

## Understanding culture: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

|   |        |           |
|---|--------|-----------|
| <b>Power Distance Index (high versus low).</b>        |        |           |
| What does it mean?                                    | Score: |           |
|   | Italy  | Australia |
| <b>Individualism Versus Collectivism.</b>             |        |           |
| What does it mean?                                    | Score: |           |
|   | Italy  | Australia |
| <b>Masculinity Versus Femininity.</b>                 |        |           |
| What does it mean?                                    | Score: |           |
|   | Italy  | Australia |
| <b>Uncertainty Avoidance Index (high versus low).</b> |        |           |
| What does it mean?                                    | Score: |           |
|   | Italy  | Australia |
| <b>Pragmatic Versus Normative.</b>                    |        |           |
| What does it mean?                                    | Score: |           |
|   | Italy  | Australia |
| <b>Indulgence Versus Restraint.</b>                   |        |           |
| What does it mean?                                    | Score: |           |
|   | Italy  | Australia |

## Here are the explanations (mixed up)

**A.** This refers to the strength of the ties that people have to others within their community. A high score indicates weak interpersonal connection among those who are not part of a core "family." Here, people take less responsibility for others' actions and outcomes. In a collectivist society, however, people are supposed to be loyal to the group to which they belong, and, in exchange, the group will defend their interests. The group itself is normally larger, and people take responsibility for one another's wellbeing.

**B.** This dimension is also known as Long-Term Orientation. It refers to the degree to which people need to explain the inexplicable, and is strongly related to religiosity and nationalism. This dimension was only added recently, so it lacks the depth of data of the first four dimensions. However, in general terms, countries that score highly tend to be pragmatic, modest, long-term oriented, and more thrifty. In low-scoring countries, people tend to be religious and nationalistic. Self-enhancement is also important here, along with a person's desire to please their parents.

**C.** This dimension describes how well people can cope with anxiety. In societies that score highly, people attempt to make life as predictable and controllable as possible. If they find that they can't control their own lives, they may be tempted to stop trying. These people may refer to "mañana," or put their fate "in the hands of God." People in low-scoring countries are more relaxed, open or inclusive. Bear in mind that avoiding uncertainty is not necessarily the same as avoiding risk. Hofstede argues that you may find people in high-scoring countries who are prepared to engage in risky behavior, precisely because it reduces ambiguities, or in order to avoid failure.

**D.** This refers to the distribution of roles between men and women. In masculine societies, the roles of men and women overlap less, and men are expected to behave assertively. Demonstrating your success, and being strong and fast, are seen as positive characteristics. In feminine societies, however, there is a great deal of overlap between male and female roles, and modesty is perceived as a virtue. Greater importance is placed on good relationships with your direct supervisors, or working with people who cooperate well with one another.

**E.** Hofstede's sixth dimension, discovered and described together with Michael Minkov, is also relatively new, and is therefore accompanied by less data. Countries with a high score allow or encourage relatively free gratification of people's own drives and emotions, such as enjoying life and having fun. In a society with a low score, there is more emphasis on suppressing gratification and more regulation of people's conduct and behavior, and there are stricter social norms.

**F.** This refers to the degree of inequality that exists – and is accepted – between people with and without power. A high score indicates that a society accepts an unequal, hierarchical distribution of power, and that people understand "their place" in the system. A low score means that power is shared and is widely dispersed, and that society members do not accept situations where power is distributed unequally.