

## Using Hofstede's Six Cultural Dimensions to Compare the U.S. and Perú

### Power Distance

⇒ Power Distance has been defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society. All societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others. (Hofstede, p. 9)

Culture 1: United States	Culture 2: Perú
<p>has [smaller/higher] power distance because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people are often respected, but it's not a cultural norm.</li> <li>• Use of power in government, for example, should be legitimate and takes into account good and evil. (This is of course based on the U.S. constitution, not current politics.)</li> <li>• Children may obey parents, may be considered equals as parents, or anything in between.</li> </ul>	<p>has [smaller/higher] power distance because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people are deeply respected and revered.</li> <li>• Power often signifies corruptness and its legitimacy is often irrelevant.</li> <li>• Children obey parents, no exceptions.</li> </ul>

## Uncertainty Avoidance

⇒ Uncertainty Avoidance is not the same as risk avoidance; it deals with a society's tolerance for ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict behavioral codes, laws and rules, disapproval of deviant opinions, and a belief in absolute Truth; 'there can only be one Truth and we have it'. (Hofstede, p. 10)

Culture 1: United States	Culture 2: Perú
<p>has [weaker/<b>stronger</b>] uncertainty avoidance because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainties are threats that must be dealt with. (Healthcare, economy, bills, food, elections, environment, etc.)</li> <li>• Country with high stress and anxiety (work multiple jobs, no paid sick days, living paycheck to paycheck).</li> <li>• Changing jobs is fairly easy. There are many options anyway, but a lot are remote or online.</li> </ul>	<p>has [<b>weaker</b>/stronger] uncertainty avoidance because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take life as it comes. Live day by day and see what happens. Family support helps.</li> <li>• Lower stress, more carefree and less anxiety about the future. Happy to be living life.</li> <li>• Jobs may be more scarce or specialized. Rural areas may have fewer options for advancement.</li> </ul>

## Individualism Versus Collectivism

⇒ **Individualism** on the one side versus its opposite, **Collectivism**, as a societal, not an individual characteristic, is the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find cultures in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him or herself and his or her immediate family. On the collectivist side we find cultures in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty, and oppose other in-groups. (Hofstede, p. 11)

Culture 1: United States	Culture 2: Perú
<p>is more [<b>individualistic</b>/collectivist] because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals and families typically take care of themselves. Extended family members often live elsewhere.</li> <li>• Individuals focus on themselves. "I" is frequently used.</li> <li>• Education teaches students how to learn. We are all lifelong learners.</li> </ul>	<p>is more [individualist/<b>collectivist</b>] because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended families live together and take care of each other.</li> <li>• Groups focus on each other and have a "we" group mentality. "I" is not often used in the group.</li> <li>• Education teaches "how to do" something. From farming to craft making to working at a restaurant, education teaches you how to make a living.</li> </ul>

## Masculinity/Femininity

⇒ **Masculinity** versus its opposite, **Femininity**, again as a societal, not as an individual characteristic, refers to the distribution of values between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society, to which a range of solutions can be found. The IBM studies revealed that (a) women's values differ less among societies than men's values; (b) men's values from one country to another contain a dimension from very assertive and competitive and maximally different from women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women's values on the other. The assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine'. (Hofstede, p. 12)

Culture 1: United States	Culture 2: Perú
<p>is more [<b>masculine</b>/feminine] because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many men choose not to show emotion, thinking that it makes them look weak.</li> <li>• Many in society maintain the misogynistic viewpoint that men should work and women should stay home (cook, clean, rear children).</li> <li>• Fathers tend to decide on family size, based on monetary considerations. Additionally, work is important to men, so children should not be a burden that interferes with work.</li> </ul>	<p>is more [masculine/<b>feminine</b>] because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men and women are humans, and humans show emotion. Most often, emotion is not frowned upon.</li> <li>• Many still live in an agrarian society. Men and women work in the fields and sell at the markets. Men and women tend the children. Men and women balance family and work.</li> <li>• Mothers decide on the number of children. Mothers are nurturers and choose to have more children to help out the (extended) family.</li> </ul>

## Long-Term Versus Short-Term Orientation

⇒ As all countries with a history of Confucianism scored near one pole which could be associated with hard work, the study's first author Michael Harris Bond labeled the dimension *Confucian Work Dynamism*. The dimension turned out to be strongly correlated with recent economic growth. As none of the four IBM dimensions was linked to economic growth, I obtained Bond's permission to add his dimension as a fifth to my four (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Because it had been identified in a study comparing students from 23 countries, most of whom had never heard of Confucius, I re-named it Long- Term versus Short-Term Orientation; the long-term pole corresponds to Bond's Confucian Work Dynamism. Values found at this pole were perseverance, thrift, ordering relationships by status, and having a sense of shame; values at the opposite, short term pole were reciprocating social obligations, respect for tradition, protecting one's 'face', and personal steadiness and stability. (Hofstede, p. 13)

Culture 1: United States (closely related)	Culture 2: Perú (closely related)
<p>has [<b>longer-term</b>/shorter-term] orientation because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditions have a stronghold (especially with sports teams and holidays), but they can change more easily.</li> <li>• Thrift and perseverance are common in society. Many have goals to save money and work hard for "The American Dream."</li> <li>• Although some students attribute success to effort and failure to lack of effort, others who do not put forth the effort do inherently rely on luck. Many students are able to attend school full time and on a regular schedule, so success should be easier for them to attain.</li> </ul>	<p>has [longer-term/<b>shorter-term</b>] orientation because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditions are ingrained in the culture and therefore difficult to change.</li> <li>• Perú tends to be poorer, so saving money is not as likely. However, hard work is an inherent goal in this society.</li> <li>• Students see a dichotomy between the rich and poor, and attribute wealth to luck. But with school, I saw school students put forth effort (if they were lucky enough to have a school). They would study in the plaza, even late at night. However, the effort was not always translated to success with irregular class schedules and an underfunded educational system.</li> </ul>

## Indulgence Versus Restraint

⇒ The sixth and new dimension, added in our 2010 book, uses Minkov's label *Indulgence versus Restraint*. It was also based on recent World Values Survey items and is more or less complementary to Long-versus Short-Term Orientation; in fact, it is weakly negatively correlated with it. It focuses on aspects not covered by the other five dimensions, but known from literature on "happiness research". Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms. (Hofstede, p. 12)

Culture 1: United States	Culture 2: Perú
<p>is more [<b>indulged</b>/restrained] because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom of speech is a right automatically given to and used by the people.</li> <li>• More people are actively involved in sports. From watching professional sports teams to cheering on our own kids, this country loves sports.</li> <li>• Leisure is considered highly important even though Americans work some of the longest hours in the world. Not everyone is able to take an exotic vacation or even have a lot of vacation days, but relaxation is coveted.</li> </ul>	<p>is more [indulged/<b>restrained</b>] because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a result of the group mentality, freedom of speech is less commonly used.</li> <li>• Sports are too expensive to be more common. Although soccer (fútbol) is considered "The" Latin American sport, not everyone is able to play. I saw repurposed bikes and old soccer balls being played with in Perú, but nothing new and no sports teams.</li> <li>• Leisure is less frequent, especially for rural folks. Vacations can be expensive, but incomes are not very high for most people.</li> </ul>

### Sources Cited or Referenced

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