CHAPTER 7

Dimensions of Culture

What You Can Learn From This Chapter

- Cultural dimensions and examples of countries
- Cultural dimensions important to understanding Japan
- Cultural dimensions important to understanding China

In 1980, the Dutch management researcher Geert Hofstede first published the results of his study of more than 100,000 employees of the multinational IBM in 40 countries (Hofstede, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1991, 1997, 2001). Hofstede was attempting to locate value dimensions across which cultures vary. His dimensions have been frequently used to describe cultures.

Hofstede identified four dimensions that he labeled individualism, masculinity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. His individualism-collectivism dimension describes cultures from loosely structured to tightly integrated. The masculinity-femininity dimension describes how a culture's dominant values are assertive or nurturing. Power distance refers to the distribution of influence within a culture. And uncertainty avoidance reflects a culture's tolerance of ambiguity and acceptance of risk.

Hofstede and Bond (1984; also see Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) identified a fifth dimension, a Confucian dynamism labeled long-term orientation versus short-term orientation to life. The Confucian dynamism dimension describes cultures that range from short-term values with respect for tradition and reciprocity in social relations to long-term values with persistence and ordering relationships by status.

When reading this chapter, and particularly when reading the lists of countries that exhibit or fail to exhibit each dimension, you might think of exceptions: individuals from a culture who do not act as might be implied by these lists. These lists reflect an overall average; no one person should be expected to fit that average exactly. Indeed, to expect so would be stereotyping.

FOCUS ON THEORY

Young Yun Kim (2005) characterizes individualism-collectivism as top of the list of theories guiding cross-cultural research in communication, psychology, and anthropology. Individualist cultures stress self-direction and self-achievement; collectivist cultures stress in-group loyalty and conformity. This rich area of research has focused on competition and cooperation, conversational constraints, handling disagreements, silence, face work and conflict style, and in-group and out-group communication patterns.

Kim (2005) draws a relationship with individualism-collectivism and Hall's (1976) theory of high and low context cultures (see Chapter 3). Characterizations of high- and low-context communication systems are closely associated with the characteristics of individualism and collectivism.

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS COLLECTIVISM

First is **individualism** versus **collectivism.** This dimension refers to how people define themselves and their relationships with others. In an individualist culture, the interest of the individual prevails over the interests of the group. Ties between individuals are loose. People look after themselves and their immediate families. Masakazu (1994) defines modern individualism as "a view of humanity that justifies inner beliefs and unilateral self-assertion, as well as competition based on these" (p. 127). In a collectivist culture, the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual. People are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups that continue throughout a lifetime to protect in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 1997). One difference is reflected in who is taken into account when you set goals. In individualist cultures, goals are set with minimal consideration given to groups other than perhaps your immediate family. In collectivist cultures, other groups are taken into account in a major way when goals are set. Individualist cultures are loosely integrated; collectivist cultures are tightly integrated.

In individualist cultures such as the United States, for example, when meeting a new person, you want to know what that person does. You tend to define people by what they have done, their accomplishments, what kind of car they

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 161

drive, or where they live. Individualist cultures are more remote and distant (see examples in Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Individualism Rankings for 50 Countries and Three Regions

1	United States	28	Turkey
2	Australia	29	Uruguay
3	Great Britain	30	Greece
4/5	Canada	31	Philippines
4/5	The Netherlands	32	Mexico
6	New Zealand	33/35	East Africa
7	Italy	33/35	Yugoslavia
8	Belgium	33/35	Portugal
9	Denmark	36	Malaysia
10/11	Sweden	37	Hong Kong
10/11	France	38	Chile
12	Ireland	39/41	West Africa
13	Norway	39/41	Singapore
14	Switzerland	39/41	Thailand
15	Germany (F.R.)	42	El Salvador
16	South Africa	43	South Korea
17	Finland	44	Taiwan
18	Austria	45	Peru
19	Israel	46	Costa Rica
20	Spain	47/48	Pakistan
21	India	47/48	Indonesia
22/23	Japan	49	Colombia
22/23	Argentina	50	Venezuela
24	Iran	51	Panama
25	Jamaica	52	Ecuador
26/27	Brazil	53	Guatemala
26/27	Arab countries		

SOURCE: Hofstede (2001, Exhibit 5.1, p. 215).

Cultures characterized by collectivism emphasize relationships among people to a greater degree. Collectivist cultures stress interdependent activities and suppressing individual aims for the group's welfare. Often, it is difficult for individuals from highly individualist cultures to understand collectivist values. This example may help: A student from Colombia may study in the United States and earn a Ph.D., teach at a distinguished university, and publish important books, but when he returns to visit Colombia, people to whom he is introduced will

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 162

want to know to whom he is related. Colombians want to know who his family is because that places him in society much more so than any of his accomplishments in the United States.

In the United States, there are few family names—perhaps only Rockefeller, Kennedy, DuPont, Getty—that carry such defining meaning. You are not socially defined by your family name but by your individual accomplishments. A generation or two ago, people were introduced by family name, and a new acquaintance then asked permission to use one's given name. The asking and giving of permission was an important stage in the development of a friendship. Today's introduction by one's given name only makes no reference to one's family. Individualism is so strong in the United States that you might even have difficulty appreciating how people might feel content in a collectivist culture. Contentment comes from knowing your place and from knowing you have a place.

In the workplace, in individualist cultures, the employer-employee relationship tends to be established by contract, and hiring and promotion decisions are based on skills and rules; in collectivist cultures, the employer-employee relationship is perceived in moral terms, like a family link, and hiring and promotion decisions take the employee's in-group into account. Hofstede's data revealed several associations with this dimension:

- *Wealth*. There is a strong relationship between a nation's wealth and individualism.
- *Geography*. Countries with moderate and cold climates tend to show more individualism.
- *Birth rates*. Countries with higher birth rates tend to be collectivist.
- *History*. Confucian countries are collectivist. Migrants from Europe who populated North America, Australia, and New Zealand tended to be sufficiently individualist to leave their native countries.

Another interesting association with inheritance practices was developed by Knighton (1999). Those cultures that have rules for equal partition of parental property among all offspring tend to be collectivist; those that have rules permitting unequal partition and those that have historically allowed parents to have full freedom in deciding who will inherit tend to be individualist.

Individualism and collectivism have been associated with direct and indirect styles of communication—that is, the extent to which speakers reveal intentions through explicit verbal communication. In the direct style, associated with individualism, the wants, needs, and desires of the speaker are embodied in the spoken message. In the indirect style, associated with collectivism, the wants, needs, and goals of the speaker are not obvious in the spoken message. Rojjanaprapayon (1997), for example, demonstrated specific communication

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 163

strategies in Thai communication: Thais do not use specific names when they express negative feelings; Thais tend to use words and phrases expressing probability, such as "maybe," "probably," "sometimes," "likely," and "I would say so, but I am not sure"; Thais do not show their feelings if doing so would make the other person feel bad; and Thais also use indirect nonverbal communication by having less or avoiding eye contact and keeping greater personal distance.

Case Study: Japan as a Homogeneous Culture

From Hofstede's (1983) research, Japan is placed about in the middle between individualism and collectivism. Yet Japan is popularly stereotyped as a group-oriented culture. In a 1995 study of Japanese students using the original Hofstede questionnaires, Woodring found that students scored higher on individualism and lower on power distance than Hofstede's original sample. Woodring explained that the higher individualism and lower power distance score might be explained by age; that is, Japanese college students may value individualism and equality more than Japanese society does as a whole. Hofstede's longitudinal study did show that national wealth and individualism were related. About 1990, the term *shin jin rui* (literally "new human beings") was applied to youths 25 years old and younger, who were described by older Japanese as "selfish, self-centered, and disrespectful of elders and tradition." Hofstede's study suggested that the Japanese were group oriented, hierarchical, and formal. There are reasons to suggest that at least younger Japanese prefer moderately egalitarian distribution of power and feel moderately independent of collective thought and action. This demonstrates that we should avoid allowing the Hofstede research to become a stereotype. In 1986, Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone described Japan as being a "homogeneous" country—a widely held view by Japanese society at large. In the following descriptions of Japan's history, religion, and cultural patterns, identify specific ways that homogeneity affects communication.

FOCUS ON THEORY

Miike (2004) believes that Asian scholars can "paint a number of wonderful portraits about humanity and communication." Miike's own portrait of communication is as "a process in which we remind ourselves of the interdependence and interrelatedness of the universe . . . communication is a process in which we experience the oneness of the universe" (p. 74). In this portrait, we can transcend the illusion of separateness, of fragmentation, and gain a glimpse of the larger relationship of what often appear to be discrete aspects of life (Miike, 2003).

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 164

History

Japan is an archipelago formed by four large islands and more than 3,000 small islands covering 377,835 square kilometers, roughly the size of California. More than 80% of the land surface is hilly or mountainous, leaving only 20% that is flat enough for farming. Hence, Japan imports a large amount of its food and relies heavily on the ocean. Seafood is a staple in the Japanese diet, and Japan is the world's leading producer of fish. As an island nation, Japan will never be fully self-sufficient. It must export in order to import materials it needs to survive.

The population of Japan is approximately 126 million, equivalent to about half of the U.S. population, and inhabits only 4% of the land area, which translates to a population density of about 850 people per square mile; in the United States, the comparable density is 58. Japan is divided into 47 administrative units or prefectures. More than 78% of Japan's population live in urban areas, with approximately 45% of the population living in the three major metropolitan areas of Tokyo (the largest city in the world), Osaka, and Nagoya. Japan's origins are not clear. It is thought that Chinese culture as it passed through Korea was seminal. Japan is known as the Land of the Rising Sun, as is symbolized on its flag. Founded early in the Christian era, Japan has been ruled by a line of emperors that continues to the present. According to legend, all Japanese are genealogically related to the emperor at some distant point. In pre–World War II Japan, the emperor was worshiped as a living god. Hirohito was the emperor from 1926 until his death in 1989. Tradition dictated that a full year of mourning pass followed by a full season to plant and harvest a crop of sacred rice before his son Akihito could be formally enthroned as a symbolic constitutional monarch in 1990.

Two key points characterize Japanese history: more than 10,000 years of culture continuity and the ability to adapt imported culture and technology to the traditional culture. After Perry's arrival with battleships in 1853, Japan transformed itself from a feudal country into an industrialized nation by adapting Western technology. Later, from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, urban Japanese experienced U.S. fashions, movies, and music. Following World War II, Japan again adopted more Western culture. The postwar constitution drafted by Allied occupation authorities and approved by the Japanese Parliament made Japan a constitutional monarchy. The new constitution also renounced war and forbade the use of military forces for offensive purposes. Again because of the U.S.-inspired postwar constitution, Japan maintains only a defense force; over the period 1960–1988, 0.9% of its gross national product was spent on defense. (In the same period, the United States spent 6.4%.) Japan now pays several billion dollars annually to subsidize U.S. military bases in Japan. In response to criticism for not providing troops in the 1991 Gulf War, Japan approved providing troops for the United Nations's peacekeeping operations in noncombat

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 165

Mt. Fuji.

roles in East Timor, Cambodia, and Afghanistan and later in Iraq and is becoming more engaged in world security issues.

Even after a decade of poor economic performance, Japan remains the world's second or third largest economy with several world-class companies that are technological leaders and household names. Japan is a major foreign investor and a major foreign aid donor. Japanese life and language are Westernized. U.S. popular culture reaches Japan more quickly than it reaches parts of the United States. English loan words in the Japanese language grow at a fast rate. Japan's Westernization has been criticized by some Asian countries.

Religion

Japan is one of the most homogeneous countries in the world: More than 95% of its population is Japanese; Koreans, Chinese, and native Ainu constitute the remaining 5%. In 1997, Japan's parliament voted to replace a century-old law that forced the Ainu to assimilate. The Ainu were recognized by the United Nations as a native people in 1992 but still face discrimination in Japan.

Except among the older people, religion is not a strong force. Christianity was brought to Japan by Jesuit missionaries in 1549. Although less than 1% of the population is Christian, Christian lifestyles, moral codes, and ethics have become part of Japanese life. The majority of the population traditionally practices a

syncretistic combination of Shinto and Buddhism. **Shinto** is exclusively nationalistic. It was the state religion from the Meiji Restoration of 1868 until the end of World War II. It is not so much a creed as it is a link to ancestors and Gods. Shinto means "the way of the Gods" and has three predominant ideas: worship of the Gods of Japan, loyalty to Japan, and cultivation of a pure Japanese spirit. Almost all Japanese are born Shinto. It is said that to be Japanese and to be a Shintoist are synonymous. There are two types of Shintoism: Popular Shinto, which has its strength in the home, and Sect Shinto, which believes in reincarnation and service to humanity as service to God. A third type, State Shinto, which taught that the Japanese were separate from other races, excelling in virtue, intelligence, and courage, was abolished by order of the Allies in 1945.

Buddhism came to Japan from Korea in the mid-6th century. There are more than 200 sects of Buddhism in Japan, with wide differences in doctrines. Buddhism has been called the "adopted faith of Japan" and centers on the temple and the family altar. Most households observe some ceremonies of both religions, such as a Shinto wedding and a Buddhist funeral. Overall, though, religion is more a social tradition than a conviction. Some charge that due to a lack of religious beliefs, the Japanese have no principles. Meditation, aesthetic appreciation, ritual cleansing, and a respect for nature's beauty and humans' part in it are important cultural beliefs.

BOX 7.1 Buddhism Worldwide

Siddhartha Gautama (563–483 B.C.E.) was born in southern Nepal. He sought supreme truth in meditation and became Buddha, "the enlightened one." Buddhist doctrine first took hold in northern India. Over the centuries, monks spread the religion throughout much of Asia. Today, Buddhism includes a wide variety of sects grouped into three primary branches: Hinayana, Mahayana (including Zen), and Tantrism. With 350 million adherents, Buddhism is the world's fourth largest religion behind Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. Buddhism accepted the basic concepts of Hinduism—including reincarnation and the law of karma, which holds that one's actions directly control one's destiny—but opposed the rituals and hardening caste system of Hinduism.

Buddhism stresses ethics as the means to salvation. It offers the "middle way" that avoids the extremes of mortification and indulgence. Following the "noble eightfold path" of right living and actions frees the adherent of self who can then achieve nirvana—the state of bliss in which humans escape the law of reincarnation.

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 167

Largest Buddhist Populations (in millions)		
Country	*Buddhist Population*	*Percentage of Total Population*
Japan	91.0[a]	74
China	63.3	6
Thailand	52.5	94
Burma (Myanmar)	36.5	88
Vietnam	36.1	51
South Korea	15.4	37

SOURCE: Compiled from the *Los Angeles Times,* October 8, 1991, p. H6.

a. Includes Japanese who adhere to both Shintoism and Buddhism.

A study by Hajime Nakamura (1964) of the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy in Japan asked citizens to name aspects of their country of which they were proudest. Topping that list was Japan's maintenance of social order, followed by its natural beauty, its history and traditions, the diligence and talent of its people, the high level of education, the country's prosperity, and its culture and arts.

Cultural Patterns

Critical to understanding the cultural patterns of Japan is the homogeneity of its population, although some would argue that Japan is not all that homogeneous. However, the cultural myth of homogeneity is believed and therefore is an important cultural concept. Because it is an island country and hence borders on no other countries, Japan had been little affected by foreign influence until 1853. Japan's isolation means that its history is its own. Everyone shares the same ideas and, lacking outside influences, has no reason to doubt them. In addition, as a small, densely populated country, its ideas and information are easily shared. Even the tradition of rice growing contributes to a society based on cooperation, minimizing conflict, and enhanced cooperation, which, like the rice, are all necessary for survival.

Japan's homogeneity contributes to its people's "communication without language" (Tsujimura, 1968, 1987). It is said that being monolingual and monoracial

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 168

makes it easy for Japanese to understand each other with few words. The United States, with its high level of diversity, is verbose—more talking is required to overcome diverse languages, diverse lifestyles, and diverse ways of feeling and thinking. Japanese axioms teach that verbosity is dangerous: "Least said, soonest mended" and "Out of the mouth comes evil." Today, the education system maintains those same cultural values. All schools have the same curriculum. Schools have uniforms and encourage students to take part in after-school group activities.

Japanese worldview is consistent with that of an isolated island. There is no differentiation: People from the United States, Europe, and other parts of Asia are foreigners. The world is divided into Japan and others: *gaikoku,* or outside nation, and **gaijin,** or outside person.

Japan has often been described as a society in which conflict is avoided by emphasizing homogeneity and dismissing differentness as incidental. The Japanese do not have the same perception of self as an individual that is typical in the United States; instead, the Japanese feel most comfortable with others who empathize. To be completely understood, people have to cooperate in the same context, and in doing so, there can be no differentiation of individuals. In such an extremely homogeneous society, you are not seen as an individual, nor do you regard individualism as a positive trait. It has been said that group life is to the Japanese what individualism is to the United States. Homogeneity is the core value of society that substantially defines other values and permeates all areas of life. This social interdependence has been referred to by Takeo Doi (1956, 1973) as **amae** (noun that comes from the verb *amaeru,* which means to look to others for support and affection). Amae is the feeling of nurturing for and dependence on another. Amae is a sense of complete dependence based on a wish to be loved and cared for unconditionally. It develops in the relationship between mother and child and later transfers to the child's teachers and others in positions of authority. Amae is a reciprocal relationship. Just as the child is dependent on the mother, the mother is dependent on the child, which arises from the need to be needed. Amae, with its emphasis on interdependence, contrasts sharply with individualism. (See Box 7.2 for a description of how the game of baseball reflects Japanese cultural patterns.)

BOX 7.2 Sporty Japanese Import

Baseball is not new to Japan. It dates back to 1873, when American teachers and missionaries organized the first formal game. It spread throughout schools, for the Japanese felt it taught self-denial and moral discipline. Some teams included Zen meditation and emphasized purity of spirit. American teams such as the Giants and

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 169

the Chicago White Sox came to Japan in 1910, which increased public interest. In 1934 when Babe Ruth came to Tokyo, 65,000 fans squeezed into Jingu Stadium for his first game. They lined the streets of the Ginza for miles and greeted him like a hero. After World War II, the Allies encouraged baseball in Japan as a vehicle for boosting morale, and the country's passion for the game was rekindled.

Today, there are two pro leagues in Japan, the Central and the Pacific, and competition is fierce. Some say the game of baseball is uniquely suited to Japan, with its emphasis on perfection, sacrifice for the common good, and in the individual confrontation between pitcher and batter, not unlike that of sumo wrestlers. One of Japan's top baseball teams comes to Yuma, Arizona, for spring training. Each morning a throng of Japanese reporters waits for the Yakult Swallows to burst from their locker room at the Ray Kroc Baseball Complex in Yuma, Arizona. To feed baseball frenzy, representatives of six Japanese TV stations, two radio stations, two news agencies, six all-sports dailies, and two general newspapers are on hand to record the Swallows' every move. Each night in February the team members appear on television screens all over Japan. Among viewers, Yuma is the best-known city in the United States. The Swallows make the 5,000-mile trip to Yuma chiefly for the weather; February is Japan's coldest month. The team also comes because in crowded Japan, four practice fields are out of the question. Some of the Japanese media's attention is centered on team member Kazushiege Nagashima, the son of one of Japan's most famous players. Fans at home are anxious to know if the youngster can measure up to his father. Hideaki "Chief" Kawako, the Swallows' Seattle-born chief interpreter and public relations official, watched the cameras swarm around Nagashima and remarked, "Bloodlines are important in Japan."

Although the Swallows are playing the all-American sport, there are many subtle differences in their approach to the game that make it distinctly Japanese. Everything from the way the players respectfully doff their caps when addressed by their coach to their strategy and philosophy of the game is infused with elements of Japanese culture. The Swallows' day begins at dawn with a jog, followed by conditioning exercises. "They do everything as a team, which is part of the Japanese culture," Kawako says. Five abreast, the players trot down the field and chant in unison. There is little room for individualism in Japanese baseball, as opposed to American baseball. The Americans like to do their own thing. Some observers say the stifling of initiative hampers Japanese baseball, but others say obedience, discipline, and respect for authority simply reflect their country's culture. American players have traditionally found it difficult to adjust to baseball in Japan. They face a different pitching style, different strike zones, inconsistent umpires, and a different philosophy and strategy. Kawako says, "In Japan, coaches think it's easier to win

(Continued)

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 170

(Continued)

while their team is ahead, so we like to go for runs in the early innings and get our players in scoring position. American hardhitters are told to bunt, and they resent that. Also, we don't like to mount a big score against another team. It's best to let them save face." At the end of the season, the Swallows form a circle and in Shinto ceremony give thanks for a good and safe spring training. Kawako watched the ceaseless practice and said, "Still, you see, we Japanese have a secret weapon. We try harder."

SOURCE: Gillette (1991). Copyright © 1991, Automobile Club of Southern California. Article reprinted by permission, courtesy of *Westways*.

Japan Samurai Bears.

Japan is changing. The younger generation is more independent and worldly. Perhaps Japan is beginning to recognize that it is not as homogeneous as the cultural myth suggests. Japan is beginning to identify itself more in terms of nationality rather than ethnicity. Traditional mores are becoming less important as Japan becomes more international. Many feel that modern Japan cannot continue to value the communication subtleties that are not easily understood by non-Japanese.

MASCULINITY VERSUS FEMININITY ■

The second dimension across which cultures vary is **masculinity** versus **femininity.** Hofstede (1980) found that women's social role varied less from culture to culture than men's. He labeled as masculine cultures those that strive for maximal distinction between what women and men are expected to do. Cultures that place high values on masculine traits stress assertiveness, competition, and material success. Those labeled as feminine cultures are those that permit more overlapping social roles for the sexes. Cultures that place high value on feminine traits stress quality of life, interpersonal relationships, and concern for the weak. Table 7.2 shows examples of both types.

Table 7.2 Masculinity Rankings for 50 Countries and Three Regions

1	Japan	28	Singapore
2	Austria	29	Israel
3	Venezuela	30/31	Indonesia
4/5	Italy	30/31	West Africa
4/5	Switzerland	32/33	Turkey
6	Mexico	32/33	Taiwan
7/8	Ireland	34	Panama
7/8	Jamaica	35/36	Iran
9/10	Great Britain	35/36	France
9/10	Germany	37/38	Spain
11/12	Philippines	37/38	Peru
11/12	Colombia	39	East Africa
13/14	South Africa	40	El Salvador
13/14	Ecuador	41	South Korea
15	United States	42	Uruguay
16	Australia	43	Guatemala
17	New Zealand	44	Thailand
18/19	Greece	45	Portugal
18/19	Hong Kong	46	Chile
20/21	Argentina	47	Finland
20/21	India	48/49	Yugoslavia
22	Belgium	48/49	Costa Rica
23	Arab countries	50	Denmark
24	Canada	51	The Netherlands
25/26	Malaysia	52	Norway
25/26	Pakistan	53	Sweden
27	Brazil		

SOURCE: Hofstede (2001, Exhibit 6.3, p. 286).

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 172

It is important to understand that these traits apply to both women and men; that is, both women and men learn to be ambitious and competitive in masculine cultures, and both women and men learn to be modest in feminine cultures. From his study of Thais in the United States, Rojjanaprapayon (1997) notes that masculinity in all cultures is not the same as Hofstede's Western concept of masculinity as assertiveness, aggressiveness, and goal orientation. Thais can be very aggressive and goal oriented in some situations but are expected to be attentive, supportive, and yielding. Rojjanaprapayon suggests labeling this dimension more appropriately as affection. In the workplace, in masculine cultures, managers are expected to be decisive and assertive; in feminine cultures, managers use intuition and strive for consensus. Solidarity and quality of life are stressed. Hofstede's data revealed two associations with this dimension:

- *Geography.* Feminine cultures are somewhat more likely in colder climates.
- *Birth rates.* In feminine cultures, the woman has a stronger say in the number of children. In masculine cultures, the man determines family size.

POWER DISTANCE

The third dimension is **power distance,** or the way the culture deals with inequalities. Hofstede (1997) defines power distance as "the extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 28). Hofstede believes that power distance is learned early in families. In high power distance cultures, children are expected to be obedient toward parents versus being treated more or less as equals. In high power distance cultures, people are expected to display respect for those of higher status. For example, in countries such as Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, people are expected to display respect for monks by greeting and taking leave of monks with ritualistic greetings, removing hats in the presence of a monk, dressing modestly, seating monks at a higher level, and using a vocabulary that shows respect. Power distance also refers to the extent to which power, prestige, and wealth are distributed within a culture. Cultures with high power distance have power and influence concentrated in the hands of a few rather than distributed throughout the population. These countries tend to be more authoritarian and may communicate in a way to limit interaction and reinforce the differences between people.

In the high power distance workplace, superiors and subordinates consider each other existentially unequal. Power is centralized, and there is a wide salary gap between the top and bottom of the organization. In cultures high in power

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 173

distance, for example, corporate presidents' offices are more likely to be luxurious, with controlled access. Company bosses are "kings" and employees "loyal subjects" who don't speak out. In the low power distance workplace, subordinates expect to be consulted, and ideal bosses are democratic. In more democratic organizations, leaders are physically more accessible. Table 7.3 shows examples of both types.

The United States is becoming higher in power distance. The year 2002 was the year of Enron and other corporate scandals. Their chief executive officers (CEOs) had taken excessive compensation. In the United States in 1980, the

Table 7.3 Power Distance Rankings for 50 Countries and Three Regions

1	Malaysia	27/28	South Korea
2/3	Guatemala	29/30	Iran
2/3	Panama	29/30	Taiwan
4	Philippines	31	Spain
5/6	Mexico	32	Pakistan
5/6	Venezuela	33	Japan
7	Arab countries	34	Italy
8/9	Ecuador	35/36	Argentina
8/9	Indonesia	35/36	South Africa
10/11	India	37	Jamaica
10/11	West Africa	38	United States
12	Yugoslavia	39	Canada
13	Singapore	40	The Netherlands
14	Brazil	41	Australia
15/16	France	42/44	Costa Rica
15/16	Hong Kong	42/44	Germany (F.R.)
17	Colombia	42/44	Great Britain
18/19	El Salvador	45	Switzerland
18/19	Turkey	46	Finland
20	Belgium	47/48	Norway
21/23	East Africa	47/48	Sweden
21/23	Peru	49	Ireland
21/23	Thailand	50	New Zealand
24/25	Chile	51	Denmark
24/25	Portugal	52	Israel
26	Uruguay	53	Austria
27/28	Greece		

SOURCE: Hofstede (2001, Exhibit 3.1, p. 87).

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 174

average CEO salary was 42 times as much as the average worker. In 1990, it was 85 times as much. In 2000, it was 531 times as much. Japan began to worry when its CEOs were making more than 8 times the factory worker's wage. In 1977, the top 1% in the United States had an after-tax income equal to the bottom 49 million; in 1999, the top 1% had an after-tax income equal to the bottom 100 million. Brazil has one of the largest gaps: The poor constitute half the population but earn only 12% of the national income. Hofstede notes four interesting associations with power distance:

- *Geographic latitude*. Higher latitudes are associated with lower power distance.
- *Population*. Large population is associated with high power distance.
- *Wealth*. National wealth is associated with lower power distance.
- *History*. Countries with a Romance language (Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French) score medium to high as do Confucian cultural inheritance countries, whereas countries with a Germanic language (German, English, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish) score low. Both the Romance language countries and the Confucian cultural inheritance countries were ruled from a single power center, whereas the Germanic language countries remained "barbaric" during Roman days.

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

Hofstede's (1980) fourth dimension is **uncertainty avoidance**, the extent to which people in a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. Hofstede explains that this feeling is expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability or a need for written and unwritten rules (Hofstede, 1997). In these cultures, such situations are avoided by maintaining strict codes of behavior and a belief in absolute truths. Cultures strong in uncertainty avoidance are active, aggressive, emotional, compulsive, security seeking, and intolerant; cultures weak in uncertainty avoidance are contemplative, less aggressive, unemotional, relaxed, accepting of personal risks, and relatively tolerant (see Table 7.4).

Students from high uncertainty avoidance cultures expect their teachers to be experts who have all the answers. And in the workplace, there is an inner need to work hard, and there is a need for rules, precision, and punctuality. Students from low uncertainty avoidance cultures accept teachers who admit to not knowing all the answers. And in the workplace, employees work hard only when needed, there are no more rules than are necessary, and precision and

Table 7.4 Uncertainty Avoidance Rankings for 50 Countries and Three Regions

1	Greece	28	Ecuador
2	Portugal	29	Germany (F.R.)
3	Guatemala	30	Thailand
4	Uruguay	31/32	Iran
5/6	Belgium	31/32	Finland
5/6	El Salvador	33	Switzerland
7	Japan	34	West Africa
8	Yugoslavia	35	The Netherlands
9	Peru	36	East Africa
10/15	France	37	Australia
10/15	Chile	38	Norway
10/15	Spain	39/40	South Africa
10/15	Costa Rica	39/40	New Zealand
10/15	Panama	41/42	Indonesia
10/15	Argentina	41/42	Canada
16/17	Turkey	43	United States
16/17	South Korea	44	Philippines
18	Mexico	45	India
19	Israel	46	Malaysia
20	Colombia	47/48	Great Britain
21/22	Venezuela	47/48	Ireland
21/22	Brazil	49/50	Hong Kong
23	Italy	49/50	Sweden
24/25	Pakistan	51	Denmark
24/25	Austria	52	Jamaica
26	Taiwan	53	Singapore
27	Arab countries		

SOURCE: Hofstede (2001, Exhibit 4.1, p. 151).

punctuality have to be learned. Hofstede notes two interesting associations with uncertainty avoidance:

- *Religion.* Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christian cultures (except the Philippines and Ireland) score high. Judaic and Muslim cultures tend to score in the middle. Protestant Christian cultures score low. Eastern religions score medium to very low (except Japan).

- *History.* Cultures with a Romance language and history of Roman codified laws score high uncertainty avoidance. Cultures with Chinese-speaking populations and Confucian tradition tend to score lower.

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 176

LONG-TERM VERSUS SHORT-TERM ORIENTATION

In 1987, the "Chinese Culture Connection," composed of Michael H. Bond and others, extended Hofstede's work to include a new dimension they labeled **Confucian work dynamism,** now more commonly called **long-term orientation** versus **short-term orientatio**n to life. This dimension includes such values as thrift, persistence, having a sense of shame, and ordering relationships. Confucian work dynamism refers to dedicated, motivated, responsible, and educated individuals with a sense of commitment and organizational identity and loyalty.

Countries high in Confucian work dynamism are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore—popularly referred to as the Five Economic Dragons. Long-term orientation encourages thrift, savings, perseverance toward results, and a willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose. Short-term orientation is consistent with spending to keep up with social pressure, less savings, preference for quick results, and a concern with face (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5 Long-Term Orientation Rankings for 23 Countries

1	China
2	Hong Kong
3	Taiwan
4	Japan
5	South Korea
6	Brazil
7	India
8	Thailand
9	Singapore
10	The Netherlands
11	Bangladesh
12	Sweden
13	Poland
14	Germany (F.R.)
15	Australia
16	New Zealand
17	United States
18	Great Britain
19	Zimbabwe
20	Canada
21	Philippines
22	Nigeria
23	Pakistan

SOURCE: Hofstede (2001, Exhibit 7.1, p. 356).

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 177

Case Study: Singapore

Singapore is an island nation of 540 square kilometers, the smallest but one of the most prosperous in Southeast Asia. Various groups of people have migrated to Singapore. Its 2.9 million population is 78% Chinese. Today, Singapore is a multiracial, multicultural society with a dynamic economy. Lee Kuan Yew, prime minister from 1959 to 1990, is now officially a senior minister. He remains the most powerful figure in Singapore. Yew's government has been strict and paternalistic, steadily building the country into an economic and trade powerhouse that has education and income levels comparable to those in the United States. The island nation is clean, efficient, and law-abiding. While on a trip there in 1987, I came across a newspaper editorial in which Confucianism is considered in juxtaposition to individualism (see Box 7.3).

BOX 7.3 Finding the Golden Mean

Confucianism is once again in the news. Its role in Singapore's progress was the theme of the Prime Minister's recent interview with the *New York Times*. And several distinguished scholars are in Singapore this week to discuss the part Confucianism has played in the economic success of East Asian nations. At the heart of this debate is a fundamental question that has exercised the minds of philosophers and kings for ages: How should a society organize itself? The goal has always been to find an effective way to control the passions of people so they can live in harmony among themselves and in peace with their neighbours. The quest is not only for sound political systems but, more importantly, for better social and economic systems.

Whatever the arguments about the State and the individual, the Prime Minister was unequivocal about one of the driving forces behind Singapore's success, namely, the basic Confucian concept of placing the good of society above that of the individual. A related factor was social cohesion. Given Singapore's mix of races, cultures and religions, its fragile harmony cannot withstand what the Prime Minister called the "untrammeled individualism" of the West. There is good reason why these two concepts have been such a constant preoccupation of Singapore's leadership. For while Singaporeans may accept the notion of sacrificing individual interests for a larger common good and to preserve social harmony, several factors make this especially difficult to apply in real life.

One of these stems from the wrenching changes that cultures in Singapore have undergone, all in one generation. In many families now, children who are Western-educated and English-speaking find it difficult to accept the mores of their dialect-speaking and more traditional parents. As families are the basic units of Asian

(Continued)

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 178

(Continued)

societies, the cultural strains that this imposes are enormous. Unfortunately, the individualist genie, once unloosed, cannot be easily coaxed back into the lamp. But on the other hand, some traditional social norms die hard no matter how badly changes are needed. Witness how even English-educated men in Singapore still have the Eastern preference for submissive wives.

An even bigger paradox arises when trying to preserve Confucian ethics and other Asian traditions within a modern capitalist economy. For capitalism is based essentially on the pursuit of individual gains. The political philosophers of Keynes' day justified capitalism on the grounds that money-making was less of an avarice than, and could in fact countervail, other more dangerous passions and vices. Individuals pursuing relentlessly their own interests will, in fact, further the common good. Or so the theory goes. Added to this, of course, is the colonial legacy of a democratic political system in which is enshrined each individual's right to vote.

So the task is to balance Confucian ethics, and its emphasis on the common good, with the individualism inherent in a capitalist economy and in a one-man, one-vote political system. Certainly selfish individualism and abrasive dissent have no place if there is to be order and harmony. Singapore has no margin for error. Still, room must be given for creativity and innovativeness. For Singapore cannot achieve the excellence it seeks as a society if there is no open-mindedness to new, and sometimes opposing, ideas. The government's important role is not so much to deliver the goods but more to inspire the people to accept what it takes to achieve the good life—and for them to work at getting there. Singaporeans must themselves find the golden mean that suits their circumstances for, in the end, they can only be their own selves.

SOURCE: "Finding the Golden Mean" (1987, p. 24). Copyright © 1987, The Straits Times Press (1975) Limited. Reprinted with permission.

Case Study: Commercial Airline Pilots

Merritt and Helmreich (1996) surveyed 9,000 male commercial airline pilots in a study to replicate Hofstede's study originally conducted in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Merritt and Helmreich selected airlines that were owned, managed, and operated by members of the same national culture and pilots at those airlines whose nationality at birth and current nationality matched the nationality of the airline.

The dimensions of individualism and power distance were replicated successfully. The pilots did have higher scores on individualism than in Hofstede's data. Merritt and Helmreich (1996) attributed this to either a worldwide shift toward greater individualism or that people who become pilots are more individualistic

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 179

than their country counterparts. Pilots from the United States, Britain, and Ireland had the highest individualism scores; pilots from Taiwan and Korea had the lowest. Pilots from Brazil, Korea, Mexico, and the Philippines had the highest power distance scores; pilots from New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa had the lowest.

Masculinity-femininity and uncertainty avoidance were only moderately replicated: Merritt and Helmreich (1996) noted that since both masculine and feminine items (good working relationships and opportunity for high earnings) define the pilot environment, this dimension does not discriminate within the pilot profession. A subset of the uncertainty avoidance items dealing with attitudes toward automation did indicate that cultures that endorse rules and procedures as a way of resolving uncertainty also endorse the use of automation. Pilots from Taiwan and Korea had the highest uncertainty avoidance scores; pilots from Hong Kong (British pilots), New Zealand, the United States, and Ireland had the lowest.

Merritt and Helmreich (1996) found power distance and uncertainty avoidance to have the most relevance for aviation. One example is attitudes toward automation in the cockpit. Anglo pilots with low power distance and uncertainty avoidance scores show the least inclination to accept and trust automation but are also drawn to it. They dislike the lack of individual control and inflexibility that automation dictates, yet may enjoy learning to work with new technology. Pilots with high power distance and uncertainty avoidance scores were enthusiastic about automation because automation is perceived as authoritative and brings a reassuring level of certainty to flight management.

Case Study: China

Values

Cultural values are relatively stable, but as we have suggested with Japan, they can change over the course of generations from contact with other cultures. China provides an example of changing cultural values resulting from internal political change. The Chinese Communist Party founded the People's Republic of China in 1949 and brought political change and has affected religion and traditional cultural values.

Religion does not hold a high place in Chinese society. Most Chinese practice a syncretistic combination of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism as a practical guide for living. Christianity, Islam, and folk religions still remain and are practiced by some. The ideology of Communism in China endorses atheism. Under the Communist government, organized religious activity is usually discouraged. However, citizens are given the right to "believe or not believe in religion." Chu and Ju (1993) conducted a survey of rural and urban Chinese in the late 1980s. They presented their respondents with a list of 18 traditional Chinese Confucian

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 180

values and then asked which ones the respondents felt proud of, which ones should be discarded, and which ones they were not sure of.

To calculate an index of endorsement, Chu and Ju (1993) subtracted the percentage who said a value should be discarded from the percentage who said they were proud of it. The results are shown in Table 7.6.

Chu and Ju (1993) speculate that a century ago, nearly all values would have received a positive high rating, but in this survey, there is evidence that relationships between women and men have changed, that attitudes about large families have changed, and that the traditional Confucian precepts of harmony and tolerance are no longer as strongly endorsed. Chu and Ju see in the data mounting

Religious shrine in China.

07-Jandt 5e-(V-5).qxd 7/13/2006 1:35 PM Page 181

Table 7.6 Endorsement and Rejection of Traditional Chinese Values

Traditional Chinese Value	*Endorsement Index*
Long historical heritage	89.7
Diligence and frugality	86.2
Loyalty and devotion to state	67.5
Benevolent father, filial son	48.0
Generosity and virtues	39.8
Respect for traditions	38.5
Submission to authority	33.2
Preciousness of harmony	29.5
Tolerance, propriety, deference	25.3
Chastity for women	–13.5
Glory to ancestors	–23.8
A house full of sons and grandsons	–35.5
Farmers high, merchants low	–43.3
Pleasing superiors	–48.9
Discretion for self-preservation	–85.9
Differentiation between women and men	–59.2
Way of the golden mean	–59.6
Three obediences and four virtues	–64.0

SOURCE: Chu and Ju (1993, p. 222).

frustrations and rising aspirations, the result of changes brought about by the Communist Revolution and modernization.

FROM THE INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ■

How tall are you? How much do you weigh? Whatever you answer, you will be using some kind of measurement to describe these characteristics about yourself. We often use measurements to compare things. For example, if we want to know if one room is bigger than another one, we measure its length and width to find out. These measurements are called dimensions. In a similar way, cultures can be compared by measuring their dimensions. However, the dimensions used to compare cultures are generally not physical measurements but, instead, are measures of the values and attitudes that different cultures have. These are called value dimensions.

Geert Hofstede originally identified four dimensions of culture: individualism (versus collectivism), masculinity (versus femininity), power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. Individualistic cultures give more importance to individuals'