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THERE IS A SYSTEM IN THE MADNESS THE 7 MENTAL IMAGES OF NATIONAL CULTURE AND THE CORONA VIRUS

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Abstract:

It is a challenge to make a fact-based comparison between countries in how they are approaching the Corona virus.

The problem in comparing countries is that official policies are to a high degree identical. Politicians look at how international colleagues are approaching the crisis and have a tendency to copy what they call "best practices".

In finding these issues that are culture specific we have to look through rhetoric and official policies. And also look at the ways the population responds. In the book "**The 7 Mental Images of National Culture**" (Wursten, 2019), culture clusters are described with specific approaches to management, politics and society.

Analyzing how countries are reacting to the Corona crisis evidence so far, it seems that the acceptance of forceful intervention/coercion by Central Governments is central. Looking at the Mental Images a distinction can be made by the degree of this acceptance. The Hofstede scores on Power-Distance (PDI) and Individualism (IDV) are important here (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

For a short overview of the Hofstede dimensions and the 7 Mental Images see: Notes at the end of this article.

Keywords: Corona crisis, Culture, Mental Images, Government intervention, Coercion, Nudging

Identifying four types of cultures

1. *The countries with a high acceptance of hierarchy and a low score on individualism: Strong intervention of the Government is accepted:*

Family System

This system is also characterized by a *low need for uncertainty avoidance*. No big fear for unfamiliar risks

Example 1: China.

The large PDI/Authoritarian culture made it possible to stonewall. But when it was decided to act, the high PDI ensured compliance, and low UAI made fast action possible.

It was accepted by the population that huge areas were locked down. It is your obligation to the community to follow the lead from the authorities.

A weak point is and will be that the central authorities are not automatically fed with open information of what is really going on in practice. Locals are reluctant to give negative feedback upwards.

Example 2 India:

An Indian colleague reported: India with its score seem to be taking things relatively easily ... strange cures are suggested by self-fashioned healers ... featuring pods of garlic, hot water sips, salt gargles, turmeric, yoga, mantras, cow-dung, prayers and huge faith is being placed in the onslaught of summer heat . Perhaps for the first time in India's history, its citizens are praying for "bharpoor grami" ... brutal heat ... this summer :-) maybe I will melt off a few of the kilos I could not all these years

The colleague relates this rightly to weak UAI. I suggest that it might be also related with the polytheistic belief system: "truth is always dependent on place time and context" There is no absolute truth. If there is a wise older person in your environment claiming to have good experience with a special cure...well why not try it?

An interesting element might be a research finding of a cooperator of Geert Hofstede a long time ago. She was asked to look into collectivist cultures, especially in Africa. Later it was also applied to Asia. She found out that an important attribute of real collectivist countries is an issue she called *external attribution*. It is the phenomenon that people don't see themselves as actors in their own life. What is happening is caused by external forces like ancestors, destiny or Gods. Authorities that deny these beliefs are mistrusted and kept at a distance. Of course this makes it difficult to cope with a big crisis like Aids, Ebola or Corona.

Example 3: Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore

Hong Kong and Taiwan and Singapore were desperate to avoid the nightmare of the 2003 epidemic SARS. Globally, SARS or severe acute respiratory syndrome, infected over 8,000 and killed 774, including 299 in Hong Kong.

Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan have been using those hard-won lessons to combat the new coronavirus a relative of SARS. Against the odds, these countries have succeeded at keeping their virus numbers low, despite their links to China

This preparedness made that these countries could react quickly. As an example of preparedness: Taiwan established right after in 2004 a National Health Command Center. This command center was activated immediately after detection of the coronavirus.

The same day that China reported the WHO about an unknown virus passengers of airplanes coming from Wuhan were inspected in Taipei and were placed in self-isolation for 14 days.

By February 1, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore had all proactively implemented travel restrictions on passengers coming from the mainland

Additionally, Taiwan used new GPS technologies enabling authorities to check the travel taken by passengers plus their health situation and also making it possible to track the continuation of their trip and checking if visitors were sticking to the rules.

The digital communication was also used to inform people about locations with a real danger for infections.

Worries about privacy were very much limited. According to reports to be compared with how people after 9/11 accepted security checks on airports.

In Hongkong Singapore and Taiwan – an efficient approach followed with strong measures but without a complete lockdown. This approach included:

- Travel restrictions
- A quarantine duty for travelers from mainland China, quickly followed by South Korea, Iran , Italy, parts of Germany, France, Spain and Japan
- Social distancing: keeping a distance from each other
- In case of infection: immediate quarantine in an isolation room. Also quarantine for close contacts including cleaning personnel and testing, symptoms of not. On a website the data like domicile and travel history of all infected persons are made public including issues like flight number and number train wagon.

Social support: These measures are getting a lot of social support. Because of collectivism, there is a strong feeling of community and collective responsibility. People don't want to be infected *but above all not to infect others*

Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore formulated "Lessons learned" by the SARS virus:

Act quickly:

Key to their success so far has been the decision to respond aggressively from the outset. In Taiwan, arrivals from Wuhan were subject to health screenings *before* human-to-human transmission of the virus was even confirmed. By Feb. 1, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore had all proactively restricted travel from passengers coming from the mainland.

The Command Center quickly formulated a list of 124 "action items". These were items like border controls, school and work policies, public communication plans and capacity assessments of hospitals.

This rapid mobilization contrasts starkly with high UAI cultures like South Korea and Japan, which are also close to China and enjoy advanced healthcare systems. They have faced criticism for their initially sluggish responses and the ensuing explosion of cases.

Rigorous detection and strict quarantine

When the virus began crossing China's borders in January, Singapore appeared fated for a large-scale outbreak. Singapore was the third country to report cases of the Corona virus, and recorded over 80 infections by mid-February, the highest outside mainland China. Experts say that this was due to the thorough testing conducted in Singapore. Estimates are that Singapore detects almost three times more cases than the global average due to its strong disease surveillance and fast contact tracing. To be sure they were not missing infected people, Singapore decided early on to test all influenza- like and pneumonia cases. Additionally they tried to trace every possible contact of those infected. The process has also involved the police. Amazing result: mid of March, they had only 178 cases and zero deaths. Part of the reason that they could operate so fast and rigorously has to do with the political situation. Singapore is a small city -state, ruled by a single party that maintains tight control not very open to public criticism. Non- compliance is punished severely. The Singapore government itself asserts that their approach is successful due to quick quarantining, isolation of infected people and comprehensive testing.

Social distancing and banning mass gatherings

Hong Kong was quick in putting social distancing into practice. Schools remain closed. Residents voluntarily stay at home. Many businesses have either closed or were asking employees to work from home. Theaters, churches and sports fields are empty. Mass meetings are canceled.

Interesting is that this happened despite mistrust of the government, after nine months of demonstrations. Faith in the public health system apparently remained intact.

Effective communication

One of the reasons for the success in Singapore is transparency according to the government. To ensure people don't panic, communication with the public is vital. The example has been Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

To smoothen unrest after announcement of the outbreak, Lee addressed the Singaporeans saying: "I want to speak to you directly, to explain where we are, and what may lie ahead," he said. The speech appeared to have an immediate effect.

That addressing the nation is important is confirmed by a similar speech made on national television by Mark Rutte, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands.

Conclusion is that in order to create trust you need to be open, honest and transparent. Doing this demonstrates your competence!

In South Korea, and Japan the opposite happened. Korean President Moon Jae-in declared the worst to be over just before the amount of infections exploded, prompting political turmoil. In Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was in the beginning virtually absent.

Pyramid system

This system is also characterized by a *high need for uncertainty avoidance*. Fear for unfamiliar risks.

Example Korea:

Because of the large PDI and UAI people follow Authority and have respect for expertise. The UAI makes that the tendency is first to take time to gather enough information before actions are taken. People at the lower levels will usually not volunteer in giving negative feedback upwards. We concluded already before that it is a necessity to demonstrate your competence! This went wrong in South Korea, President Moon Jae-in declared the worst to be over just before the amount of infections exploded, prompting political turmoil. In Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was in the beginning virtually absent.

A strong condition is to understand that *people respect what you inspect*.

Example Russia:

A Bulgarian/American colleague of ours quotes a Russian friend writing: "Very few Corona cases in Russia. Following our ancient Russian tradition: *until thunder strikes, no need to call to Lord!* - nobody is doing anything on the matter. We will see what happens next!"

The colleague writes: "So typical Russian and for the whole associated cultural group: "best strategy is to duck and wait it out". "No action until the government sanctions it". "Don't panic, you are not in control anyway", "Why should I be the first one and get all the blame?"

The colleague explains these attitudes by the 5th and 6th dimension added to the system by Minkov. Compared to the 4 first Hofstede dimensions they are however rather new and not substantiated by repeated research. A decision was made not to include these dimensions and wait till more evidence is gathered.

My take on what is going on is based on my experience in Russia.

I see a huge country with an authoritarian regime (accepted because of high PDI). People are defined by the feeling that they don't have control over their own life. They developed a refined feeling for the absurdity of life as a result. Right now you are miserable, but if you turn the corner of the street something wonderful might happen (A leading politician in Russia recommended me reading *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov to understand what he called the Russian "soul").

Attributes of this attitude:

- A *fatalistic* outlook at life. "You cannot control what is happening anyhow".
- Drinking habits. Trying to forget how miserable life is.

- Looking into the culture of the former communist countries I add to this that **mistrust** toward what authorities are saying is widely developed. An official publication about the findings is expected end of March 2020.

2. *The countries with a high acceptance of hierarchy and a high score on Individualism. Strong intervention of a central Government is accepted.*

Solar System

This system is also characterized by a *high need for uncertainty avoidance* (Fear for unfamiliar risks) and a high score for Individualism.

Immediate centralized action from the top in the Solar System is seen as strong leadership.

Locking down a complete area is accepted by the population.

President Macron said that the Corona crisis will be managed by decree. “We are at war”, he said. Followed by: “Nobody is to leave home except to shop for essentials.....etc.”

Deductive thinking is the norm in high UAI cultures.

These cultures try first to get an understanding of what is known about a subject. The first step is always to look into what others, especially experts from the past and the present, have already said on a subject. Then a philosophy or “the principles of...” (management, leadership, marketing, education) can be formulated. The last step is application. In this approach philosophy and thinking is more highly regarded than the actions of practitioners that follow. As a result, people of these cultures experience “best practices” as “superficial.” They are more interested in the thinking that led to successful approaches.

What is making this Mental Image different compared to the Pyramid is the high score on Individualism. People combine the acceptance of top down decision making with a keen awareness of their individual interests and rights.

It is interesting to see in the Northern Italy (Solar System is high IDV) that individual citizens made an effort to escape just before a lockdown was ordered as a result of a leaked document.

The same happened in Paris.

“Drawing your own plan” is an attribute of this Mental Image.

(I cannot wait for a stylish Italian movie after the crisis: “Escape from Milano”).

Japan

This system stands alone because of the combination of a middle score on Power distance and Individualism but it is also characterized by a *high need for uncertainty avoidance*. (Fear for unfamiliar risks) and a high score for “Masculinity” (MAS).

Japan is very good in “familiar” crisis situations. They are very well prepared to cope with earthquakes as an example. In Tokyo where it is known that earthquakes take place regularly they build earthquake resistant buildings, even tall ones. For everything that can be foreseen the Japanese have emergency plans.

The weak point in the handling of crisis is when something unforeseen happens.

Improvising is hard in this culture of very high UAI. In 1995 an earthquake happened in Kobe. It was an unusual kind of earthquake for a Japanese city. Most earthquakes occur when two tectonic plates slide past each other; effectively, a *horizontal* earthquake. In the Kobe quake, one plate passed under another; it was a *vertical* earthquake. Building codes hadn’t anticipated this—it’s easy to design buildings to *sway*, not so easy to design them to *bounce*. It was not expected and it took the Government weeks to react effectively.

During the start of the Corona virus the Japanese were exactly for this reason criticized for the way they handled the cruise ship.

A Japanese colleague writes that the specific value combination of Japan really affects the decisions of the government. “We do not have an authority for a speed implementation”. As we have high UAI, many people do not want to consider/think what real risks are and they stop contemplating what it means to self and to society. As with high MAS, the people in front (Gemba) work very hard until they get exhausted and sick.

I do not think we are good at a systemic approach.

A very good Japanese book called "The essence of failure" by prof Nonaka et. al., laid out the rationale of Japan *vis a vis* WWII. The publication is only in Japanese, but similarities can be found of the country's weakness, facing unknown uncertainties like war, 3/11 nuclear plant in Fukushima and this time.

3. *The countries with low acceptance of hierarchy, high Individualism. There is an acceptance of Government as an important factor in regulating society, combined with a feeling that other societal stakeholders like scientific institutions, local authorities and professional groups should play an important role in decision making. Authority is distributed. Incremental policy making and “Nudging” “Nudging” is mainly concerned with the **design of choices**, which influences the decisions we make. The use of Nudge theory is based on indirect encouragement and enablement. It avoids direct instruction or enforcement .For a full explanation see under Contest.*

Network

Example: the Netherlands:

Coordination on horizontal level between central and local institutions, experts systems, hospitals, local test systems plus call for responsible behavior of citizens. Initially much emphasize on “Nudging” and *let's not overdo things*.

The Corona approach is characterized by a coordinated approach across all levels. Between Central Government, local authorities, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), hospitals and local medical Institutions: GGD (Public Health Service) with an appeal to the general public to behave responsibly.

Crisis management was shaped by ideas about complex decision making based on empirical research into “what works” and the societal/ political discussion after the crash of an Israeli plane above Amsterdam.

Empirical research: Teisman (in 1992) did research into complex decision making in the Netherlands. He analyzed the reality of decision making in the projects he reviewed. He found that, progress was clearly difficult if it was assumed that *formal hierarchical power* could be used to make decisions. What works in reality is to accept following principles :

1. All policy systems consist of a combination of central and decentralized units;
2. They are not in a hierarchical, nor in an autonomous, but in a mutual equal relationship with each other;
3. Neither a central nor a local decision-making right alone leads to a satisfactory policy;
4. Not the public interest or self-interest, but the shared interest is the benchmark for policy.

Conclusion: Dislike of enforcement

Crisis control: About the specific issue of crisis control, conclusions were drawn by 3 experts about the lessons learned from the *Bijlmerramp* (1992, Israeli plane crashing in Amsterdam. 43 people died of which 39 were people living in the quarter where the plane crashed). The first reaction was, what is known as the “centralization reflex”. If the crisis would be approached from a central point then slowness, bureaucracy and information flaws are issues of the past.

This is however according to the specialists opposite to the basic attributes of the Dutch societal political reality: consensus, coalition politics, collegial administration and co-optation (adopting some core issues of the opposition).

“These 4 C’s brought prosperity and well-being through the centuries”, they said. They are rooted in a deeply felt resistance against power exertion and majority tyranny. *The ones who claim the clarity of an absolute majority are punished mercilessly in this culture of consensus and coalitions. Those who want to command the lower authorities from a central point are utterly ineffective in our administration.*

About the corona crisis an interesting issue was reported by an Indian colleague living with her family in The Hague. She wrote: *A personal anecdote: my daughter and I noticed flu like symptoms for the last two days and we decided to self-quarantine as a family the rest of this week. This morning, I called up the doctor's office to check if there is any early measure or test we can do so that we can warn people we have been in contact with over the last weeks. The doctor's office suggested we call the coronavirus helpline. The helpline is "heel druk" (very busy) and redirects us to the website. The website says that if we have a fever of more than 38 degrees and respiratory issues, we call the doctor, and so on....So basically what I find is that there is no way, at least in the Netherlands, to detect this early enough and by then, we may have infected a lot of people!*

Analyzing the problem it is clear that the system is afraid for an overload of worried people without systems and tries to do that by describing the symptoms. Most important is having fever. This might help to protect the medical institutions against overload. It is a system called *triage*. The assignment of degrees of urgency to wounds or illnesses to decide the order of treatment of a large number of patients or casualties. What is underestimated is the feeling of being neglected emotionally by concerned parents and their need for reassurance! The urgency of personal emotions must be taken into account. It is interesting to see that this is not only happening in the Network cultures. A colleague reported that this was happening also in Switzerland.

The Well Oiled Machine

Example Germany:

It is more or less the exact opposite approach compared to the Contest cultures. Before taking action there is a need for a meticulous assessment of what exactly is going on and weighing what effective measures are. This is done by people who are trusted to know what they are talking about (experts). Only after understanding *die Prinzipien* (The principles) effective and structural action is taken.

An example from the recent past. When the financial crisis started, France and the UK took immediate measures to cope with the crisis. At that time the Germans were more or less invisible. In the famous weekly *The Economist* an article was published with this observation. The heading was: *Where is Angela?* Only after feeling they understood the reasons for the crisis the German Government intervened in a very consistent way.

When Merkel spoke on the coronavirus crisis, it followed the same pattern. As predicted, it took some time to analyze the situation. She said, “Our approach is determined by the intention not to overload our health system; it aims at gaining time. We don't have sufficient knowledge about this virus and there is no therapy and no antidote. That's why align our approach to what experts tell us.”

These experts tell us, according to Merkel, that as long we don't have an immune population the virus will infect 60 to 70 percent of the people

She defends in this way the canceling of big events and putting some communities in quarantine.

A German colleague added: “We have seen much of this: reactions to crisis, as you say, but also slow marketing of newly invented products, slow but then effective adoption of the internet etc.”

Another colleague wrote: “In Germany, there is a lot of expert discussions and protective and preventive information is being shared. Hand gel and face masks are sold out locally but otherwise, it’s pretty normal. Here people are NOT wearing face masks but in nearby Luxembourg, I’ve seen this already.”

In Switzerland, there’s a central number you call before you go anywhere. It’s triage, a systematic way of deciding in terms of priorities.

For “nudging see next chapter.

4. *The countries with a conviction that the invisible hand of the “market” should do its work. Government interference is in principle disturbing the natural order. Governments should be small and is only important to create a level playing field Checks and Balances that no one is winning permanently. This cluster is characterized by low PDI, high IDV, Masculinity and low Uncertainty Avoidance. “Nudging” is seen an important policy instrument.*

Contest

In the Contest it is very important for a **leader to be seen as decisive**. A bad action is even better than no action. But...

People are **reluctant about interventions of Central Government**. Government should be small and let the market do the work.

It is interesting to see that in countries like Australia, the USA, the UK the criticism after the crisis was spreading was that the central Government was not visible and active enough!

Well, it is predictable looking at movies on Netflix. In most movies the plot has to do with the feeling that local people, including law enforcement hate the “Feds” even worse the “Suits”. This is a direct product of low PDI, high IDV and high Masculinity and weak UAI.

A second big role is played by the **dominant thinking system** of the Contest: **Pragmatism**. I use the quote of William James (called the father of pragmatism) as a reference: *truth is when it works*. And how can you see it works? By the visible end result: behavior.

As the saying goes: *the proof of the pudding is in the eating*. Theories don’t count. Looking at practices is the norm. Pragmatists are unwilling to be involved in too much speculation on what is going on in the minds of people. Abstract argumentation is something for “academics.” What counts is whether specific actions lead to desired observable behavior. *If we can work out what’s in the box – fine. It may help. If not – we’ll just do what seems to work. Even if we do work out what’s in the box and it doesn’t work, we’ll do something else.*

As a recent example involving one of the most important paladins of Boris Johnson, Mr. Gove: In Finland a critical moment in education policy occurred when the Government decided that teachers should only be recruited from Universities to give the profession "high status." In a May 2013 speech by the then education secretary in the UK, Mr. Gove told his audience that he wants “to sweep away the whole structure that has underpinned schools since the war. Schools themselves should conduct research into what produces great teaching and learning, rather than leaving such studies to universities, which he believes have offered little of practical value in terms of improving schools. Leaders should be trained within schools rather than being sent away to acquire abstract diplomas. Teachers should equally be trained within the schools themselves, rather than learning how to teach in university education departments”.

The tendency to put the focus on behavior is in psychology leading to behaviorism.

One of the outcomes of this focus on behavior is Nudging, the approach that characterized the initial reaction of the Johnson administration,

“Nudging” is mainly concerned with the **design of choices**, which influences the decisions we make. Nudge theory proposes that the designing of choices should be based on how people actually think and decide (instinctively and rather irrationally), rather than how leaders and authorities traditionally (and typically incorrectly) believe people think and decide (logically and rationally). Nudging tries to achieve change in a different way than traditional methods of direct instruction, enforcement, punishment, etc.

The use of Nudge theory is based on indirect encouragement and enablement. It avoids direct instruction or enforcement.

Nudge theory accepts that people have certain attitudes, knowledge, capabilities, etc., and allows for these factors (whereas autocratic methods ignore them). Nudge theory is based on understanding and allowing for the **reality** of situations and human tendencies (unlike traditional forcible instruction, which often ignores or discounts the reality of situations and people).

Fundamentally (and properly, according to its origins) Nudge theory operates by **designing choices** for people which encourage **positive helpful decisions**; for the people choosing, and ideally for the wider interests of society and environment, etc.

Applying this to the Corona virus: The Johnson Government did not opt to close schools, or forbid gatherings of people, or locking down areas, but instead opted for behavioral “nudges”: wash your hands, don’t touch your face, don’t shake hands with others, stay at home if you feel ill, and self-isolate if you have a continuous cough. (This is also been encouraged by other countries of course, but then mostly as part of the package of policy measures).

It is no accident that Nudge theory came from a Contest culture at the same time as the financial crisis of 2008. Rather than punishments for financial wrongdoers in the crisis, the Obama and Cameron governments focused on positive incentives. The market recovery allowed proponents of Nudge to claim success.

Nudge success stories in Contest cultures abound. Healthy eating choices, pension savings, and even leaving your towels on the rack in a hotel for the sake of the environment. Such interventions can change behavior on average 15%. But will it work with the corona virus? Unfortunately, cutting restaurant visits by 15%, or washing your hands 15% more, or visiting 15% fewer elderly relatives won’t stop the disease. As Andrew Rawnsley wrote in the Guardian back in 2017, “Nudge theory works until you need a kick in the backside.”

On April 17 Boris Johnson, the UK prime minister, urged everyone to work from home and avoid theatres and pubs. Note that he did close the pubs and theatres. He urged everyone to avoid them.....

Compare this with the French President who by decree announced a strict lock down!

The behavioral approach led as a consequence also to the idea that it is better to build mass immunity by letting the virus do its work. At the end the “herd immunity” is much more effective. This echoes a belief in market forces.

A third important element is the focus on action, also with limited information.

Two quotes as illustration:

Roosevelt: “The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation”, “It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something”.

Michael Ignatieff (Canadian politician): “What is right does not always work; What works is not always right”.

All this came together by the intervention of Donald Trump. Action orientation: forbidding all travel from Europe to the US because he blamed Europeans of being lax. Does it work? Well he is criticized by his own specialists. Is it right? Trump blamed others calling the Coronavirus “Wuhan” virus. Right or wrong, he certainly got the headlines!

Conclusion

In reaction to the Corona crisis politicians look at what other countries are doing and try to learn from best practices.

Analyzing what “works”, it is clear that the acceptability of government coercion is vastly different. Of the 7 different policy approaches that can be distinguished worldwide three can be seen in using top down strong coercion combined with group loyalty. One is Top Down but has to take individual rights into account, one is accepting government interference in consultation with other autonomous societal stakeholders and one culture cluster is very reluctant to use government coercion. “Nudging” is the preferred method in this cluster.

What can we learn from the way the Corona virus was approached by the different value systems? One thing is certain: nudging is probably not always sufficient. The challenge for the future will be how to combine democratic freedoms, human rights and resistance against coercion with the need to have strong measures from governments to contain viruses.

What is becoming clear is that there is one condition to make it work everywhere: the leaders must be very transparent and clear in explaining the reasons why sometimes coercion cannot be avoided.

Notes

1. The confirmed value preferences Hofstede found empirically are in shorthand:

PDI. Power distance Index: the way hierarchy is accepted as something existential or as something created for convenience.

IDV. Individualism versus collectivism: describing the emphasis of loyalty. To the Individual or to the In-group.

MAS. Masculinity versus Femininity: motivation by competition and challenges or by cooperation and consensus seeking.

UAI. Uncertainty Avoidance Index: the extent of the need for predictability. Is dealing with unknown risks uncertainty experienced as positive drive or a negative one.

In terms of research methodology it is important to emphasize that the 4 value dimensions are independent.

However: In applying the value dimensions for analysis in real life it is rare that explanations can be given by one single dimension. In most cases it is the combination that gives the full picture.

2. The Mental Images

The key issue is that the combination of the fundamental value dimensions is leading to a “Gestalt”, something new. An important consequence is that the different combinations lead to 6 different “pictures” in the mind of people of what society and organizations look like. Hence the name: “mental images”.

Each mental image represents a cluster of countries which have certain characteristics (scores) in common.

1. **The contest model** (^winner takes all^)

Competitive Anglo-Saxon cultures with low power distance, high individualism and masculinity, and fairly low scores on uncertainty avoidance. Examples: Australia, New Zealand, UK and USA.

2. **The network model** (consensus)

Highly individualistic, 'feminine' societies with low power distance like Scandinavia and the Netherlands. Everyone is involved in decision-making.

3. **The organization as a family** (loyalty and hierarchy)
Found in societies that score high on power distance and collectivism and have powerful in-groups and paternalistic leaders. Examples: China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore.
4. **The pyramidal organization** (loyalty, hierarchy and implicit order)
Found in collective societies with large power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Examples: much of Latin America, Greece, Portugal, Russia and South Korea.
5. **The solar system** (hierarchy and an impersonal bureaucracy)
Similar to the pyramid structure, but with greater individualism. Examples: Belgium, France, Northern Italy, Spain and French speaking Switzerland.
6. **The well-oiled machine** (order)
Found in societies with low power distance and high uncertainty avoidance, carefully balanced procedures and rules, not much hierarchy. Examples: Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, German speaking Switzerland.
7. **Japan.**
This country is standing alone

References

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