

The Hofstede Model

Geert Hofstede conducted a comprehensive study of how values are influenced by culture by analyzing a large data base covering more than 76 countries. The values that distinguished countries from each other were grouped statistically into four clusters which are defined as cultural dimensions as follows:

The Power Dimension: This dimension reflects deals that all individuals in societies are not equal and expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities. Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. It highlights that society's inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. A low power distance, typical of countries such as Sweden, reflects the general lack of tolerance for power inequities.

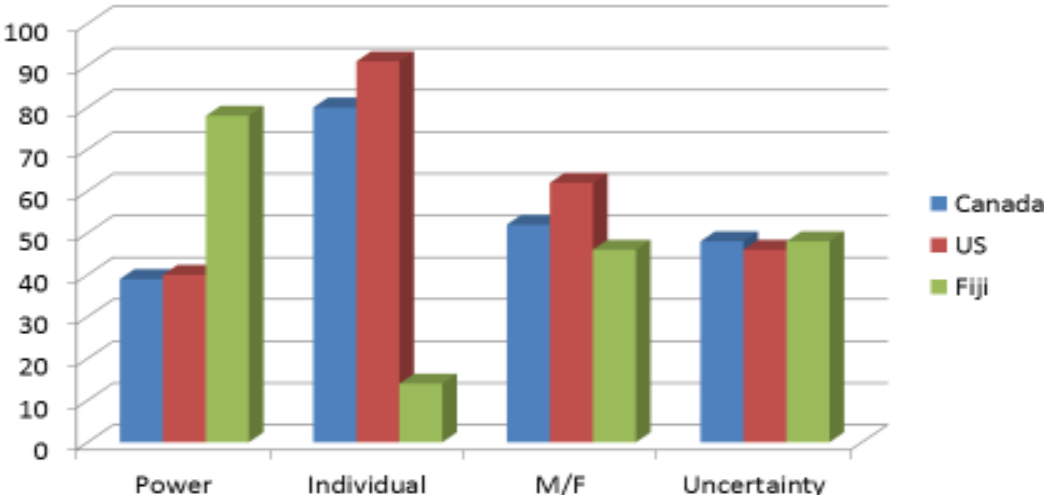
The Individualism vs Collectivism Dimension: This dimension reflects the accepted degree of interdependence within a society. It has to do with whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We". In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist societies people belong to 'in groups' including their extended family and members of the broader community, that take care of them in exchange for loyalty and obedience.

Masculinity vs Femininity Dimension: A high masculine score indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with an emphasis placed on winning. This value system starts in school and continues through to work and leisure pursuits. High scores are masculine, whereas a low score reflects success has a broader definition and is not tied directly to monetary wealth or positions of power. A feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable.

Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension: This dimension reflects societal views on controlling the future: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous situations, and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these is reflected in the score. High scores indicating fear of the future and a high need for control, low scores reflect a sense that that change is not negative, and that adaptation is desirable. Students can compare the cultural dimensions for varied countries by visiting the following site: <https://www.geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>. Charts comparing countries are provided below.

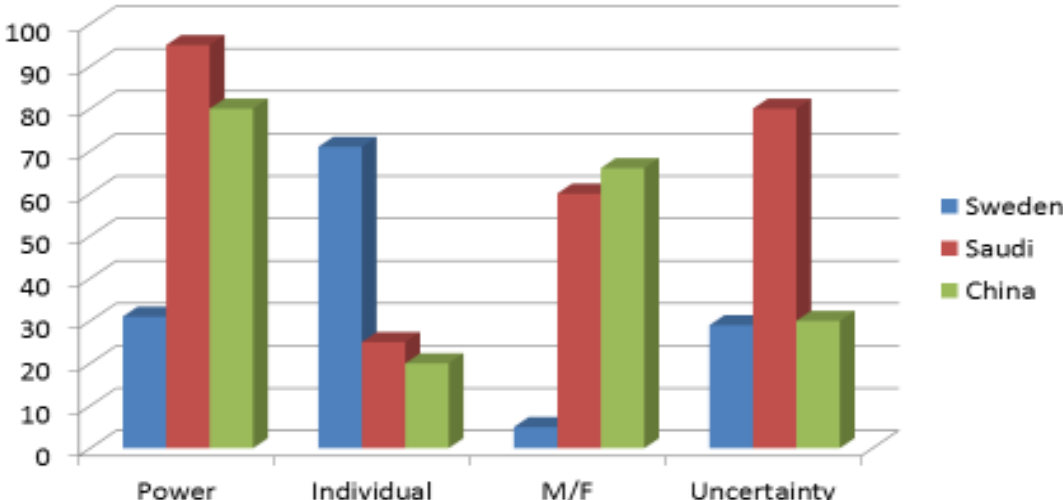
Students note that the power and collective orientations of North America are dramatically different than those of a Polynesian culture, with people from such countries as the Cook Islands not being impressed by monetary achievements, and being very committed to their community needs above their own.

Canada, US, Fiji



1

Sweden, Saudi Arabia, China



2