Culture and Diversity in Project Management and Beyond

Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.

- Cesar Chavez
Gunnar Nordahl PMP
Executive and Project/program management consultant with wide experience from a number of industries in Norway, France, the UK, Holland, Canada and the United States. Originally a full time athlete and university trainer he since transitioned into oil and gas construction, software and defense. He has served as a board member of companies within engineering consulting, oil and gas commissioning, emergency management, knowledge management and public relations as well as on the boards of a number of national and international sport bodies. Before moving to the US he was Vice President of Norway’s largest software company, Visma, and served with several oil and gas operators and engineering companies as a contracts advisor and in various roles in project management. Before moving to Austin he was in charge of the IT project office for Schlumberger’s oilfield division stationed in Paris, France. In 2016 he was appointed as Chairman of the Tokyo 2020 Planning Commission responsible for the planning of introduction of karate to the Olympic Games for the World Karate Federation, where he has also served as an Executive Committee Member and Vice President for 22 years. Gunnar Nordahl lives in Austin Texas with his wife Texas born wife Jill and his 16 year old adopted son Alexander.
Learning objectives

• Being able to define culture from a PM viewpoint

• Gain an understanding of types of cultures that may influence our work environment

• Understand the role of culture in a diverse, or often global, work environment

• Master a simple suggested process for addressing diversity and cultural differences in a project

• Gain familiarity with different approaches to conflict resolution in a multicultural environment
diversity [simple definition]:

i) the quality or state of having many different forms, types, ideas, etc.

ii) the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization
Benefits of diversity

• **Creativity increases** when people with different ways of solving difficult problems work together towards a common solution.
  – There is no one best answer to any question--the more ideas you can obtain from different people, the more likely you are to develop a workable answer.
  – Other cultures can offer insightful alternatives Americans might not have considered.
  – This is a tremendous advantage of diversity in the workplace.

Main source: Article by Michael D. Lee MBA on the website ethnoconnect.com
Benefits of diversity

Productivity increases exponentially when people of all cultures pull together towards a single inspiring goal.

- Foreign executives are extremely successful in the American corporate world because of globalization and internationalization.

- People from China and India benefit U.S. firms with their stellar quantitative skills.

- And European citizens; Swiss, Germans, British, and French do well here in high-level jobs.

- Increased productivity is an obvious advantage of diversity in the workplace.

Main source: Article by Michael D. Lee MBA on the website ethnoconnect.com
Benefits of diversity

New attitudes are brought to the business table by people from diverse cultures.

• For instance, Americans may want to consider adopting the perspective other cultures have about time.

• Our culture believes that “time is money” and “getting to the bottom line” is paramount in business.

• However, in most other countries around the world “time is for building relationships” and an integral part of getting to know the other party you are considering doing business with before starting a transaction.

• How much of an advantage would workplace diversity be if we followed this practice more closely?

Main source: Article by Michael D. Lee MBA on the website ethnoconnect.com
Benefits of diversity

**Language skills** are obviously needed in today’s increasingly global economy--and diverse workers often have this proficiency

- If a company needs specific knowledge or language skills, it may hire foreign nationals for help. In some markets, international job seekers have the advantage.

- For example, companies breaking into European, Asian or Latin American markets will need foreign expertise.

- High-tech firms in particular are expanding into countries abroad.

Main source: Article by Michael D. Lee MBA on the website ethnoconnect.com
Benefits of diversity

Understanding how the United States fits into the world picture

• By relating to people of all backgrounds, Americans will gain a greater perspective on how different cultures operate and experience greater success in global business as a result.

• The average American believes that this country’s residents account for about 25 percent of the world’s population.

• People from outside our borders are not surprised to learn that the figure is actually less than five percent.

Main source: Article by Michael D. Lee MBA on the website ethnoconnect.com
Benefits of diversity

- Workplace diversity can make American companies more productive and profitable.

- They also bring differences that we must understand and embrace for those benefits to be realized.

Main source: Article by Michael D. Lee MBA on the website ethnoconnect.com
WHY DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FAIL
AND WHAT WORK BETTER

This section is at large based on the article “Why Diversity Programs Fail by Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev (HBR July-August 2016).
# Does diversity training work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE PROBLEM</th>
<th>THE REASON</th>
<th>THE SOLUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To reduce bias and increase diversity in organizations have at large been using the same programs since the 1960’s. Some of these efforts makes matters worse, not better.</td>
<td>Most diversity programs focus on controlling managers behavior, and as studies show, that approach tendencies to activate bias rather than quash it. People rebel against rules that threaten their autonomy.</td>
<td>Instead of policing managers’ decisions, the most effective programs engage people in working for diversity, increase their contact with women and minorities, and tap into their desire to look good to others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can we achieve diversity?

- **Legislation**
  - Anti discrimination laws
    - Typically focused on discrimination on gender, race, faith, and sexual preference
  - Preferential treatment of minorities
    - i.e. access to higher education [which by its nature actually is “discrimination” of the privileged]
- **Quotas**
  - A certain percentage of a group of representatives on a board of directors of a company or organization above a certain size
  - Employee representation on boards of directors
- **Training (?)**
  - Are they designed for achieving diversity or for avoiding lawsuits?
  - Conformance can be thought
  - Acceptance must be experienced
  - Effective programs must include direct interaction in solving the problem
How can we achieve diversity?

Thinks proven not to work
• Mandatory diversity programs
• Testing of applicants
• Grievance system

Things proven to work
• Voluntary training
• College recruitment targeting minorities and woman
• Self-managed teams
• Mentoring
• Cross training
• Diversity task forces
• Diversity managers
A couple of examples of consequences of diversity

Barack Obama
US President

Bobby Jindal
Former Governor
of Louisiana

Hadia Tajik
Minister of Culture

Alice Bah Kuhnke
Minister of Culture
**culture** [simple definition]:

The sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next.
- but culture is more than a group thing
Why do foreigners have to be so different?

What do they think about Americans?

Will I understand their English?

Do we have a common language?

How can I tell if Mr. Chang agrees or not?

Why do the Norwegians not respond to my e-mails?

Why do they leave when I recap the meeting?

Why does he leave the napkin on the table?

Should I finish it all or leave some on my plate?

Why does he not say anything during the whole meeting?

How about table manners if we go out together?

Why does he leave the meeting?

What is the social etiquette in the Paris office?

Why do the Asians not stick to the subject?

Does Ramadan effect me if I am not Muslim?

Why is the Russian manager chewing out her assistant in front of us all?

Why do the Communists Party take Good Friday off?

Why do the Norwegians not respond to my e-mails?

Why do I have to rent a maid for my KL apartment when I can clean it myself?

Why do I have to rent a maid for my KL apartment when I can clean it myself?

I feel like one big ? !
Hofstede’s Culture Triangle

Individual level

Collective level

Universal level

Individualistic approach:
Understanding the culture through individuals

“One size fits all” approach:
Defining the individuals by group

Starting by dialogue with the individual(s) involved

Typical focus for cultural and diversity training

Typical focus for cultural and diversity training
Cross cultural understanding

Individual level

Collective level

Universal level

You should see this as your theory part of developing your cross cultural understanding.

- and this as the practical part
The cultural importance of language

• Language is the basis of civilized society
  – Essential for survival and knowledge preservation
  – Without language there is limited possibility for organized interaction
• Language as identity
  – France
    • A “defeated” world language – but still very much a subject of “domestic dispute”
  – Norwegian (Bokmål and Nynorsk)
    • Dialects becoming a language (- or rather at least two..)
  – Former Yugoslavia (Serbo-Croatian language)
    • The splitting of the language of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia
• Cultural expressions found in language (Please consider the time they were developed!):
  – Chinese for trouble: 妛 (nuán). There's no roof, but they are together and the meaning is "quarrel, quarreling, foolishness, foolish, etc.
  – 好 (hǎo/hào) — the most common word for "good" is [woman] + [child]
  – 安 (ān — the common name & a word meaning "peace, peaceful" is (1) [woman] under a [roof]
  – 嬷 (niǎo) — a [woman] between 2 [men] is "flirt"
  – 嫺 (nǎo) — a [man] between 2 [women] is "fool, tease, prank"
  – 媼 (wàn) — [woman] + [money] is an (archaic) word for "good-looking"
True for both diversity and cultural awareness:

- Some of us look different but are very much alike.
- Some of us look different and are actually very different.
- Some of us look alike but are very different.
Satanist or UT Fan?

- A Norwegian record store was forced by the authorities to remove a sign with this gesture from their storefront.
- The reaction in Austin would probably not be as harsh (unless the Aggies take over the town that is...).
Norwegian penal code Paragraph 142:

• “A person that by word or action publicly ridicule or in another manner insults, or in a malicious manner shows contempt for, an expression of faith allowed in the country, a legal congregation of faith, teachings of faith or worship - or assist thereto, is to be punished with fines, detention or imprisonment for up to 6 months.”

• Removed from the penal code first May 7th, 2015 subsequent to the terrorist attack on the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine in Paris.
Exceptionalism: What’s wrong with this picture?

Clue #1: USA was number 4 on this list for all other countries than the US

Clue #2: 11 golds beat 9 every time – regardless of silver and bronze!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDAL COUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- People of almost any country tend to think they represent “normalcy”
- The US is just a little bit better at it than most....
A few reasons why the USA is exceptional

You may not know their culture - but they will know (and have probably adopted) some of yours...

- The US is better known than any other culture on the planet.
- American fast-food is available virtually everywhere although in local variations.
- The American entertainment industry has saturated TV programs worldwide for many decades.
- Hollywood films have dominated the world movie market for even longer.
- Being the dominant military and political power on the planet will also color other nations’ view of Americans depending on experiences, history, and viewpoint.
- Above we see Chinese KFC employees giving each other a high five and cricket players fist-bumping in India.
- This tells us that also American behaviors and social conventions have spread far beyond the US borders.
ERYN MAYER: THE CULTURE MAP

Erin Meyer is an Affiliate Professor in the Organizational Behavior Department at INSEAD and specializes in the field of Cross-Cultural Management, Intercultural Negotiations, and Multi-Cultural Leadership. Erin is also the Program Director for two INSEAD executive education programs: Managing Global Virtual Teams, and Management Skills for International Business. She is also the author of The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business. Erin’s work focuses on how the world’s most successful leaders navigate the complexities of cultural differences in a global environment.
Culture map
A tool for understanding how different cultures work by addressing eight key factors in how people of different cultural background interact

1. Communicating
   Low context
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ High context                                                     │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

2. Evaluating
   Direct negative feedback
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Indirect negative feedback                                       │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

3. Persuading
   Principle-first
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Applications-first                                               │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

4. Leading
   Egalitarian
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Hierarchical                                                     │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

5. Deciding
   Consensual
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Top-down                                                         │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

6. Trusting
   Task-based
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Relationship based                                               │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

7. Disagreeing
   Confrontational
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Avoids confrontation                                             │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

8. Scheduling
   Linear-time
   ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │ Flexible time                                                    │
   └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
“Tom wants to know why that thing he hasn’t told you about isn’t done yet.”
Communicating

**Low-context communication**
- Good communication is precise, simple and clear.
- Messages are expressed and understood at face value.
- Repetition is appreciated if it helps to clarify the communication.
- USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands.

**High-context communication**
- Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered.
- Messages are both spoken and read between the lines.
- Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.
- Japan, China, Indonesia, India, Saudi Arabia.

**Examples of the middle ground:**
- The UK, Scandinavia, Poland, the Mediterranean, South and Central America
Communicating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the English person says</th>
<th>What the English person thinks</th>
<th>What the Dutch person hear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perhaps you would think about... I would suggest...</td>
<td>This is an order. Do it or be prepared to justify yourself.</td>
<td>Think about this idea and do it if you like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With all due respect...</td>
<td>I think you are wrong.</td>
<td>He is listening to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very interesting.</td>
<td>I don’t like it.</td>
<td>She is impressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sure it is my fault.</td>
<td>It’s not my fault.</td>
<td>It’s his fault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh, by the way...</td>
<td>The following criticism is the purpose of this discussion I am very upset and angry that...</td>
<td>This is not very important It doesn’t really matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was a bit disappointed that...</td>
<td>Your idea is not a good one.</td>
<td>He has not yet decided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could we consider some other options?</td>
<td>Your idea is stupid.</td>
<td>He likes my idea!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That is an original point of view.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluating

Direct negative feedback

- **Direct negative feedback**
- Negative feedback to a college is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly.
- Negative messages stand alone – not softened by positive ones.
- Absolute descriptions are often used. (Totally inappropriate, completely unprofessional etc.)
- Russia, Israel, France, Germany, Norway, Denmark.

Indirect negative feedback

- **Indirect negative feedback**
- Negative feedback to a college is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically.
- Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones.
- Qualifying description are often used (Sort of, slightly, somewhat etc.)
- Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, India

Examples of the middle ground:

- US, Canada, Argentina, Spain, Italy, Brazil, Mexico.
**Persuading**

**Principle-first**

- **Principles first**
  - Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting the fact, statement or opinion.
  - The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving to a conclusion.
  - The conceptual principles underlying each situation is valued.
  - Italy, France, Spain, Germany

- **Applications first**
  - Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary.
  - The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points.
  - Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner.
  - Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment.
  - US, Canada, Australia

**Examples of the middle ground:**

- Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Sweden, Denmark
Leading

Egalitarian leadership
– The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low.
– The best boss is a facilitator among equals.
– Organizational structures are flat
– Communication often skips hierarchical lines
– Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Australia, Israel.

Hierarchical leadership
– The ideal distance between the boss and subordinate is high.
– The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front.
– Status is important.
– Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed.
– Communication follows set hierarchical lines.
– Japan, Korea, Nigeria, China, Saudi Arabia, India, Russia.

Examples of the middle ground
– US, Germany, Brazil, France, Italy
Leading

Egalitarian <-> Hierarchical

General traits of egalitarian cultures:

- It’s okay to disagree with the boss openly - even in front of others.
- People are more likely to move to action without the boss’s okay.
- If meeting with a client or supplier, there is less focus on matching hierarchical levels.
- It’s okay to call or e-mail people several levels below or above you.
- With clients or partners you will be seated and spoken to in no particular order.

General traits of hierarchical cultures:

- An effort is made to defer to the boss’s opinion – especially in public.
- People are more likely to get the boss’s approval before moving to action.
- If you send your boss, the will send their boss. If your boss cancels, their boss also may not come.
- Communication follows the hierarchical chain.
- With clients and partners you may be seated and spoken to in order of position.
Deciding

Consensual

- Decisions are made in groups through unanimous agreement.
- Scandinavia, Japan, the Netherlands

Top-down

- Decisions are made by individuals (usually the boss)
- Nigeria, Russia, India, China

Examples of the middle ground:
- Germany, UK, US, Brazil, France, Italy
Trusting

Task-based

- **Task-based**
- Trust is built through business related activities
- Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation
- You do good work consistently, you are reliable.
- I enjoy working with you, I trust you.
- US, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Australia, Germany

Relationship-based

- **Relationship-based**
- Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks and visits at the coffee machine.
- Work relationships build up slowly over the long term.
- I have seen who you are on a deep level, I have shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you.
- Saudi Arabia, India, Nigeria, China, Thailand, Brazil

**Examples of the middle ground:**

- UK, Poland, Austria, France, Italy, Spain
Disagreeing

Confrontational

• Confrontational
• Disagreement and debate are positive for the team or organization.
• Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.
• Israel, France, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands

Avoids confrontation

• Avoids confrontation
• Disagreement and debate is negative for the team or organization.
• Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.
• Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Ghana, China

Example of the middle ground:
• Sweden, UK, US, Sweden, Australia
Scheduling

Linear-time
- Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next.
- One thing at the time.
- No interruptions.
- The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule.
- Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.
- Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Japan.

Flexible time
- Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise.
- Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions are accepted.
- The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization.
- Saudi Arabia, India, Nigeria, China, Turkey, Mexico.

Examples of the middle ground:
- UK, Poland, Czech Republic, France, Spain.
1. **Communicating**
   - Low context

2. **Evaluating**
   - Direct negative feedback

3. **Persuading**
   - Principle-first

4. **Leading**
   - Egalitarian

5. **Deciding**
   - Consensual

6. **Trusting**
   - Task-based

7. **Disagreeing**
   - Confrontational

8. **Scheduling**
   - Linear-time

---

I = Israel  
R = Russia
1. Communicating
   Low context
   
2. Evaluating
   Direct negative feedback
   
3. Persuading
   Principle-first
   
4. Leading
   Egalitarian
   
5. Deciding
   Consensual
   
6. Trusting
   Task-based
   
7. Disagreeing
   Confrontational
   
8. Scheduling
   Linear-time
   
---

High context

Indirect negative feedback

Applications-first

Hierarchical

Top-down

Relationship based

Avoids confrontation

Flexible time

I = Israel  R = Russia
5 easy steps to better cultural awareness

1. Do (at least) a basic research of the other person’s culture that give you some basic information.
   – There are very good websites that provide short overviews such as http://www.commisceo-global.com/

2. As you get in contact with the group or person from the other culture, explain that you are trying to achieve the best possible communication and working relationships.

3. Acknowledge your lack of knowledge of the other persons culture and solicit their input.

4. Have he/she/them explain how they see things different between your culture an their own.

5. Make sure you listen more than you ask.
Award-Winning Culture Guides

80+ country-specific guides covering country characteristics, the people, language, culture, etiquette, business protocol, communication styles and much more.

International Management Guides

Designed specifically for the traveling manager, these short, sharp guides to being a manager in a foreign country offer invaluable insights and practical tips.
THE SIX HOFSTEDE DIMENSIONS

Professor Geert Hofstede conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. He defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others”.

The six dimensions of national culture are based on extensive research done by Professor Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov and their research teams.
Hofstede’s “Pyramid of Uniqueness in Mental Programming”

- **Universal level**: Inherited
  - **Human Nature**: Inherited

- **Collective level**: Learned
  - **Culture**: Learned

- **Individual level**: Inherited and learned
  - **Personal**: Inherited and learned
Ten Differences Between Small- and Large- Power Distance Societies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Power Distance</th>
<th>Large Power Distance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of power should be legitimate and is subject to criteria of good and evil</td>
<td>Power is a basic fact of society antedating good or evil: its legitimacy is irrelevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents treats children like equals</td>
<td>Parents teach children obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older people are neither respected or feared</td>
<td>Older people are both respected and feared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centered education</td>
<td>Teacher-centered education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy means inequality of roles, established for convenience</td>
<td>Hierarchy means existential inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinated expect to be consulted</td>
<td>Subordinates expects to be told what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluralist governments based on majority vote and changed peacefully</td>
<td>Autocratic governments based on co-optation and changed by revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption rear; scandals and political careers</td>
<td>Corruption frequent; scandals are covered up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income distribution in society rather even</td>
<td>Income distribution in society very uneven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious stressing equality of believers</td>
<td>Religions with hierarchy of priests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Ten Differences Between Weak- and Strong- Uncertainty Avoidance Societies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
<th>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The uncertainty inherent in life is accepted and each day is taken as it comes</td>
<td>The uncertainty in life is felt as a continuous threat that must be fought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease, lower stress, self-control, low anxiety</td>
<td>Higher stress, emotionality, anxiety, neuroticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher scores on subjective health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Lower scores on subjective health and wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance of deviant persons and ideas; what is different is curious</td>
<td>Intolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable with ambiguity and chaos</td>
<td>Need for clarity and structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers may say “I don’t know”</td>
<td>Teachers are supposed to have all the answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing jobs is no problem</td>
<td>Staying in jobs even if disliked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike of rules – written or unwritten</td>
<td>Emotional need for rules – even if they are not obeyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In politics, citizens feel and are seen as competent towards authorities</td>
<td>In politics citizens feel and are seen as incompetent towards authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In religion, philosophy and science: relativism and empiricism</td>
<td>In religion, philosophy and science: belief in ultimate truths and grand theories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ten Differences Between Collectivist and Individualist Societies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Collectivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only</td>
<td>People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I” – consciousness</td>
<td>“We” – consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right of privacy</td>
<td>Stress of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking one’s mind is healthy</td>
<td>Harmony should always be maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others classified as individuals</td>
<td>Others classified as in-group or out-group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal opinion expected: one person one vote</td>
<td>Opinions and votes predetermined by in-group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgression of norms leads to guilt feelings</td>
<td>Transgression of norms leads to shame feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages in which the word “I” is indispensable</td>
<td>Languages in which the word “I” is avoided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of education is learning how to learn</td>
<td>Purpose of education is learning how to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task prevails over relationship</td>
<td>Relationships prevail over tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Ten Differences Between Feminine and Masculine Societies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Femininity</th>
<th>Masculinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders</td>
<td>Maximum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men and woman should be modest and caring</td>
<td>Men should be, and women may be, assertive and ambitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance between family and work</td>
<td>Work prevails over family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy for the weak</td>
<td>Admiration of the strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings</td>
<td>Fathers deals with facts, mothers with feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both boys and girls may cry but neither should fight</td>
<td>Girls cry, boys don’t: boys should fight back, girls shouldn't fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers decide on number of children</td>
<td>Fathers decide on family size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many women in elected political positions</td>
<td>Few women in elected political positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion focuses on fellow human beings</td>
<td>Religions focuses on God or gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter-of-fact attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of relating</td>
<td>Moralistic attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of performing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Ten Differences Between Short- and Long-Term-Oriented Societies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-Term Orientation</th>
<th>Long-Term Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most important events in life occurred in the past or take place now</td>
<td>Most important events in life will occur in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal steadiness and stability: a good person is always the same</td>
<td>A good person adapts to the circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are universal guidelines about what is good or evil</td>
<td>What is good and evil depends upon the circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditions are sacrosanct</td>
<td>Traditions are adaptable to changed circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life guided by imperatives</td>
<td>Family life guided by shared tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supposed to be proud of one’s country</td>
<td>Trying to learn from other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service to others is an important goal</td>
<td>Thrift and perseverance are important goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social spending and consumption</td>
<td>Large savings quote, funds available for investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students attribute success and failure to luck</td>
<td>Students attribute success to effort and failure to lack of effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow or no economic growth of poor countries</td>
<td>Fast economic growth of countries up till a level of prosperity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Ten Differences between Indulgent and Restrained Societies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indulgence</th>
<th>Restrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher percentage of people declaring themselves as very happy</td>
<td>Fewer people very happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A perception of personal life control</td>
<td>A perception of helplessness: what happens to me is not my own doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of speech seen as important</td>
<td>Freedom of speech is not a primary concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher importance on leisure</td>
<td>Lower importance of leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to remember positive emotions</td>
<td>Less likely to remember positive emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In countries with educated populations, higher birthrates</td>
<td>In countries with educated populations, lower birthrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More people actively involved in sports</td>
<td>Fewer people actively involved in sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In countries with enough food, higher percentages of obese people</td>
<td>In countries with enough food, fewer obese people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In wealthy countries, lenient sexual norms</td>
<td>In wealthy countries, stricter sexual norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining order in the nation is not a given high priority</td>
<td>Higher number of police officers per 100,000 populations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 easy steps to better cultural awareness

1. Do (at least) a basic research of the other person’s culture that give you some basic information.
   – There are very good websites that provide short overviews such as [http://www.commisceo-global.com/](http://www.commisceo-global.com/)

2. As you get in contact with the group or person from the other culture, explain that you are trying to achieve the best possible communication and working relationships.

3. Acknowledge your lack of knowledge of the other persons culture and solicit their input.

4. Have he/she/them explain how they see things different between your culture and their own.

5. Make sure you listen more than you ask.