. The time dimension can be represented in the following way:

Precise-Reckoning-of-Time Societies

Punctuality
Rigid schedules
Time is scarce/limited
"Time is money"

Loose-Reckoning-of-Time Societies

Little punctuality
Loose schedules
Time is plentiful
Social relationships

Even though people from most cultures understand the meaning of clock time (hours, minutes, and seconds), each culture has its own vocabulary of time and its own pace of life. In one rather ingenious cross-cultural study of social time, Robert Levine and E. Wolfe (1985) compare the temporal pace in six cultures—England, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. This study utilized some creative unobtrusive measures for quantifying how seriously time is taken in these cultures. These included (1) the accuracy of bank clocks, (2) the average length of time it took pedestrians on a clear day to walk 100 feet on a city street during business hours, and (3) the average length of time it took to buy a single stamp from a postal clerk. The findings suggested considerable differences across these six cultures on these three time indicators. A quick pace of life and concern for speed and accuracy were most noticeable in Japan, followed closely by the United States, whereas Indonesia scored consistently at the other extreme.

Sequential versus Synchronized Time

In some respects, time speaks more plainly than words, for time conveys powerful messages about how people relate to the world and to each other. In addition to some societies having either a precise or loose reckoning of time, they also must

With increased business relations between the United States and Mexico, many U.S. businesspeople are becoming keenly aware of the differences in how these two cultures deal with time. According to Jay and Maggie Jessup,

The mañana syndrome is basic to Mexican business. The word "mañana" is translated literally as "tomorrow." But figuratively, the word has a different meaning. The naive U.S. businessperson uses mañana derogatorily, suggesting that Mexicans procrastinate. But what at first seems to be procrastination is merely the different way Mexican businesspeople prioritize their lives and activities. The Mexican businessperson's system of priorities is family and social obligations first and business later. . . . It is absolutely wrong for the visiting United States businessperson to try to overcome . . . [the Mexican] concept of mañana. . . . In a country where business is done only with "friends," the (2-4 hour) ritual business lunch is an opportunity for the Mexicans to take your measure, judging you by your cool and by your attention to family and social concerns. Thus, this indeed is a business lunch. Your response to the mañana attitude tells the Mexicans about you as a person and enables them to decide whether you will be an asset to their business or an unnecessary annoyance. (1993, 34-35)

choose whether to do things sequentially (one thing at a time) or synchronically (a number of things at the same time). This dichotomy between sequentially and synchronically oriented societies uses terms suggested by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998, 126-28). However, others have used different terminology to refer to the same phenomenon. For example, Brake and colleagues (1995, 50-51) use the terms *single focus* and *multifocus*, whereas years earlier Edward Hall (1976, 14-18) spoke of *monochronic time* (M-time) and *polychronic time* (P-time). The person from a sequential, or M-time, culture conceives of time as a straight, dotted line with regular spacing. Tasks are routinely accomplished one at a time, meetings have highly structured agendas, and schedules are rigidly followed. Since everything has its own time and place for the sequential thinker, any changes in the normal sequence are likely to be anxiety producing. In such sequentially oriented societies as England, the United States, and the Netherlands, one should never jump ahead of others waiting in line. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, "In the Netherlands you could be the Queen, but if you are in a butcher's shop with number 46 and you step up for service when number 12 is called, you are still in deep trouble . . . (after all) order is order" (1998, 126).

Those people in sequentially oriented societies would argue that proceeding in a straight line is reasonable because it is orderly, efficient, and involves a minimum of effort. However, this type of straight-line thinking may not always be the best way of doing something, for it is blind to certain efficiencies of shared activities and interconnections. Sometimes juggling a number of different tasks at the same time may in fact be the most time efficient. Continuing with the butcher shop analogy, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner cite the example of the shop in Italy (a more synchronically oriented society)

where the butcher unwraps out, "Anyone want salami in order, the whole process of rewrapping of the various

Thus, the person activities in parallel, with people that are sequential want to deviate. Both a person of one style will the opposite style. To i Aires is extraordinarily phone, drinking a diet chronically oriented social ing on the phone) is running office, for it is considered the phone.



United States and Mexico, many differences in how these two Jessup,

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at a time) or synchronically (a between sequentially and synchronically Trompenaars and Hampden-Trompenaars different terminology to refer to colleagues (1995, 50-51) use the term Edward Hall (1976, 14-18) time (P-time). The person from a straight, dotted line with regard to a time, meetings have highly 1. Since everything has its own in the normal sequence are oriented societies as England, the jump ahead of others waiting in , "In the Netherlands you could number 46 and you step up for trouble . . . (after all) order is

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where the butcher unwraps and slices an order of salami for one customer, and then yells out, "Anyone want salami before I rewrap it?" Even though each customer is not served in order, the whole process is more efficient because it involves far less unwrapping and rewrapping of the various types of meat.

Thus, the person from a synchronically oriented society conducts a number of activities in parallel, without being thrown off his or her rhythm. By way of contrast, those people that are sequentially oriented envision a crucial path from which they do not want to deviate. Both approaches to time are usually so well ingrained in people that a person of one style will have difficulty when interacting with a person accustomed to the opposite style. To illustrate, a New Yorker is likely to think a salesclerk in Buenos Aires is extraordinarily rude when she is writing up his sales order while talking on the phone, drinking a diet cola, and flirting with another customer. Someone from a synchronically oriented society, however, will think that his American colleague (who is talking on the phone) is rude because the American does not greet him when entering his office, for it is considered a serious slight not to be greeted even while still talking on the phone.



Most North Americans tend to take time very seriously.

The differences between those who are sequentially oriented (M-time) and synchronically oriented (P-time) can be summarized as follows:

Sequentially Oriented Societies

- One task at a time
- Concentration on task
- Schedules taken very seriously
- Many short-term relationships
- Time is a threat

Synchronically Oriented Societies

Multiple tasks at a time
Easily distracted
Schedules not taken seriously
Long-term social relationships
Time is a friend

Past, Present, and Future Orientations

A third aspect of the time dimension concerns the extent to which people focus on the past, the present, or the future. To be certain, all three alternatives must be recognized, but as Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961, 14) argue, one time orientation is likely to predominate. Past-oriented societies regard previous experience and events as the most important and in fact use the past as a guide to the present. Traditional wisdom that has been passed down from previous generations is given a primary emphasis. Since the elders are the link with the past, they are afforded the highest level of deference in the present. Events in such societies are seen as circular or recurring; consequently, the tried-and-true solutions to problems are the ones most likely applied to present-day problems. In such cultures, the leaders are expected to carry the vision of the past into the present and future.

Present-oriented societies tend to emphasize spontaneity, immediacy, and experiencing each moment to its fullest. According to this perspective, people do not do things because it reflects a glorious past or because it will bring about some gain in the future. Rather, people do things because of the inherent pleasure they will derive in the here and now. This perspective on time can be summed up in the adage "Take care of today, and tomorrow will take care of itself." Since people with a present orientation typically believe that their lives are controlled by external forces (such as fate or luck), they have developed a number of ways of appreciating the simple pleasures of daily activities. Business organizations in such present-oriented societies formulate short-term plans, allocate resources based on present demands, and train their personnel to meet current goals.

People from future-oriented societies believe that it is far more important to trade off short-term gains in the present for more long-term benefits in the future. One does not engage in activities today for the sole reason of benefiting from the immediate rewards, but rather from the potentially greater benefits that will be realized in the future. In other words, people are willing to invest now and defer gratification until the future. For example, rather than buying a Yugo automobile today, you should leave the money in a high-interest mutual fund so that you will be able to buy a BMW next year. In the event of premature death, future-oriented parents are willing to pay life insurance premiums today so that their dependent children are protected from financial catastrophe. People

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Although the United future—which, it is believed American businesspeople t tant future. Other societies Japan it is not at all unusu Moreover, Japanese compa turies in their business plan United States. The notion o we realize that some socie John Mbiti, many traditio tion of time, “with a short African time is composed of little meaning because f ment with linguistic data fi guages contain three futu present. If future events do anisms can conceive or ex sume that speakers of the things that might occur in

How This Value Plays

Precise/M-Time Societies

- People pay close attention
- People tend to eat meat
- Business deadlines are strict
- People move rapidly.
- Meetings start pretty much on time.
- People do one thing at a time
- People tend to emphasize the facts

Loose/P-Time Societies

- Few people pay close
- People eat because of hands on the clock.
- Business deadlines are the deadline from being

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Culturally Oriented Societies

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from future-oriented societies—such as the United States, Canada, and a number of European countries—believe that they have a good deal of control over their lives and can to some degree influence the course of future events. Business organizations in future-oriented societies plan work and resources to meet long-term goals that will be directed to future needs.

Although the United States is a future-oriented society, the American view of the future—which, it is believed, can be controlled from the present—is relatively short term. American businesspeople tend to emphasize gains in the immediate future, not the distant future. Other societies have much deeper conceptions of the future. For example, in Japan it is not at all unusual for a couple to take out a 100-year mortgage on a house. Moreover, Japanese companies are likely to include projections for the next two centuries in their business plan, not just for the next decade as is typical in Europe and the United States. The notion of a future-oriented society can only become meaningful when we realize that some societies have a very truncated view of the future. According to John Mbiti, many traditional African societies have essentially a two-dimensional notion of time, "with a short past, a present, and virtually no future" (1969, 17). Since African time is composed of a series of events that are experienced, the future must be of little meaning because future events have not yet occurred. Mbiti supports his argument with linguistic data from the Gikuyu and Kikamba languages of Kenya. Both languages contain three future tenses covering a period not exceeding two years from the present. If future events do not fall within this shallow range, virtually no linguistic mechanisms can conceive or express them. Given these linguistic structures, it is safe to assume that speakers of these East African languages have little or no interest in those things that might occur in the distant future.

How This Value Plays Out in Different Types of Societies

Precise/M-Time Societies

- People pay close attention to their watches and tend to divide time in very precise units.
- People tend to eat meals because "it's time to eat."
- Business deadlines are taken very seriously.
- People move rapidly.
- Meetings start pretty much on time, usually no later than five minutes after the designated time.
- People do one thing at a time, rather than a number of things at the same time.
- People tend to emphasize getting contracts signed and then moving on to some new endeavor.

Loose/P-Time Societies

- Few people pay close attention to the clock.
- People eat because of the "need to share food," rather than because of the position of the hands on the clock.
- Business deadlines are hoped for, but people will not get overly upset if something prevents the deadline from being met.

- People move at a more leisurely pace.
- Meetings start after an appropriate amount of time is devoted to socializing.
- People do many things at the same time.
- A greater emphasis is placed on building social relationships, rather than on completing the task on time.

Past-Oriented Societies

- People have a great concern for history and origins of their families, businesses, and social institutions.
- Employees are motivated by examples from the "golden past."
- Predecessors and older people are looked to as role models. Even though they may not have had the most recent formal education, their wisdom and experience are highly valued.
- Business hosts will want to share their cultural history with you (via museums, monuments).

Present-Oriented Societies

- People live in the here and now and look for immediate gratification.
- Everything is evaluated in terms of its immediate impact.
- People are not particularly effective at deferring gratification or planning for the future.

Future-Oriented Societies

- People tend to be enthusiastic planners.
- There is a considerable willingness to defer present gratification for even more gratification later on.
- People are generally optimistic about progress in the future.
- People place a high value on being youthful, because the young have more of a future than the more senior members of the society.

Implications for Business

Suggestions for Dealing with Loose/P-Time Societies

1. Suppress the urge to get things done quickly (because "Faster is better" and "Time is money"). Be willing to spend time building long-lasting relationships.
2. Don't show impatience. You may be viewed as untrustworthy and as someone who wants to cheat your business partners.
3. Become more flexible in your scheduling and broaden your concept of what is an acceptable range of tardiness.
4. Be aware that high-status people can keep lower-status people waiting, but the opposite is not true.
5. Don't be put off when business associates do more than one thing at a time. Be prepared to be in several different conversations at the same time.
6. Understand and respect local traditions and long-term commitments.
7. Use role models and situations from the past as ways of motivating your employees.
8. Sell the reputation of your company and its success over time.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have value systems found in from the work of many mensions, which raise in a new and different cult

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CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have set forth a framework to help you better understand different value systems found in the world's many cultures. The conceptual framework (derived from the work of many scholars over the last thirty years) is composed of five major dimensions, which raise important questions that need to be answered when encountering a new and different culture. These questions include the following:

1. Do people identify themselves primarily as individuals or as members of a larger collective?
2. Do people with different levels of power and prestige treat one another equally or unequally?
3. To what extent do different cultures emphasize combat (tough) or compromise (tender)?
4. How do cultures differ in terms of taking risks, tolerating ambiguity, and needing relatively little organizational structure?
5. How precisely do people from different cultures deal with time?

These five value dimensions should serve as a starting point for better understanding the dynamics of interacting cross-culturally. We must keep in mind that these dichotomies are not a precise description of reality. There are no cultures that embody absolutely all the traits associated with any of these basic polarities. Instead, we should view this framework as a set of continua on which different cultures fall relative to one another. Viewed as such, the framework will help us better understand that reality. In other words, it should help us get a better feel for someone else's values *relative to our own*. To illustrate, before a lawyer from Boston can conclude that a rural Colombian is too lazy to be on time, he must first come to grips with the importance that his own culture puts on schedules, deadlines, and punctuality. In short, before we can begin to understand other cultures, we must first understand how our own culture influences our cognitive and behavioral assumption. This framework of values should enable us to get a better handle on both sets of values, theirs as well as our own.

If these dichotomies are taken too seriously, they can be just another form of uncritical stereotyping. But, as Nancy Adler (1997, 75–76) suggests, they can be “helpful stereotypes,” provided we recognize their limitations. We must see them as being more useful for comparing *between* cultures than in understanding the wide differences that exist *within* a single culture. They must be seen as describing cultural norms, not the exact behavior of all people within a cultural group. They should be subject to revision, and they should constitute the best “first guess” about a culture before having all the facts.

Finally, we must remember that the way we view ourselves and our own values is often quite different from the way others view us. Americans might take pride in describing themselves as individualistic, autonomous, and self-reliant, but people from other cultures might view us as egocentric or self-absorbed. We may see ourselves as informal, friendly, and casual, but others might see us as undisciplined and insensitive to legitimate status differences. Also, our desire to “tell it like it is” (direct communication) can be interpreted as rude or excessively blunt. In other words, it is only natural for all people, including ourselves, to consider their own values as natural and good, while those

values that are different or opposite from their own are strange and less good. The value differences discussed in this chapter, however, are neither good nor bad. Rather, they should be viewed as a way of better understanding the values of others, as well as our own. The good news is that no one expects you to adopt the values of other cultures. In fact, no one is even asking you to like them. But, it is imperative to *understand* the value differences found throughout the world so that you will be in the best position to make the most informed international business decisions.

CROSS-CULTURAL SCENARIOS

Read the following cross-cultural scenarios. In each mini-case study, a basic cultural conflict occurs between the actors involved. Try to identify the source of the conflict and suggest how it could have been avoided or minimized. Then see how well your analyses compare to the explanations in Appendix A.

5-1 Tom Forrest, an up-and-coming executive for a U.S. electronics company, was sent to Japan to work out the details of a joint venture with a Japanese electronics firm. During the first several weeks, Tom felt that the negotiations were proceeding better than he had expected. He found that he had very cordial working relationships with the team of Japanese executives, and they had in fact agreed on the major policies and strategies governing the new joint venture. During the third week of negotiations, Tom was present at a meeting held to review their progress. The meeting was chaired by the president of the Japanese firm, Mr. Hayakawa, a man in his mid-forties, who had recently taken over the presidency from his eighty-two-year-old grandfather. The new president, who had been involved in most of the negotiations during the preceding weeks, seemed to Tom to be one of the strongest advocates of the plan that had been developed to date. Also attending the meeting was Hayakawa's grandfather, the recently retired president. After the plans had been discussed in some detail, the octogenarian past president proceeded to give a long soliloquy about how some of the features of this plan violated the traditional practices on which the company had been founded. Much to Tom's amazement, Hayakawa did nothing to explain or defend the policies and strategies that they had taken weeks to develop. Feeling extremely frustrated, Tom then gave a fairly strongly argued defense of the plan. To Tom's further amazement, no one else in the meeting spoke up in defense of the plan. The tension in the air was quite heavy, and the meeting adjourned shortly thereafter. Within days the Japanese firm completely terminated the negotiations on the joint venture.

How could you help Tom better understand this bewildering situation?

5-2 Jeff Walters, owner and manager of a highly successful bookstore in Philadelphia during the 1960s and 1970s, had gone on a three-week safari to East Africa. He and his wife had been so struck by the beauty of the area that they had decided soon after returning to the United States to sell the bookstore and start a book distribution company based in Nairobi that would supply books from all over the world to eastern and southern African countries. Although the new business was only four years old, Jeff's enthusiasm for combining his love of books with his newfound love of East Africa was largely responsible for the great success of the new enterprise. In only four years, Jeff, as president of the company, had put together a professional and administrative staff of eighteen local Kenyans.

Jeff found that he was behind schedule in preparing a lengthy proposal for a possible government contract due in the USAID office in Nairobi the next day. The deadline was

so critical that he had to meet. In the final hours, Jeff assembled the multiple copies of the proposal and noticed that his staff became restless. Jeff couldn't understand why.

How could you help Jeff?

5-3 For the past three years, Ned, manager of a U.S.-owned manufacturing plant in Taiwan, he instituted a number of programs to improve worker satisfaction. However, one day, Ned had to be unrelated incident which fortunately was corrected on the following day, the wife and two children were involved in an automobile accident. Finally, after several accidents on the assembly line, Ned heard the news that the evil spirits, and absenteeism, Ned called together some experts from the United States. They argued, would show that the Taiwanese workers suggested that a local representative would do nothing but give the workers without any substantial improvement.

How would you explain this?

5-4 Within the past few years, a person for the entire Western Hemisphere. He presented a vinyl floor covering presentation to a large company in Spanish, and the company was assigned. Ray had set up the office when he arrived from Los Angeles. He met him at the airport and later so that Ray could see the sights and enjoy their home. Ray had prepared to make the presentation the business at hand. Eventually, on Ray's behalf, the meeting began, Ray noticed the exchange of pleasantries and again the next afternoon the slow pace of the negotiations.

How could you help Ray?

5-5 Stefan Phillips, a manager from Saudi Arabia, to set up a new office in Paris. He had assignments in Paris and