

# Geert Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture and Edward T. Hall's Time Orientations

Hofstede's "dimensions of culture" were derived mainly from his extensive organizational anthropology research in the late 1970s and early 1980s – the scores are general comparisons of values in the countries and regions he studied and can vary greatly within each country. Although Hofstede's work is somewhat dated and has rightly been criticized on a number of grounds the dimensions are useful in understanding that members of various societies are likely to behave in different ways in a given situation.

**Power Distance Index (PDI)** is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”. (Hofstede, 1994, p. 28) A **High Power Distance** ranking indicates that inequalities of power and wealth exist within the society and that the less powerful members of the society accept this situation. A **Low Power Distance** ranking indicates the society de-emphasizes the differences between citizen's power and wealth. In these societies equality and opportunity for everyone is stressed.

**Individualism (IDV)** Hofstede defines this dimension as follows: “individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family.” A **High Individualism** ranking indicates that individuality and individual rights are paramount within the society. A **Low Individualism** ranking typifies societies of a more collectivist nature with close ties among its members. In these societies “...people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 51)

**Masculinity (MAS)** focuses on the degree to which ‘masculine’ values like competitiveness and the acquisition of wealth are valued over ‘feminine’ values like relationship building and quality of life. A **High Masculinity** ranking indicates the society values assertive and aggressive 'masculine' traits. A **Low Masculinity** ranking typifies societies in which nurturing and caring 'feminine' characteristics predominate.

**Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)** focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society. A **High Uncertainty Avoidance** ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A **Low Uncertainty Avoidance** ranking indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a diversity of opinions. This is reflected in a society that is less rule-oriented, more readily accepts change, and takes more and greater risks.

**Long-Term Orientation (LTO)** (formerly called "Confucian dynamism") focuses on the degree the society embraces, or does not embrace, long-term devotion to traditional values. A **High Long-Term Orientation** ranking indicates the country prescribes to the values of long-term commitments and respect for tradition and where long-term rewards are expected as a result of today's hard work. A **Low Long-Term Orientation** ranking indicates the country does not reinforce the concept of a long-term, traditional orientation and people expect short-term rewards from their work.

## Hofstede's Dimension of Culture Scales

Country	Power Distance	Individualism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity	Long term Orientation
Arab Countries	80	38	68	53	
Argentina	49	46	86	56	
Australia	36	90	51	61	31
Austria	11	55	70	79	
Bangladesh					40
Belgium	65	75	94	54	
Brazil	69	38	76	49	65
Canada	39	80	48	52	23
Chile	63	23	86	28	
China	80	20	40	66	118
Colombia	67	13	80	64	
Costa Rica	35	15	86	21	
Czech Rep.	57	58	74	57	
Denmark	18	74	23	16	
Ecuador	78	8	67	63	
East Africa	64	27	52	41	25
El Salvador	66	19	94	40	
Ethiopia	64	27	52	41	25
Finland	33	63	59	26	
France	68	71	86	43	
Germany	35	67	65	66	31
Great Britain	35	89	35	66	25
Greece	60	35	112	57	
Guatemala	95	6	101	37	
Hong Kong	68	25	29	57	96
Hungary	46	55	82	88	
India	77	48	40	56	61
Indonesia	78	14	48	46	
Iran	58	41	59	43	
Ireland	28	70	35	68	
Israel	13	54	81	47	
Italy	50	76	75	70	

Country	Power Distance	Individualism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity	Long term Orientation
Jamaica	45	39	13	68	
Japan	54	46	92	95	80
Malaysia	104	26	36	50	
Mexico	81	30	82	69	
Netherlands	38	80	53	14	44
New Zealand	22	79	49	58	30
Norway	31	69	50	8	20
Pakistan	55	14	70	50	0
Panama	95	11	86	44	
Peru	64	16	87	42	
Philippines	94	32	44	64	19
Poland	68	60	93	64	32
Portugal	63	27	104	31	
Singapore	74	20	8	48	48
South Africa	49	65	49	63	
South Korea	60	18	85	39	75
Spain	57	51	86	42	
Sweden	31	71	29	5	33
Switzerland	34	68	58	70	
Taiwan	58	17	69	45	87
Tanzania	64	27	52	41	25
Thailand	64	20	64	34	56
Turkey	66	37	85	45	
United States	40	91	46	62	29
Uruguay	61	36	100	38	
Venezuela	81	12	76	73	
West Africa	77	20	54	46	16
Yugoslavia	76	27	88	21	

(Adapted primarily from <http://spectrum.troy.edu/~vorism/hofstede.htm> and <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/culture2.html> )

## Edward T. Hall's Time Orientations

Anthropologist Edward T. Hall's concept of polychronic versus monochronic time orientation describes how cultures structure their time. The monochronic time concept follows the notion of "one thing at a time", while the polychronic concept focuses on multiple tasks being handled at one time, and time is subordinate to interpersonal relations. The following table gives a brief overview of the two different time concepts, and their resultant behaviour.

While Hall's publications<sup>1</sup> indicated countries or societies in each group, he did not conduct systematic research to provide scores for individual countries or regions on a 'dimension' similar to Hofstede's work. Direct observation of behavior in a society will readily identify the time orientation that is likely to predominate in an organization.

### Monochronic and Polychronic Cultures

	<b>Monochronic Culture</b>	<b>Polychronic Culture</b>
Interpersonal Relations	Interpersonal relations are subordinate to present schedule	Present schedule is subordinate to interpersonal relations
Activity Co-ordination	Schedule co-ordinates activity; appointment time is rigid.	Interpersonal relations co-ordinate activity; appointment time is flexible
Task Handling	One task at a time	Many tasks are handled simultaneously
Breaks and Personal Time	Breaks and personal time are sacrosanct regardless of personal ties.	Breaks and personal time are subordinate to personal ties.
Temporal Structure	Time is inflexible; time is tangible	Time is flexible; time is fluid
Work/personal time separability	Work time is clearly separable from personal time	Work time is not clearly separable from personal time
Organisational Perception	Activities are isolated from organisation as a whole; tasks are measured by output in time (activity per hour or minute)	Activities are integrated into organisation as a whole; tasks are measured as part of overall organisational goal

(Adapted from <http://stephan.dahl.at/research/online-publications/intercultural-research/halls-classic-patterns/>)

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<sup>1</sup> Edward T. Hall's publications are readily available. They include *The Silent Language*, *The Hidden Dimension*, *Beyond Culture*, *The Dance of Life* and more.