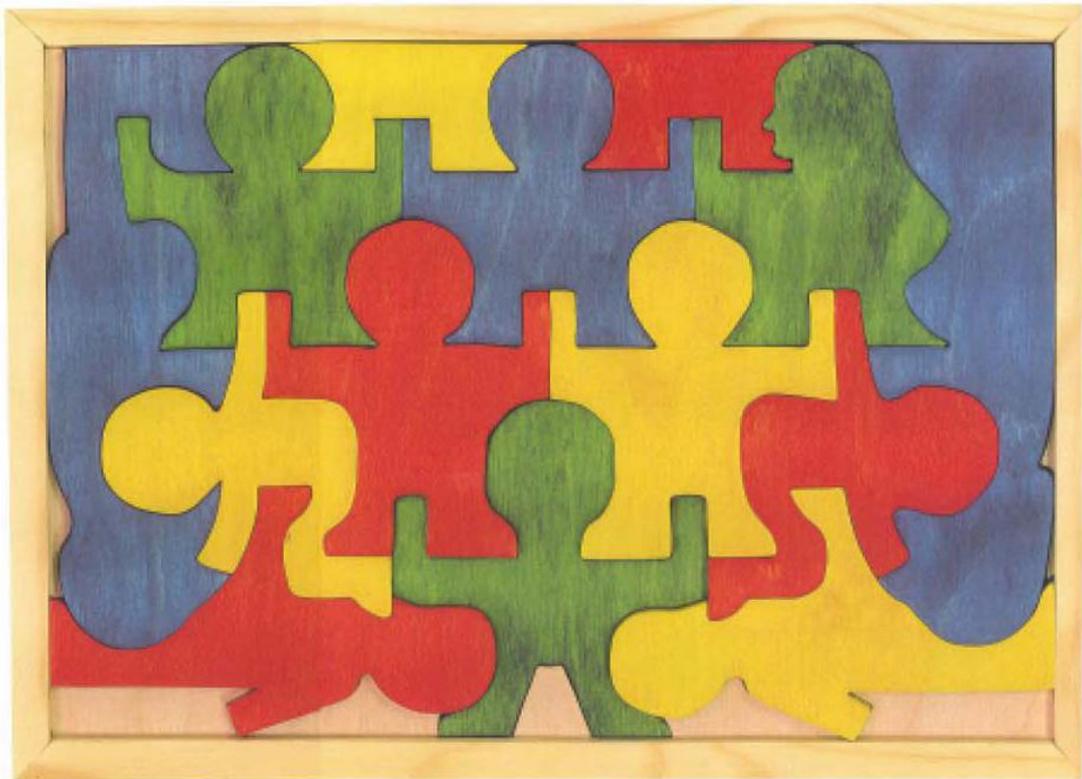

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Exploring Culture

Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures



Profiles: Identity Dimension

Extreme Individualism (Indiv)

Core value: individual freedom

Core distinction: me/others

The Indiv culture is highly individualist.

Seven key elements:

1. Honest people speak their mind.
2. Low-context communication (explicit concepts) is preferred.
3. The task takes precedence over relationships.
4. Laws and rights are the same for all.
5. Trespassing leads to guilt and loss of self-respect.
6. Everyone is supposed to have a personal opinion on any topic.
7. The relationship between employer and employee or between parent and child is a contract based on mutual advantage.

Words with a positive connotation: self, friendship, “do your own thing,” contract, litigation, self-interest, self-respect, self-actualizing, individual, dignity, I, me, pleasure, adventure, guilt, privacy.

Words with a negative connotation: harmony, face, obligation, sacrifice, family (in a symbolic sense), tradition, decency, honor, duty, loyalty, shame.

Indivs at a glance:

- Language: Indivs are verbal and self-centered, using *I* and *me* a lot.
- Nonverbal: Indivs make eye contact freely. When in groups, they are likely to stand out visually.
- Stereotypes: Indivs are defensive and tend to be loners; they run from one appointment to the next.
- Evaluation: Indivs use other people and measure the importance of others in terms of how useful they are.
- Stress: Indivs are supposed to continually test their own ability. This can be stressful. They tend to take on stress physically.

Gender roles: Females might as easily hold power as males, especially in urban and modernized areas. Gender roles are not rigidly defined; each gender takes on the role of the other when necessary to serve her or his self-interests in public and/or private activities.

Role of women: Women are supposed to be adventurous.

Role of men: Men are supposed to be adventurous.

Extreme Collectivism: (Collec)

Core value: group harmony

Core distinction: ingroup/outgroup

The Collec culture is the opposite of the Indiv culture. It is extremely collectivist.

Seven key elements:

1. Members of one's ingroup (organization, extended family) are very close, whereas other, outgroup people are very distant.
2. Harmony should always be maintained and direct confrontations avoided.
3. Relationships are more important than the task at hand. Much time is spent on greeting and farewell rituals.
4. Laws, rights, and opinions differ by group.
5. Trespassing leads to shame and loss of face for the entire ingroup.
6. The relationship between employer and employee is perceived in moral terms, like a family link.
7. Spoken communication uses imprecise style. Discreet nonverbal clues, such as tone and pauses, are crucial. The speaker adapts to the listener.

Words with a positive connotation: we, harmony, face, obligation, sacrifice, family (in a symbolic sense), tradition, decency, honor, duty, loyalty, shame.

Words with a negative connotation: self, friendship, "do your own thing," contract, litigation, self-interest, self-respect, selfactualizing, individual, dignity, I, me, pleasure, adventure, guilt, privacy.

Collec at a glance:

- **Language:** Collec can be very silent, especially when alone among outgroup people. They use *we* instead of *I*. Silences may occur in conversations without creating tension.
- **Nonverbal:** Collec are physically very close with ingroups, but reserved with outgroups.
- **Stereotypes:** They are never on their own; they are not forthright.
- **Evaluation:** Collec will go to great lengths for their friends and expect the same in return.
- **Stress:** Collec internalize stress. They will suffer if they cannot avoid deviant behavior or if they are forced to be alone. If provoked, they can be collectively violent to outgroups.

Gender roles: Gender roles are likely to be well defined, with males and females weaving the social fabric, each in his or her own sphere. Couples are part of wider family groups.

Role of women: Collec women tend to move into their partner's family when they marry. They tend to both care for the home and provide food and income.

Role of men: Men tend to spend much of their time in the social sphere of their work.

Profiles: Hierarchy Dimension

Extremely High Power Distance (Hipow)

Core value respect for status

Core distinction powerful/dependent

The Hipow culture is characterized by large power distance.

Seven key elements:

1. Might makes right; power is good.
2. Power, status, and privilege go together.
3. Less powerful people are dependent on those who are more powerful.
4. Centralization is popular.
5. Subordinates and children expect direction. They do not speak without being asked.
6. The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat or “good father.”
7. Style of speech is formal and acknowledges hierarchical positions.

Words with a positive connotation: respect, father (as a title), master, servant, older brother, younger brother, wisdom, favor, protect, obey, orders, pleasing.

Words with a negative connotation: rights, complain, negotiate, fairness, necessity, codetermination, objectives, question, criticize.

Hipows at a glance:

- Language: Hipows are very verbal but usually soft-spoken and polite.
- Nonverbal: Hipows are usually restrained and formal.
- Stereotypes: Hipows are hierarchical and seek to please in a formal way.
- Evaluation: Hipows tend to shift blame downward for any problems.
- Stress: Hipows internalize stress and express it indirectly.

Gender roles: Both males and females may hold leadership roles. Either way it is obvious who holds power.

Role of women: In home and family affairs, women are likely to be very powerful even though that power might be less visible than that of the males. While women may seem subservient, that may not in fact be true.

Role of men: While males may be the visible traditional leaders, the men may be much more subservient in less visible and more private social roles in a balance of power.

Extremely Low Power Distance (Lopow)

Core value equality between people

Core distinction responsible for task X/ not responsible for task X

The Lopow culture is the opposite of the Hipow culture. It is characterized by extremely small power distance.

Seven key elements:

1. Inequalities among people should be minimized. Privileges and status symbols are frowned upon.
2. There should be, and is, interdependence between less and more powerful people.
3. Hierarchy in organizations means an inequality of roles only, established for convenience.
4. Decentralization is popular.
5. Subordinates and children expect to be consulted.
6. In a conversation anyone can take the lead at any time.
7. Powerful people try to appear less powerful than they are. *Words with a positive connotation:* rights, complain, negotiate, fairness, task, necessity, codetermination, objectives, question, criticize.

Words with a negative connotation: father (as a title), master, servant, older brother, younger brother, wisdom, favor, protect, obey, orders, pleasing.

Lopows at a glance:

- Language: Lopows talk freely in any social context.
- Nonverbal: Lopows are usually informal and unceremonious.
- Stereotypes: Lopows are unruly, impolite, and jealous.
- Evaluation: Lopows will talk back to anybody.
- Stress: Lopows always talk or fight conflicts out.

Gender roles: Leadership roles may be held by either male or female. It is not obvious to outsiders who holds leadership roles. Leaders have limited power and have to be resourceful democrats; otherwise, they would be ousted.

Role of women: Women may play any social role.

Role of men: Men may play any social role.

Profiles: Gender Dimension

Extreme Masculinity (Mascu)

Core value winning

Core distinction man/woman

The Mascu culture is strongly masculine.*

Seven key elements:

1. Material success and progress are dominant values.
2. Bigger and faster are better.
3. Men are supposed to be assertive, ambitious, and tough. Women should be subservient and tender. Attractive women can use their beauty as a weapon in social competition.
4. Mascus like to admire exceptional achievements or people.
5. Failing (at school, at work, in sports, or wherever) is a disaster.
6. Conflicts are resolved by arguing or fighting them out.
7. The best student, worker, or manager sets the norm.

Words with a positive connotation: career, competition, fight, aggressive, assertive, success, winner, deserve, merit, excel, force, big, fast, tough, quantity, total, power, action.

Words with a negative connotation: caring, solidarity, modesty, compromise, help, love, grow, small, soft, slow, tender, touch.

Mascus at a glance:

- Language: Mascus are loud and verbal, with a tendency to criticize and argue with others.
- Nonverbal: Mascus like physical contact, direct eye contact, and animated gestures.
- Stereotypes: Mascus are macho, are hero- and status-oriented, and like winners.
- Evaluation: Mascus are hard to please, tend to be overachievers, are defensive, and blame others for their mistakes.
- Stress: Mascus generate stress through fastpaced lifestyles.

Gender roles: This synthetic culture is all about differences between socially “masculine” and socially “feminine” behaviors. Men are typically more powerful and are highly favored in leadership roles. Women can act like “one of the guys,” but they have to be extra tough to succeed. Passive and facilitating behaviors are tolerated for women but not for men. Men are stereotyped as strong and women as weak. Sexual achievement is important, too. Everybody tries to look young and vigorous.

Role of women: Women tend to be either masculine in their personal style or subservient and docile (at least outwardly). Young and attractive women can use their beauty to win but have no romantic illusions. Older and less attractive women are at a great disadvantage.

Role of men: Men are supposed to excel in areas requiring physical strength. Young, strong, tall, and attractive men are idealized as heroes and are admired or envied by others. Men see life as a game played by men, with women as cheerleaders.

* Power is central to both Mascu and Hipow culture, but in Mascu culture, it means *power to*—to force others to do what you want them to do. In Hipow culture, it means *power as an intrinsic characteristic* of a person, unrelated to any circumstance. Other people who perceive that power will respond, without needing coercion.

Extreme Femininity (Femi)

Core value caring for others, especially the weak

Core distinction caring/needing care

The Femi culture is strongly feminine. It is the opposite of the Mascu culture.

Seven key elements:

1. Dominant values in society are caring for the weak and preservation (for example, of the environment).
2. Small and slow are beautiful.
3. Everybody is supposed to be modest, soft-spoken, and empathetic—men and women alike.
4. Femis play down exceptional achievements and people.
5. Conflicts are resolved through compromise and negotiation.
6. Equality, solidarity, and quality of work life are emphasized.
7. Society is permissive.

Words with a positive connotation: quality, caring, solidarity, modesty, compromise, help, love, grow, small, soft, slow, tender, touch.

Words with a negative connotation: career, competition, fight, aggressive, assertive, success, winner, deserve, merit, excel, force, big, hard, fast, tough, quantity, total, power, action.

Femis at a glance:

- Language: Femis do not raise their voices. They like small talk and agreement.
- Nonverbal: They don't take much room and are warm and friendly in conversation.
- Stereotypes: You cannot tell the men from the women. Losers are pampered. Femis complain about small things.
- Evaluation: Femis tend to pity others and themselves and to avoid excessive achievements.
- Stress: Femis have a hard time standing up for their rights or ending relationships.

Gender roles: Gender is not supposed to play a role among Femis. Men and women are considered socially equal. Homosexuality is not a threat. Love and tenderness are for men and women alike. Intimate relationships without sex are allowed. Children need love, and parents spend much time on them.

Role of women: Because women give birth and breastfeed, they tend to have breaks in their working lives when they have children. Otherwise they are equal to men.

Role of men: Men can fulfill any role that women can, in much the same way, without raising curiosity. They tend to work shorter hours when they have young children.

Profiles: Truth Dimension

Extreme Uncertainty Avoidance (Uncavo)

Core value certainty

Core distinction true/false

The Uncavo culture is one of strong uncertainty avoidance.

Seven key elements:

1. What is different is dangerous.
2. Familiar risks are accepted, but ambiguous situations and unfamiliar risks are feared.
3. Rules are important, even if the rules will never work.
4. Rigid taboos exist about what is dirty, wrong, or indecent.
5. Time is money.
6. There is only one truth and we have it.
7. Experts and specialization are valued.

Words with a positive connotation: structure, duty, truth, law, order, certain, pure, clear, secure, safe, predictable, tight.

Words with a negative connotation: maybe, creative, conflict, tolerant, experiment, spontaneous, relativity, insight, unstructured, loose, flexible.

Uncavos at a glance:

- Language: Uncavos are very verbal and well organized, somewhat loud, and emotional.
- Nonverbal: Uncavos are animated in using hands but are uncomfortable with physical contact.
- Stereotypes: Uncavos have rigid beliefs and are obsessed with rules. They can be xenophobic. They argue all the time.
- Evaluation: Uncavos quickly and sometimes prematurely judge a situation to establish right and wrong.
- Stress: Uncavos are uptight. They externalize stress and usually make others feel stressed.

Gender roles: Appropriate male and female roles might or might not differ widely, but in any case, they are unambiguously defined and rigidly followed. Dress and behavior of men and women are defined by rules, traditions, and carefully guarded boundaries. Society has romantic and idealized images of gender roles.

Role of women: Women usually rule over home, family, children, and religious rituals. They may also be professionally active and tend to specialize in certain professions. Society can be very unforgiving of women who rebel or violate the rules, although elderly women may take on traditional power roles otherwise reserved for males.

Role of men: Professional qualifications are important for public identity. Men are expected to take care of women and to provide for the home and family. Older men are usually respected.

Extreme Uncertainty Tolerance (Unctol)

Core value exploration

Core distinction urgent/can wait

The Unctol culture is the opposite of the Uncavo culture. Even extreme ambiguity is tolerated well.

Seven key elements:

1. What is different causes curiosity.
2. Ambiguous situations and unfamiliar risks cause no discomfort.
3. Rules should be limited to those that are absolutely necessary.
4. Aggression and emotions should be hidden.
5. Being lazy feels good; working hard is valued only when needed.
6. Deviant and innovative ideas and behavior are tolerated.
7. Generalists are valued, as is common sense.

Words with a positive connotation: maybe, creative, conflict, tolerant, experiment, spontaneous, relativity, insight, unstructured, loose, flexible.

Words with a negative connotation: structure, duty, truth, law, order, certain, pure, clear, secure, safe, predictable, tight .

Unctols at a glance:

- Language: Unctols are not loud. They can be imprecise. They ask open-ended questions.
- Nonverbal: Unctols are unhurried, informal, and have no taboos.
- Stereotypes: Unctols have no principles and talk nonsense.
- Evaluation: Unctols judge in pragmatic, not moral, terms.
- Stress: Unctols are relaxed and take each day as it comes.

Gender roles: There may or may not be marked differences between men and women. People don't follow strict rules; exceptions are easily accepted. Personal relationships can take many forms. Homosexuality is not considered threatening.

Role of women: A wide range of roles is acceptable. A woman may easily adopt new roles if her situation in life changes.

Role of men: Men may or may not be expected to dominate over women. Deviant roles for men are acceptable.

Profiles: Virtue Dimension

Extreme Long-Term Orientation (Lotor)[†]

Lotor *Core value* long-term benefits

Core distinction does/does not serve a purpose

The Lotor culture is extremely long-term oriented.

Seven key elements:

1. Working very hard is good.
2. Thrift and saving are good.
3. Never give up, even if results are disappointing.
4. People may devote their lives to lofty, remote ideals.
5. Traditions can be adapted to a modern context.
6. Achieving one's purpose may be worth losing face.
7. Past and future generations are important.

Words with a positive connotation: work, save, moderation, endurance, duty, goal, permanent, future, economy, virtue, invest, afford, effort.

Words with a negative connotation: relation, gift, today, yesterday, truth, quick, spend, receive, grand, tradition, show, image, the bottom line.

Lotors at a glance:

- Language: Lotors are direct and focused, asking questions about implications of actions.
- Nonverbal: Lotors are restrained and unceremonious.
- Stereotypes: Lotors are dull and always working.
- Evaluation: Lotors tend to blame themselves. They are careful planners.
- Stress: Lotors can be uptight and worried. They can, however, cope with heavy work loads under difficult circumstances.

Gender roles: An elaborate system of social roles, ordered by status, exists in which men and women may have separate or overlapping spheres. If need be, they take on each other's role.

Role of women: Women work, whether or not they have Children.

Role of men: Men tend to be entrepreneurial. The extended family may participate in business, and prosperity is desirable.

[†] For Western readers, here is a word of caution about the virtue dimension. This dimension was discovered using questionnaires designed by Asians. Western minds typically find the virtue aspect harder to grasp than they do the other aspects.

Extreme Short-Term Orientation (Shotor)

Core value saving face

Core distinction proper/improper

The Shotor culture is the inverse of the Lotor culture.

It is very short-term oriented.

Seven key elements:

1. Never lose face.
2. There is a social pressure to “keep up with the Joneses,” even if it means overspending.
3. Quick results are expected.
4. Traditions should be respected.
5. Social demands (for example, reciprocating gifts) are met regardless of cost.
6. Personal stability is much valued.
7. Saving is not popular, so that there is little money for investment.

Words with a positive connotation: relation, gift, today, yesterday, truth, quick, spend, receive, grand, tradition, show, image, The bottom line.

Words with a negative connotation: work, save, moderation, endurance, duty, goal, permanent, future, economy, invest, afford, effort.

Shotors at a glance:

- Language: Shotors talk a lot. They enjoy talking about the past.
- Nonverbal: Shotors are ceremonious, attentive, and stylish and are warm and formal.
- Stereotype: Shotors are big spenders, irresponsible.
- Evaluation: Shotors are fatalistic and live from day to day.
- Stress: Shotors are desperate to save face and are distressed at loss of face.

Gender roles: An elaborate system of social roles, ordered by status, exists. Much time is spent maintaining this system through traditional rituals in which men and women have definite roles. Women may or may not be subservient to men.

Role of women: Women know how to behave and are good hosts. They tend to give much attention to their looks.

Role of men: Men like to socialize and to womanize. They might fight for ideals, however impractical. They will respond to appeals for help in times of crisis but are poor at keeping long-term commitments. They will not do anything that might endanger their dignity.