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Applying Intercultural Competency Models To Accelerator Operations

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21 September, 2016

BROOKHAVEN
NATIONAL LABORATORY

a passion for discovery



Background – why this topic?



← Palais des Nations, Geneva

↓ United Nations, New York



← *Soviet inspectors and their U.S. escorts stand among dismantled U.S. Pershing II missiles at an unidentified site on January 14, 1989, as part of the regime of destruction and inspections under the INF Treaty. (Photo credit: MSGT Jose Lopez Jr./Defense Department)*

Science, Engineering, and Culture: A Case Study

Fukushima Nuclear Accident

Misplaced deference and other "ingrained conventions" of Japanese culture were at the heart of the 2011 meltdown at Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant (Kiyoshi Kurokawa, Chairman of the Fukushima Independent Investigative Committee)



Key take-away: Even in technical enterprises, culture plays a crucial role

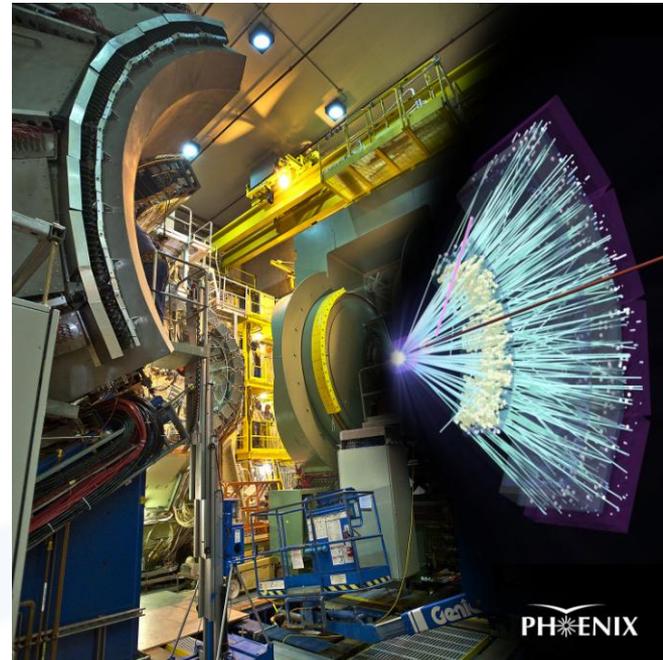
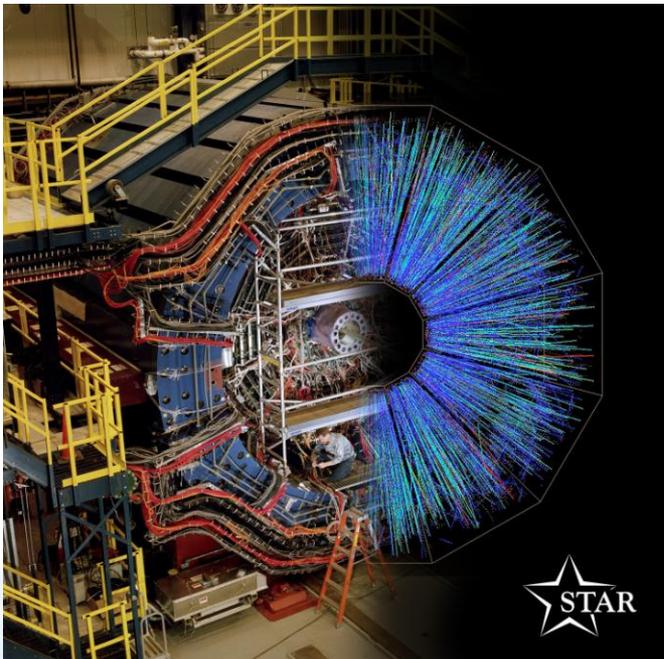


Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, NY, USA



International Guests, Users and Visitors at BNL

- Over 4,500 guests, users and visitors per year
- Visitors from multiple countries and backgrounds
- Multinational, multicultural scientific collaboration





Chemical detector tour for visiting BNL guests

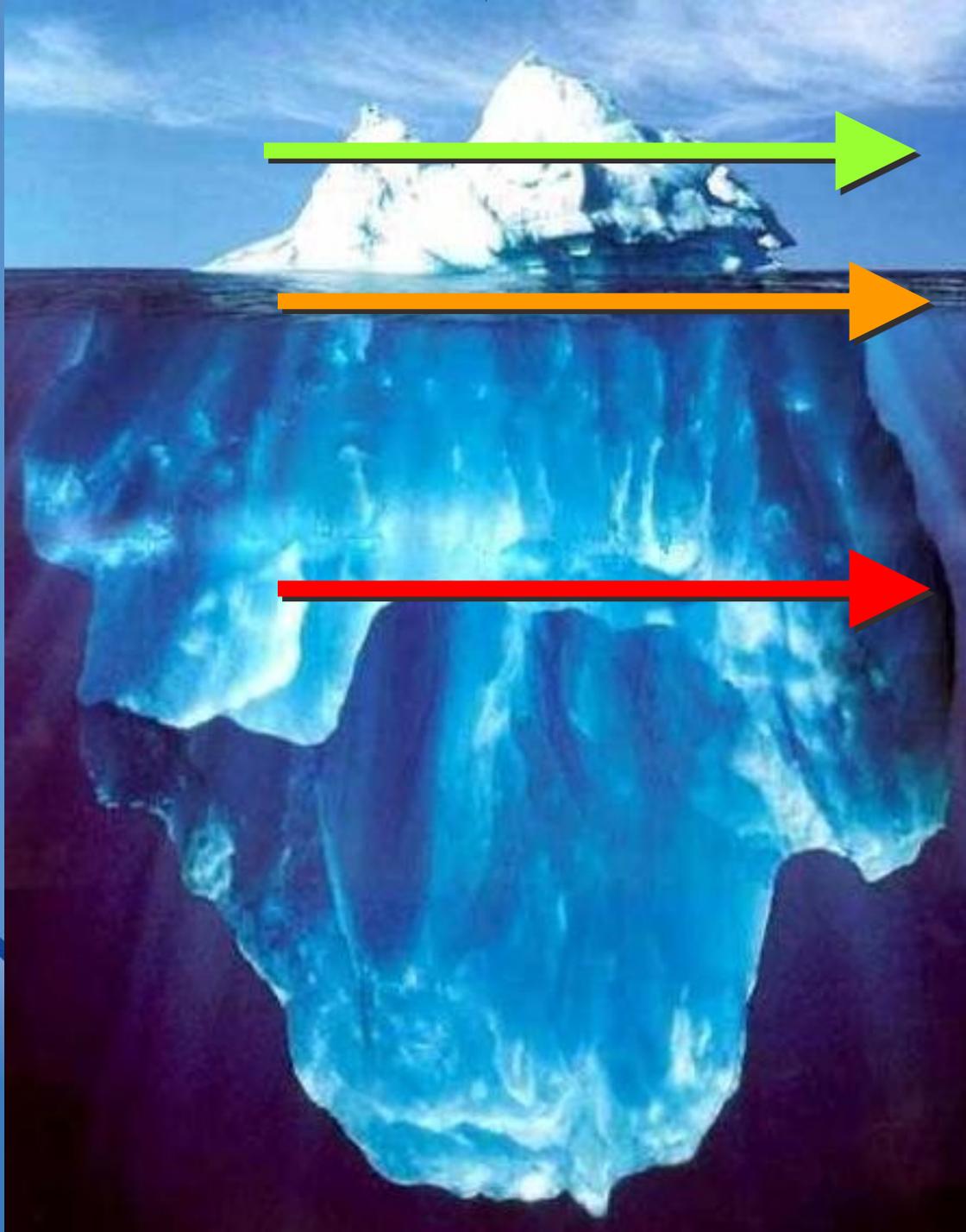
Concepts in Intercultural Communication

What is culture?

- The way of life of a people passed down from one generation to the next through learning; the rules for living and functioning in society; a system of acquired skills, habits, and society-specific training that gives a group its identity.
- It is not art, music, or literature (“objective culture”).
- It is inside our heads and includes our shared values, worldviews, and ways of thinking (“subjective culture”).

Types of culture

- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Gender
- Profession
- Geography
- Organization
- Generation



BEHAVIOR

BELIEFS

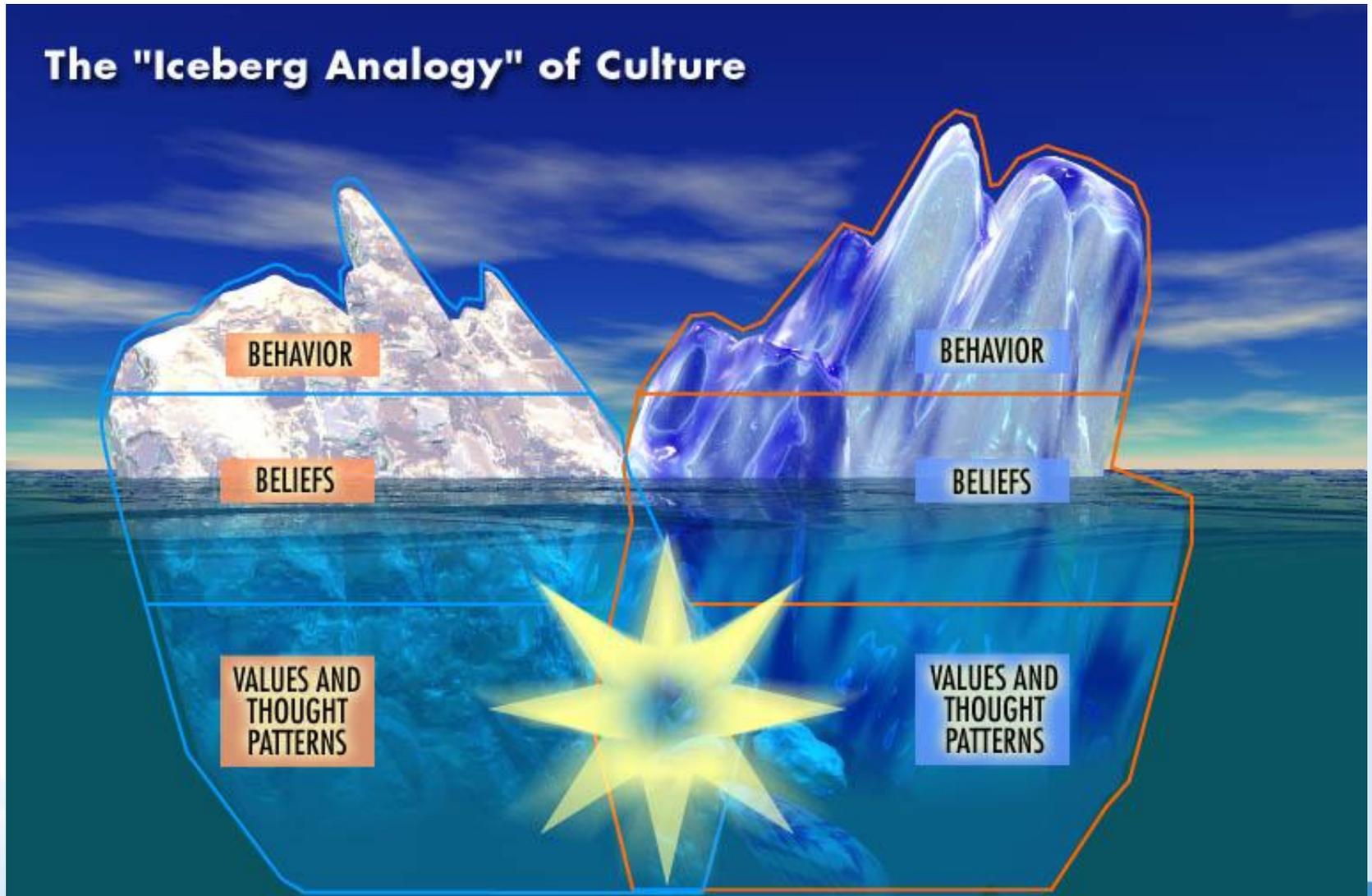
**VALUES AND
THOUGHT
PATTERNS**

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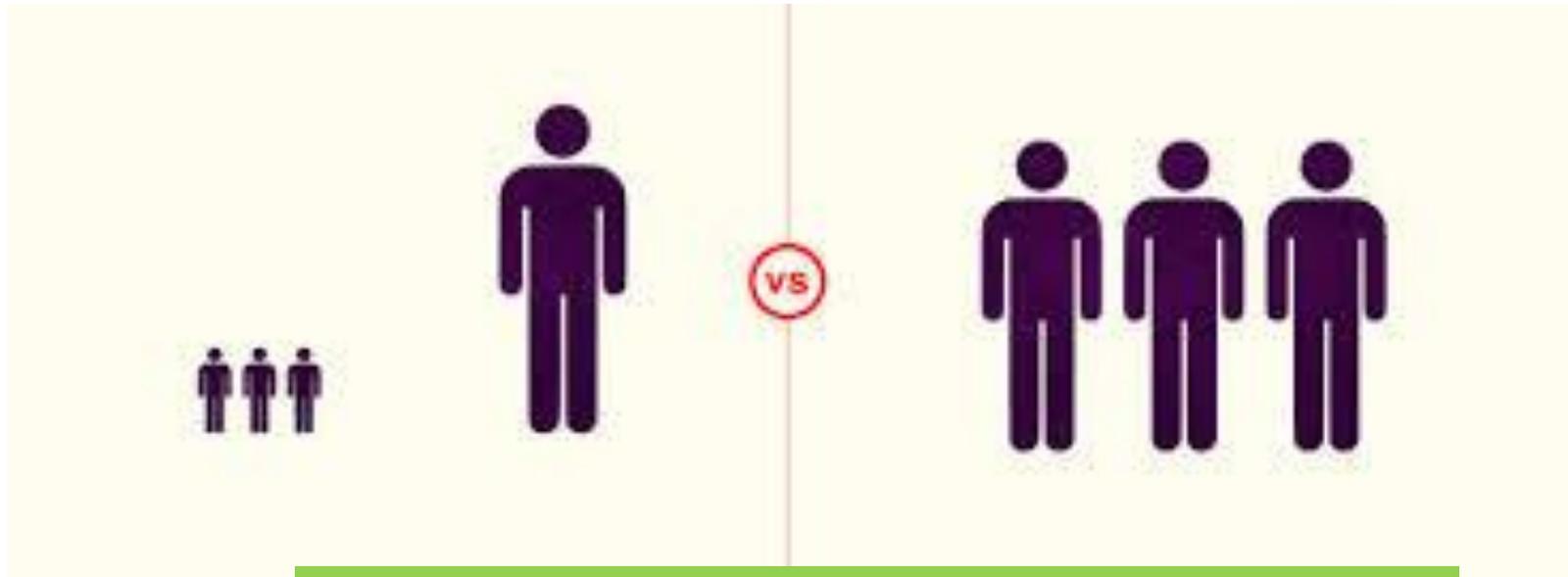


The "Iceberg Analogy" of Culture



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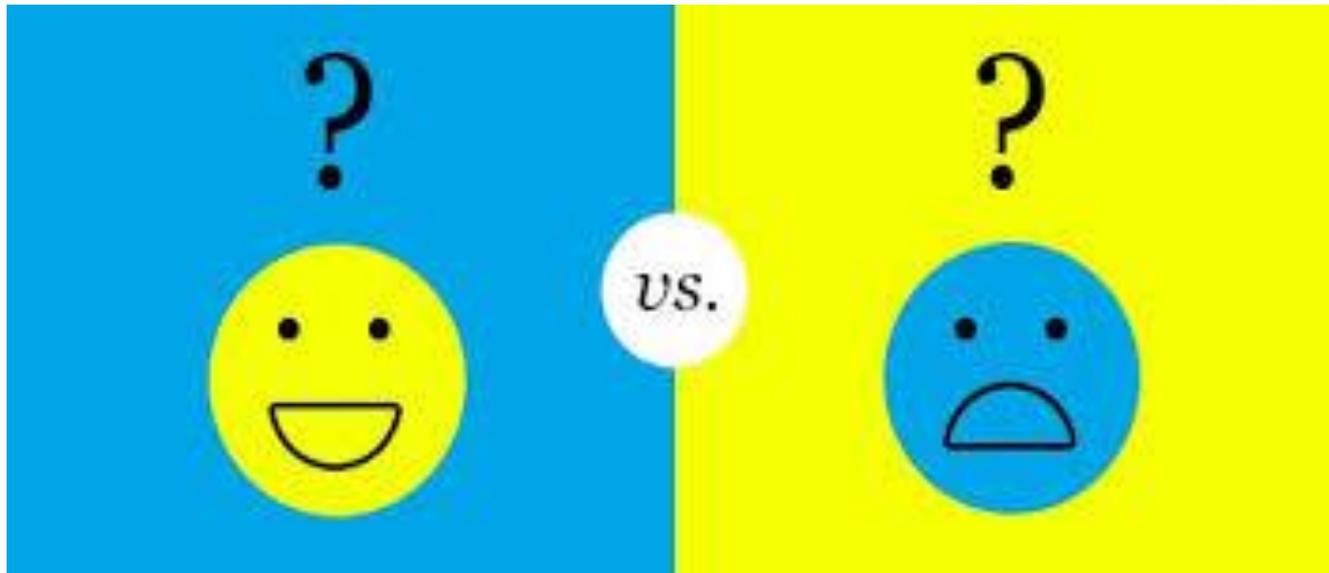
Hofstede's Value Orientations – Power Distance



Key takeaway: Understand that your counterpart may be experiencing a power distance issue in their job

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Hofstede's Value Orientations - Uncertainty Avoidance

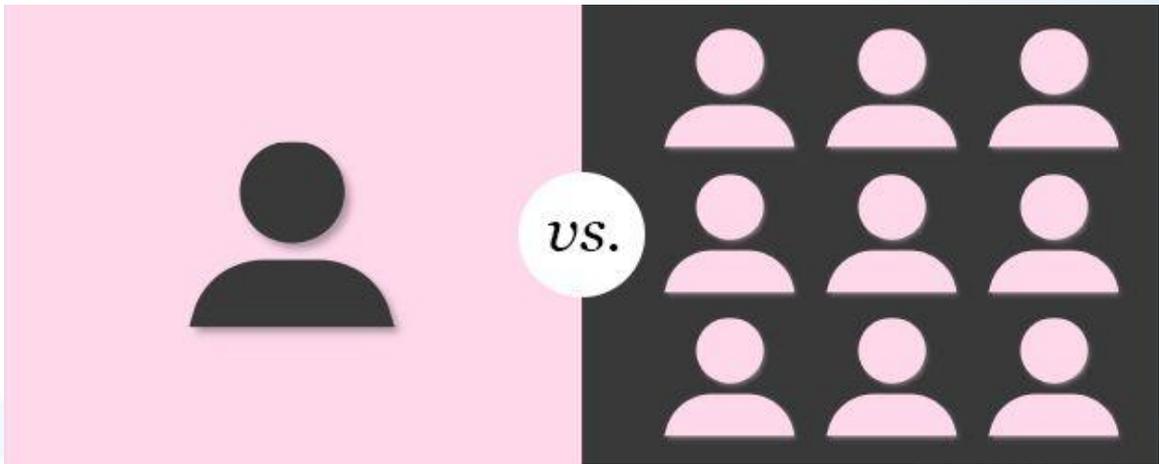
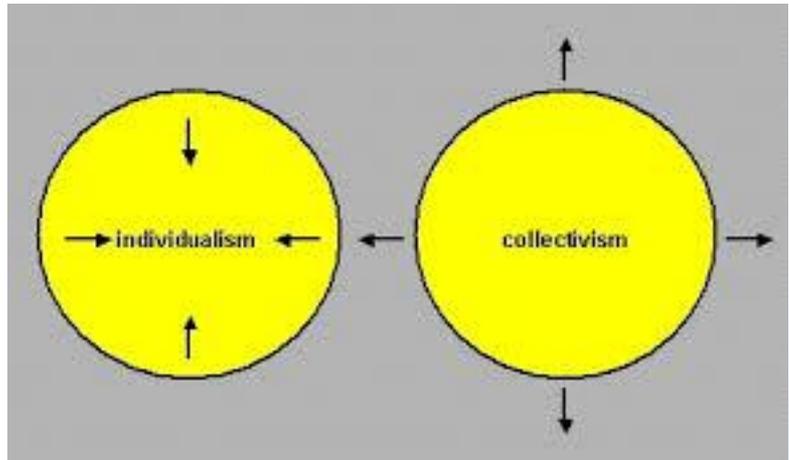


Key takeaway: Your counterpart may have a differing comfort level with risk

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Hofstede's Value Orientations - Individualism

Key takeaway:
Not everyone sees promotion of the individual as positively as Americans tend to.



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Hofstede's Value Orientations - Masculinity

The degree to which people esteem wealth, ambition, and achievement

Key takeaway: Do not assume that everyone's attitude toward ambition (i.e. good versus bad) is the same

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Hofstede's Value Orientations - Long-Term Orientation

The degree to which people focus on delayed gratification, or the degree to which people want instant results

Key takeaway: Different approaches to long-term orientation mean different approaches to planning

Communication Spectrum (1)

- *Linear/circular*
- *Direct/indirect*
- *Formal/informal*

Communication Spectrum (2)

- *Low context/high context*
- *Attached/detached*
- *Intellectual confrontation/relational confrontation*
- *Task focused/relationship focused*
- *Concrete/abstract*

Key Takeaways:

- **Communication between cultures can be thought of as an interaction of complex systems.**
- **ASSUME THEY ARE DIFFERENT, NOT SIMILAR.**

Viet Nam



- Power distance = high
- Individualism = low (collectivistic)
- Masculinity = low (consensus, equality, solidarity and quality in working life)
- Uncertainty avoidance = low
- Long-term orientation = high (pragmatic)

Nigeria

- Power distance = high
- Individualism = low (collectivistic)
- Masculinity = high (society driven by competition, achievement and success)
- Uncertainty avoidance = intermediate
- Long-term orientation = very low (culture is normative versus pragmatic)



Turkey

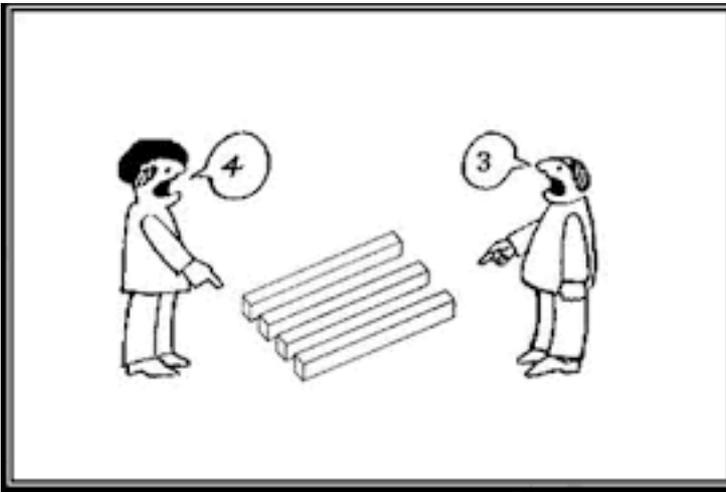


- Power distance = high
- Individualism = low (collectivistic)
- Masculinity = low (consensus, sympathy for the underdog)
- Uncertainty avoidance = high (need rules, rituals)
- Long-term orientation = intermediate
- Other items of interest: Fatalism

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World View

These syndromes are manifestations of particular world views.



Key takeaway: Make no assumptions about your knowledge of the priorities of people coming from other cultures

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Five Cautionary Notes

1st caution:
Avoid making incorrect assumptions about intercultural preparedness!



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2nd caution

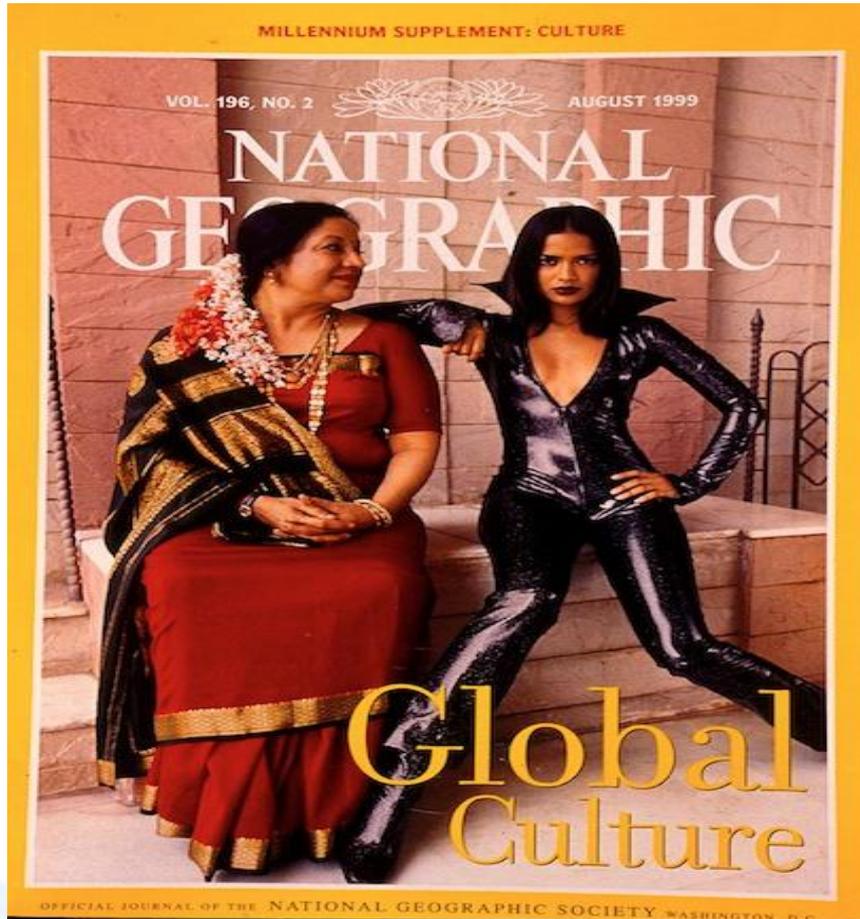
Generalization vs. Stereotype

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3rd caution: Culture Is a continuum

- Individual differences exist
- There are no hard and fast rules
- A particular U.S. American may be more collectivistic, for example, than a particular Guatemalan
- We belong to many different cultures
- Sometimes, seemingly contradictory cultural patterns are at work

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4th caution:
Cultures change

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5th caution:

It's not always about culture

Is the issue:

- Personal?
- Interpersonal?
- Procedural?
- Legal?
- Political?
- Ethical?
- Technical?
- Or cultural?



Case Study: Cockpit Culture

Korean Air flight 801



Key takeaway: culture can influence decision-making, even regarding life and death decisions

A Framework for Interacting Across Cultures

Goals

- Contract? Or relationship?

Attitudes

- Win – win? Or win – lose?

Personal Styles:

- Formal, or informal?

Communication:

- Direct, or indirect?

Sensitivity to time:

- High, or low?

Emotionalism:

- High, or low?

Team organization:

- One leader, or group consensus?

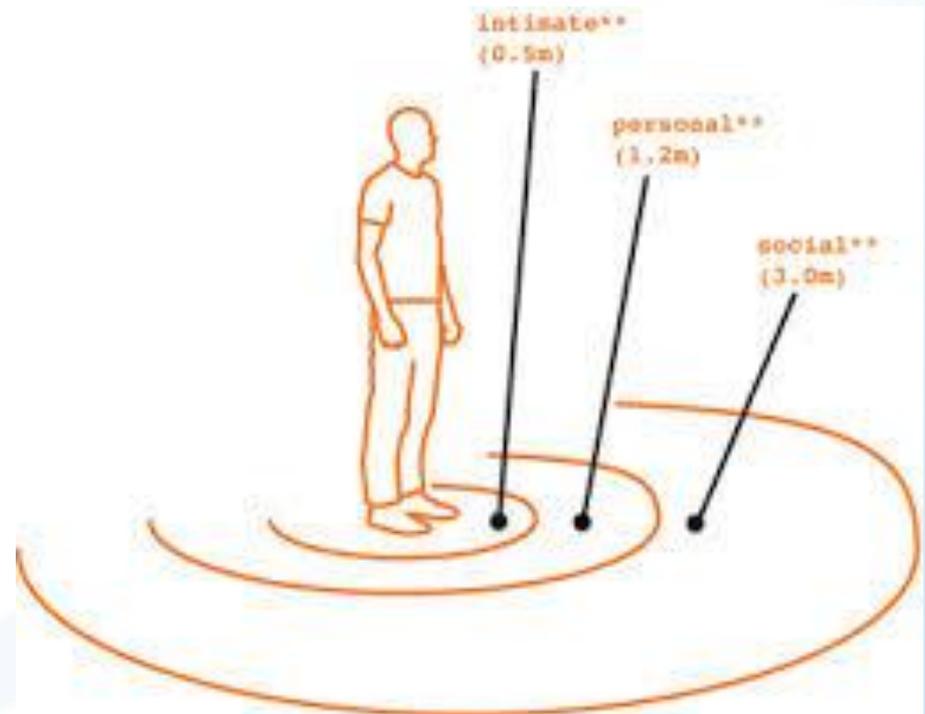
Form of agreement:

- General, or specific?

A Framework for Interacting Across Cultures

Three Main Cultural Differences in Nonverbal Communication

- Expression of emotions
- Contact
- Use of time



A Framework for Interacting Across Cultures

Related Etiquette Considerations

- Greetings
- Formality
- Gift-giving
- Touching
- Eye Contact
- Emotions
- Silence
- Eating
- Body Language
- Punctuality
- Space

Key Takeaways

- Culture plays a significant role in communication and interaction
- Technical, legal, contractual, and other collaborative pursuits are affected by culture
- Always consider potential cultural factors when dealing with colleagues and counterparts from different backgrounds

Overarching takeaway: Recognize that culture is a silent language, profoundly impacting how you and your counterpart approach each other and the task at hand