INTRODUCTION TO INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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- This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester. Sometimes we need more or less time on a particular topic, and the lecturer reserves the right to make changes to assignment deadlines and required readings. All such changes will be communicated via email and in class.

- **Course Description**: This is a combination of theoretical and practical course on intercultural communication. It is designed to help you understand how to communicate with people who are different from you. We live in a global environment where individuals from diverse cultures interact both face to face and online. You will examine your own cultural identities and your interactions with others. Taking a communicative lens, we will address how various cultural indicators (values, beliefs, traditions, etc.) manifest through communication and how cultures use communication in different ways. Through this course, I hope to broaden your perspectives of live and people, and to build your capacity to adapt to a changing world by exploring cultural and communication differences.

- Intercultural communication is the study of communication patterns and norms of diverse groups (both internal to Russia and in comparison with members of other nations/cultures outside Russia). Students learn these norms in order to appreciate and appropriately communicate with diverse others.

Class Policies

- **Attendance**: Because this course depends on your presence and participation for its success, attendance is required. Excused absences are only granted for personal emergencies (that are accompanied by proper documentation). Meetings for other classes, appointments with advisors, work excuses, sleeping through alarm clocks, departure for breaks, roommate crises, car failures, and computer/printer problems, etc. are not considered "excused" absences.

- **Cultural Research Paper (Project)**
  In a 10-12 page paper, you will have to conduct an analysis of one of the questions on your choice. Your paper will be graded on the depth of your analysis and your class presentation.

Point Distribution

Attendance (lectures + check-up tests)	Up to 10 points
Midterm test (end of October)	Up to 10 points
Written assignments	Up to 30 points
Final Exam	
Project + presentation (December)	Up to 20 points
Written Exam (January)	Up to 30 points
Total	Up to 100 points

DEFINING CULTURE

We live in an era where intercultural communication skills are not just an asset; they are a requirement.

(Edwin R. McDaniel, Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter)

Practical reasons for studying intercultural communication

- global and domestic diversity trends

- interpersonal communication opportunities: "you may not plan to travel the world, but the world is travelling to you"

<div align="right">(Steven A. Beebe & Mark V. Redmond)</div>

Intercultural communication is a direct or indirect exchange of information between representatives of different linguocultures.

CULTURE - from Latin *colo – colui – **cultum** - colere* "to tend, guard; to till, cultivate"

- *Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.*
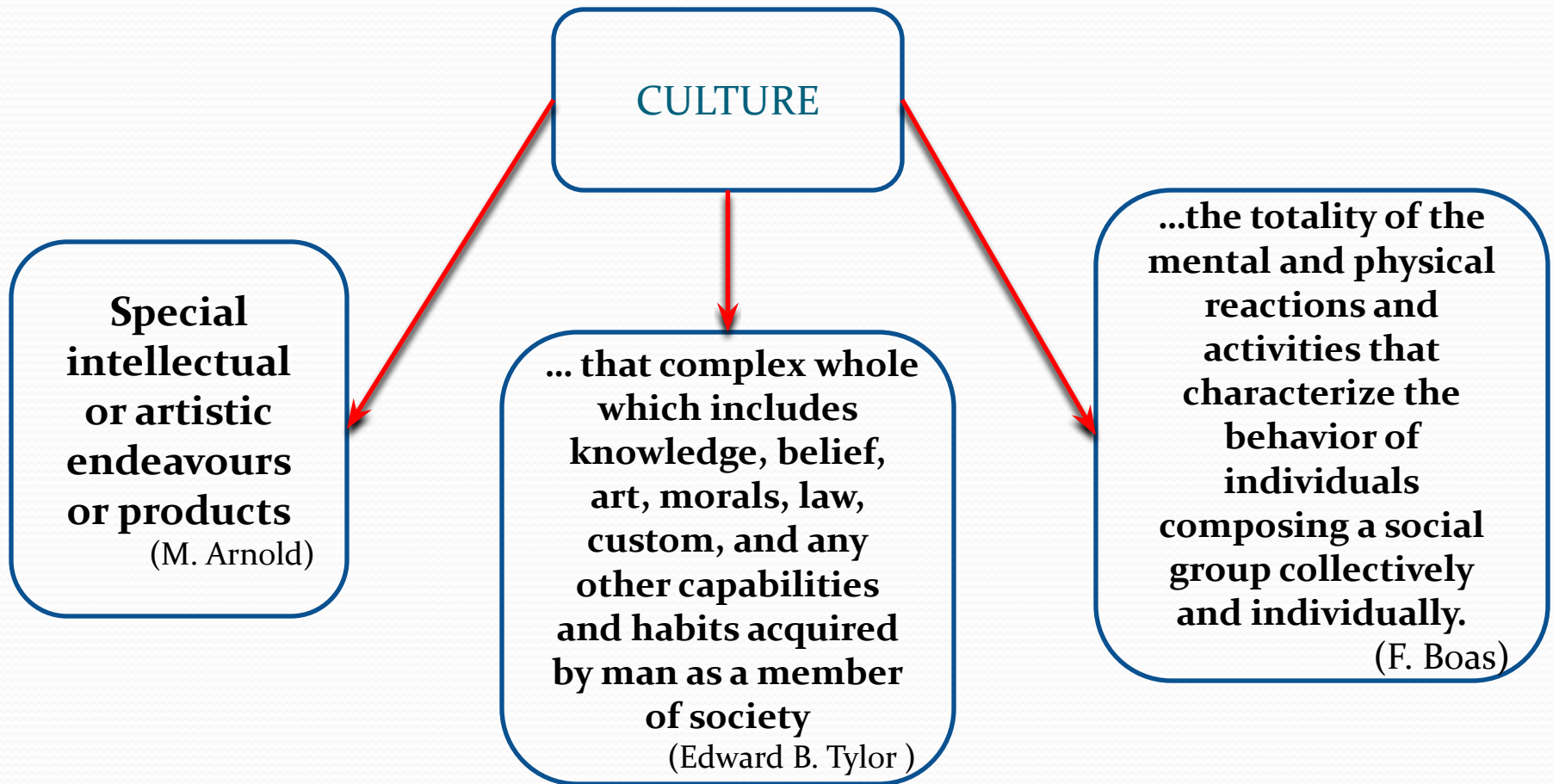
(G. Hofstede)

- Culture: learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day- to-day living patterns. these patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism

  (L. Damen)

- Culture...consists in those patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes.

  (T. Parson)

Three different usages of the term "CULTURE"

CULTURE

Special intellectual or artistic endeavours or products
(M. Arnold)

... that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society
(Edward B. Tylor)

...the totality of the mental and physical reactions and activities that characterize the behavior of individuals composing a social group collectively and individually.
(F. Boas)

CULTURE

1) a pattern of shared symbols, meanings, premises, and rules,

which are

2) socially constructed

and

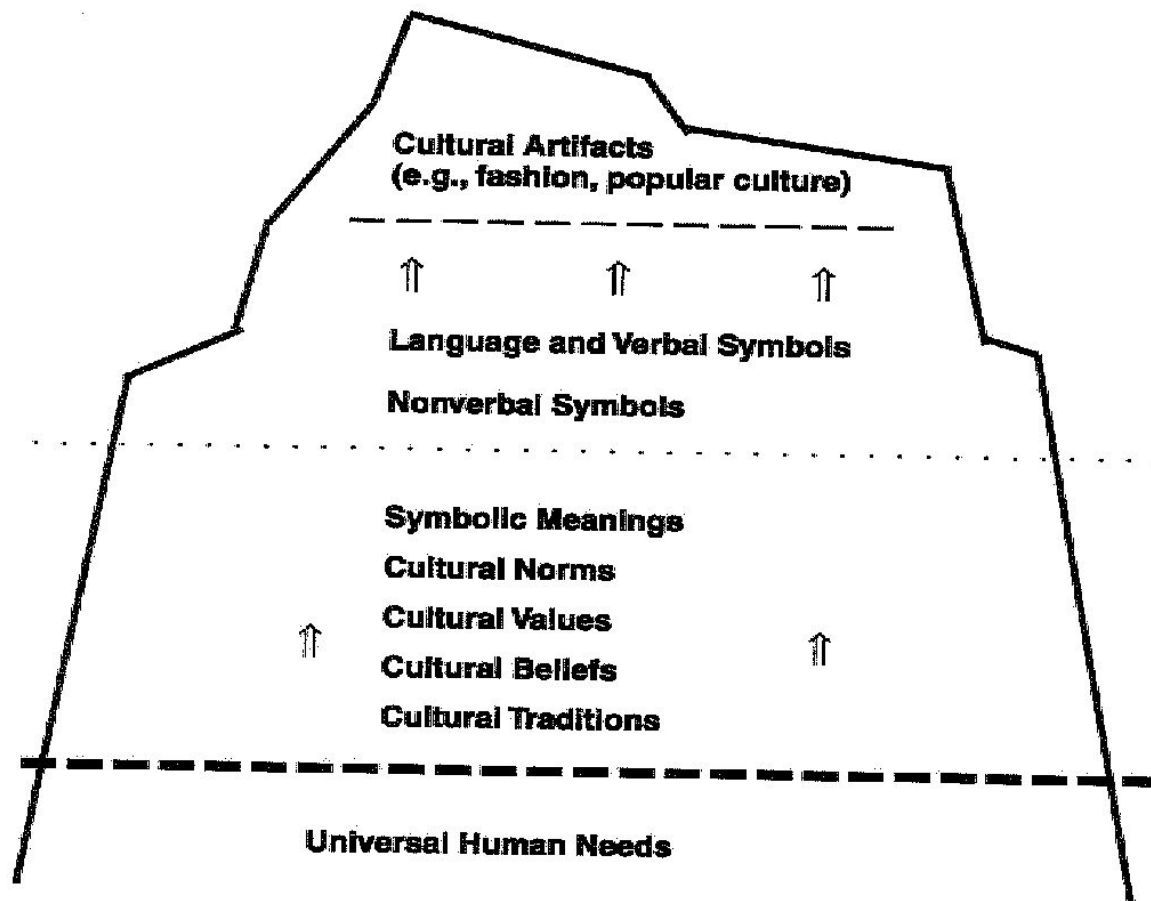**3) historically transmitted.**

Wilhelm von Humboldt
(1767 – 1835)

- *The interdependence of word and idea shows clearly that languages are not actually means of representing a truth already known, but rather of discovering the previously unknown. **Their diversity is not one of sounds and signs, but a diversity of world perspectives.***

(Wilhelm von Humboldt)

An Iceberg Metaphor of Culture

(S. Ting-Toomey)

Cultural Artifacts
(e.g., fashion, popular culture)

⇑   ⇑   ⇑

Language and Verbal Symbols

Nonverbal Symbols

Symbolic Meanings
Cultural Norms
Cultural Values
Cultural Beliefs
Cultural Traditions

⇑   ⇑

Universal Human Needs

Functions of Culture

1) *The identity meaning function*: culture helps to answer the most fundamental question of every person – Who am I?

2) *The group inclusion function*: it satisfies our need for belonging.

3) *The intergroup boundary regulation function:* it shapes our attitudes in dealing with people who are culturally dissimilar.

Functions of Culture

4) *the ecological adaptation function:* It facilitates the adaptation processes among the self, the cultural community, and the larger environment (i.e. habitat).

5) *the cultural communication function* which means the coordination between culture and communication.

Edward Twitchell Hall, Jr.
(1914 – 2009)

Culture itself is communication, and communication is culture.

CONTEXT

internal context:

- the past experience of the communicant, programmed in his mind and the structure of the nervous system; a set of presuppositions and background knowledge, values, cultural identity and individual characteristics of the language personality.

external context:

- physical environment, as well as other information implicit in the communicative interaction, including the nature of interpersonal relationships between communicants and the social circumstances of communication.

High- and Low-Context Cultures

Much information is drawn from surroundings. Very little must be explicitly transferred.

- Nonverbal important
- Physical context relied upon for information
- Environment, situation, gestures, mood all taken into account

Arab, Asian, Southern European

Information must be provided explicitly, usually in words.

- Less aware of nonverbal clues, environment and situation
- Need detailed background information
- Prefer explicit and careful direction from someone who "knows"
- Knowledge is a commodity

Swiss, German, Scandinavian, American

High and Low Context Cultures
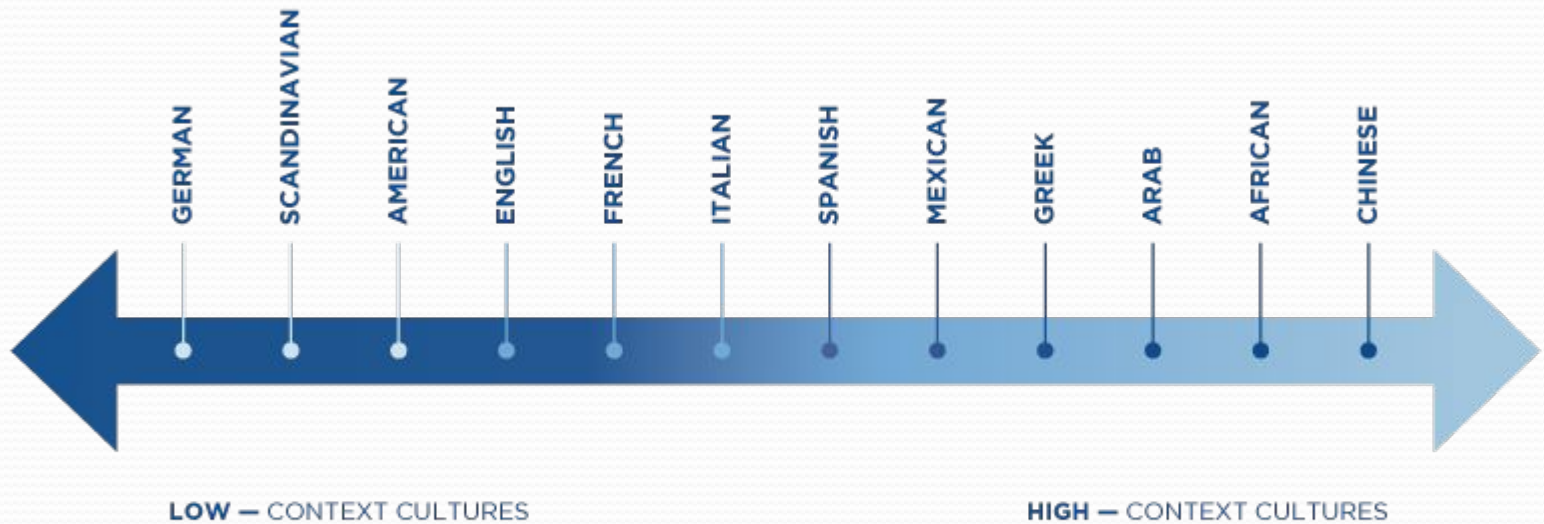
Factor	High-context culture	Low-context culture
Overtness of messages	Many covert and implicit messages, with use of metaphor and reading between the lines.	Many overt and explicit messages that are simple and clear.
Locus of control and attribution for failure	Inner locus of control and personal acceptance for failure	Outer locus of control and blame of others for failure
Use of non-verbal communication	Much nonverbal communication	More focus on verbal communication than body language
Expression of reaction	Reserved, inward reactions	Visible, external, outward reaction
Cohesion and separation of groups	Strong diistinction between ingroup and outgroup. Strong sense of family.	Flexible and open grouping patterns, changing as needed
People bonds	Strong people bonds with affiliation to family and community	Fragile bonds between people with little sense of loyalty.
Level of commitment to relationships	High commitment to long-term relationships. Relationship more important than task.	Low commitment to relationship. Task more important than relationships.
Flexibility of time	Time is open and flexible. Process is more important than product	Time is highly organized. Product is more important than process

Edward T. Hall.
Beyond Cultures

	Low-Context	High-Context
Example Countries	US, UK, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Norway	Japan, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, France, Italy, Spain
Business Outlook	Competitive	Cooperative
Work Ethic	Task-oriented	Relationship-oriented
Work Style	Individualistic	Team-oriented
Employee Desires	Individual achievement	Team achievement
Relationships	Many, looser, short-term	Fewer, tighter, long-term
Decision Process	Logical, linear, rule-oriented	Intuitive, relational
Communication	Verbal over Non-verbal	Non-verbal over Verbal
Planning Horizons	More explicit, written, formal	More implicit, oral, informal
Sense of Time	Present/Future-oriented	Deep respect for the past
View of Change	Change over tradition	Tradition over change
Knowledge	Explicit, conscious	Implicit, not fully conscious
Learning	Knowledge is transferable (above the waterline)	Knowledge is situational (below the waterline)

Gisela Schmalz. *Cliquenwirtschaft* (2014)

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS THEORY (G. HOFSTEDE).

- https://www.hofstede-insights.com/models/national-culture/

- https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/
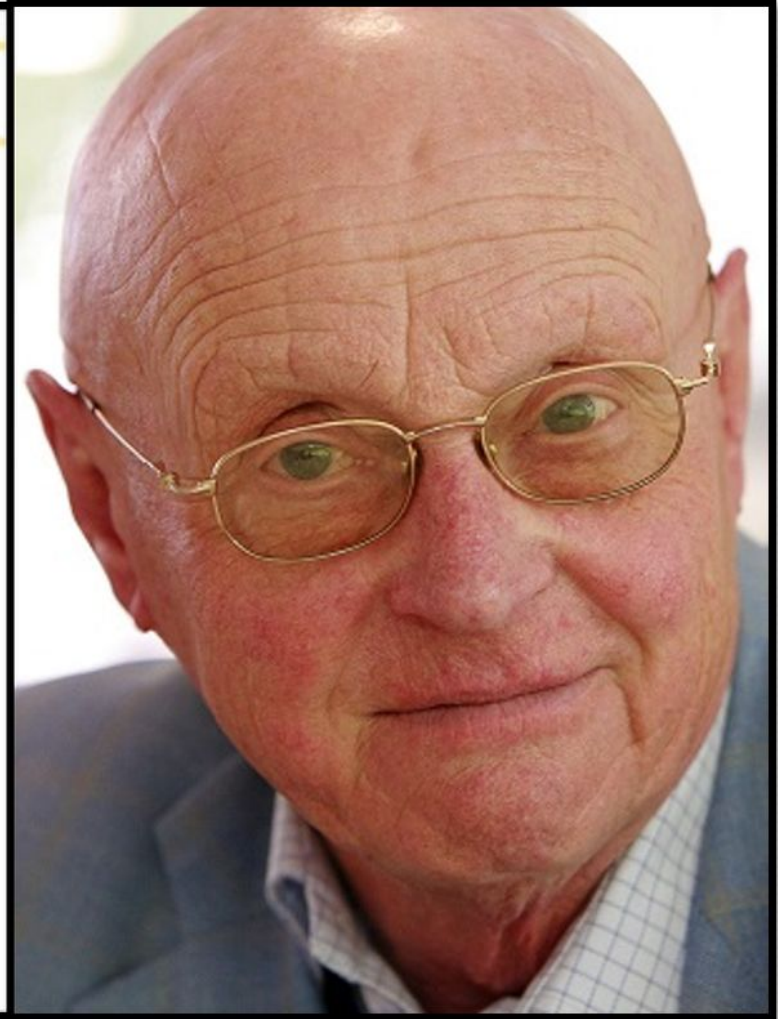
The original theory proposed four dimensions along which cultural values could be analyzed:

- power distance (strength of social hierarchy)
- masculinity-femininity (task orientation versus person-orientation)
- individualism-collectivism
- uncertainty avoidance

POWER DISTANCE INDEX (PDI)

- This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The fundamental issue here is how a society handles *inequalities* among people.

INDIVIDUALISM vs COLLECTIVISM (IVC)

- The high side of this dimension can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families.

- Its opposite, Collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

- A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we."

MASCULINITY vs FEMININITY (MAS)

- The Masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive.

- Its opposite, Femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented.

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE INDEX (UAI)

- The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.

- Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour, and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

TWO more dimensions were added:

- LONG TERM ORIENTATION VERSUS SHORT TERM NORMATIVE ORIENTATION (LTO)

- INDULGENCE VERSUS RESTRAINT (IND)

LONG TERM ORIENTATION VERSUS SHORT TERM NORMATIVE ORIENTATION (LTO)

- Every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. Societies prioritize these two existential goals differently.

- Societies who score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion.

- Those which score high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

INDULGENCE VERSUS RESTRAINT (IND)

- Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

Hofstede Insights

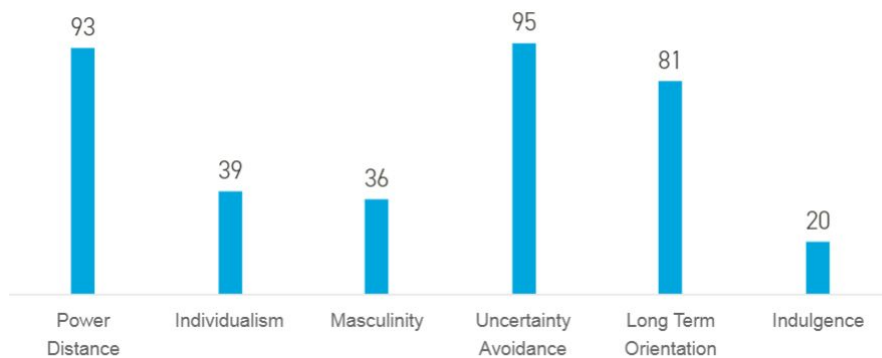HOME | WHAT WE DO | INSIGHTS | OUR MODELS | ABOUT US | CONTACT | STORE

COUNTRY COMPARISON

Select one or several countries in the menu below to see the values for the 6 dimensions.

To compare your personal preferences to the scores of a country get the Culture Compass™ from our store.

Russia ×

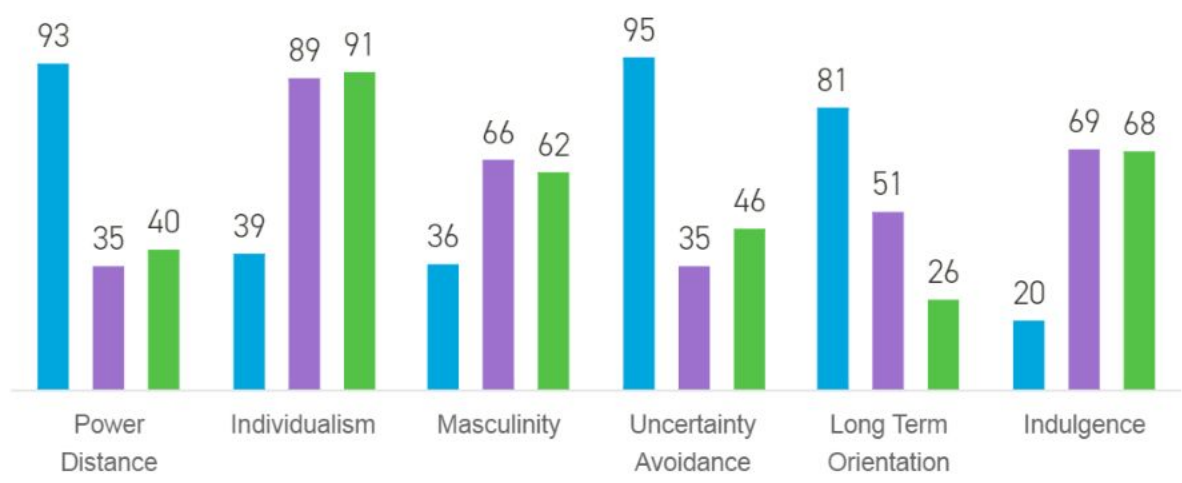|	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long Term Orientation	Indulgence
	93	39	36	95	81	20

COMPARE COUNTRIES

ease select a country in the dropdown menu below to see the values for the 6 dimensions. After a first country has been selected, a cond and even a third country can be chosen to be able to see a comparison of their scores. To compare your personal preferences the scores of a country of your choice, please purchase our cultural survey tool, the Culture Compass™.

Russia ×   United Kingdom ×   United States ×

	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long Term Orientation	Indulgence
Russia	93	39	36	95	81	20
United Kingdom	35	89	66	35	51	69
United States	40	91	62	46	26	68

EN   97%

Culture as a "three-layered" entity (S.Dahl)

artifacts, other material phenomena of culture, as well as language

norms and values

basic settings, assumptions, beliefs, mentality