

# Cultural Models and Dimensions

# Hall's High- and Low- Context Cultural Taxonomy

- **High-context cultures** prefer to use high-context messages in which most of the meaning is either implied by the physical setting or presumed to be part of the individual's internalized beliefs, values, norms and social practices. Very little is provided in coded , explicit, transmitted part of the message (Japanese, Mexican, Latino, African American).
- **Low-context cultures** prefer to use low –context messages, in which majority of information is vested in the explicit code (German, Swedish, English, European American).

# Hall's High- and Low- Context Cultural Taxonomy

## *Use of covert and overt messages*

- *High-context culture* – a large emphasis on non-verbal codes.
- *Low-context culture* – message is expressed precisely, in the words that people use as they try to communicate with others.

## *Importance of Ingroups and Outgroups*

- *High-context culture* – very easy to determine who is a member of the group and who is not. Commitment between people very strong, responsibility to others takes precedence over responsibility to oneself; long-lasting loyalties to families and members of one's social and work groups.
- *Low-context culture* – the bond between people are fragile, the extent of involvement and commitment to long-term relationships is lower.

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## *Orientation to time*

- *High-context culture* – time is viewed as more open, less structured, more responsive to the immediate need of people, less subject to external goals and constraints.
- *Low-context culture* – time is highly organized.

# Characteristics of Low- and High-Context Cultures

High-Context Cultures	Low-Context Cultures
Covert and implicit	Overt and explicit
Messages internalized	Messages plainly coded
Much non-verbal coding	Details verbalized
Reactions reserved	Reactions on the surface
Distinct ingroups and outgroups	Flexible ingroups and outgroups
Strong interpersonal bonds	Fragile interpersonal bonds
High commitment	Low commitment
Time open and flexible	Time highly organized

# Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory

**Power Distance  
(High vs. Low)**

**Individualism  
(vs. Collectivism)**

**Masculinity  
(vs. Femininity)**

**Uncertainty  
Avoidance  
(High vs. Low)**

**Long-Term  
Orientation  
(vs. Short-Term)**

**Indulgence vs.  
restraint**

**Monumentalism vs  
self-effacement**

# Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Individualistic / Collectivistic	How personal needs and goals are prioritized vs. the needs and goals of the group/clan/organization.
Masculine / Feminine	Masculine societies have different rules for men and women, less so in feminine cultures.
Uncertainty Avoidance	How comfortable are people with changing the way they work or live (low UA) or prefer the known systems (high UA).
Power Distance	The degree people are comfortable with influencing upwards. Accept of inequality in distribution on power in society.
Time Perspective	Long-term perspective, planning for future, perseverance values vs. short time past and present oriented.
Indulgence / Restraint	Allowing gratification of basic drives related to enjoying life and having fun vs. regulating it through strict social norms.

# Hofstede's cultural dimensions

- ***Monumentalism versus self-effacement*** dimension compares **stability** with **change**.
- **Cultures with high monumentalism:** proud, unchangeable, upstanding, stable, resolute.
- **Cultures with high self-effacement:** humility, flexibility, adaptation to the situation, feeling comfortable about life's paradoxes and inconsistencies.



# References

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- Jackson, J. 2014. *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication*. London and New York: Routledge