

**Cultural Dimensions of Values:  
What They Are  
and  
Why They Are Important**

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# What Cultural Values Are

- Cultural values are shared, abstract ideas about what is **good, right, and desirable** in a society
- They represent the **goals that members of the society are encouraged to have** and they serve to justify actions taken in the pursuit of these goals.

➡ As a result, cultural values are represented in widely shared norms, symbols, rituals, practices, and ways of thinking.

➡ **Values are often seen as the heart of culture**

(Bardi & Sagiv, 2003; Hofstede, 1980; Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000; Schwartz, 1994; 1999; Smith & Schwartz, 1997; Williams, 1970).

# What Cultural Values Are

**Cultural values are expressed in the personal values and goals that members of the culture emphasize.**

 Cultural values influence and direct preferences, choices and behaviors of individuals in the society.

# What Cultural Values Are

**Cultural values are also expressed in the way social institutions operate and function**

➔ They are used by institutional leaders to set goals and agendas, and to justify and explain them to members of the culture.

For example:

- Welfare laws prevail in countries where values of justice and equality are emphasized.
- Political leaders in such countries are likely to promote these laws, explaining how they would help reduce social gaps and create equal opportunities for all.

# **Schwartz Theory: Cultural Dimensions of Values**

# I. To what extent are people autonomous vs. embedded in their groups?

**Embeddedness**: People are viewed as entities embedded in the collectivity, who find meaning in life largely through identifying with the group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving toward its shared goals.

**Values**: social order, family security, respect tradition, obedient, politeness.

**Autonomy**: People are viewed as autonomous, bounded entities who find meaning in their own uniqueness and who are encouraged to express their internal attributes.

**Values**: creativity, curiosity, broadminded, varied life, exciting life, pleasure.

## II. How to guarantee responsible behavior to preserve the social fabric

**Hierarchy**: The Culture relies on hierarchical systems of ascribed roles to insure responsible behavior. It defines the unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources as legitimate.

**Values**: authority, social power, humble.

**Egalitarianism**: People are induced to recognize one another as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. People are socialized to internalize a commitment to voluntary cooperation with others and to feel concern for everyone's welfare.

**Values**: social justice, equality, help, honesty.

### **III. How to regulate the relation of humankind to the natural world?**

**Mastery**: The culture encourages active self-assertion in order to master, change and exploit the natural and social environment to attain personal or group goals.

**Values**: ambitious, success, daring.

**Harmony**: An emphasis on fitting harmoniously into the environment. Accept the world as it is, trying to comprehend and fit in rather than to change or exploit. Questioning the legitimacy of applying technology to manipulate the environment.

**Values**: world of beauty, environment, world of peace.



# West-Europe

ITAL\*  
 NORWY\*  
 FINL(2(\*  
 SPAIN(2)\*  
 \*FRANCE \*SWEDEN  
 DENMK(2)\*\*WGER(2)  
 \*AUSTR PORTG\*  
 NETHL(2(\*  
 \*SWITZFr \*EGER  
 GREECE\*

# East-Europe

\*SLOVNI \*CHILE \*CYPRUS  
 ESTON\*  
 CZECH\* SLOVK(2)\* BOLIV\*  
 BULGTK\*  
 ETHOP\* \*TURK \*GEORG \*SINGP  
 POLAN\* \*PHILP \*INDON(2(  
 RUS2\*  
 VENZ\* MACED\*  
 HUNG(2)\* \*BRAZ(2) BULG\* \*TAIWN \*NEPAL  
 AUSTL\* (2) (2(  
 \*ARGN MEXI\* X  
 )2(  
 \*CANAD \*IRELND  
 \*NWZEAL  
 USA(3)\*  
 \*JAPAN(2(  
 ENGL\* ISRLJEW\*  
 (2)

# Anglo-Countries

USA(3)\*  
 \*JAPAN(2(  
 ISRLJEW\*  
 (2)

# East-Asia

\*SINGP  
 \*INDON(2(  
 \*MALAY \*THAIL  
 \*TAIWN (2)  
 HNGKNG\* (2)  
 \*ISRLARAB(3(  
 \*NAMIB  
 \*INDIA  
 \*CHINA(3)

# Africa

\*GHANA\*  
 \*UGANDA  
 \*NIGERIA  
 \*ZIMBABWE (2)

# **Why Should We Care?**

**Cultural values impact  
what happens to individuals  
and to societal institutions**

(e.g., families, business organizations,  
law systems, corporate governance)

# **The Case of Business Organizations**

- To exemplify some of the implications of cultural values for organizations, we re-analyzed data published by **Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998)**.
- These researchers presented middle managers from about 40 countries with various **organizational scenarios** and asked them to report their attitudes and choices.
- From their pool of scenarios, **we sampled two examples that we judged relevant for each bi-polar value dimension.**
- We re-analyzed *Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's* findings, to examine how cultural values impact managers' choices in those scenarios.

# Embeddedness versus Autonomy

**Organizations in embedded cultures:** Function as extended families. They are likely to take responsibility for their members in all domains of life and, in return, expect members to identify with and work dutifully toward shared goals.

**Organizations in autonomous cultures:** Are likely to treat their members as independent actors with their own interests, preferences, abilities, and allegiances. Organizational members are likely to be granted some autonomy and may be encouraged to generate their own ideas and act upon them.

# How Do You Perceive your Manager?

- Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner asked managers whether they perceive their manager as “**sort of a father**”, or as someone who is “**only doing his job**”.
- **We hypothesized that managers will perceive their own manager as a father figure, the more embedded their culture.**
- Because organizations in embedded cultures tend to function as extended families that take responsibility for their members at work as well as in other settings, members of organizations in such cultures may perceive their leaders as paternal figures.
- In contrast, in autonomy cultures, organizational members are perceived as independent actors, who follow their own personal attributes. The nature of their relations with their boss are more “contractual”, and they are less likely to view their managers as paternal figures.

# Who Controls your Life?

- Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner asked managers whether they felt they had **control over their lives**.
- **We hypothesize that managers perceive themselves as controlling their fate, the more autonomous their culture.**
- In organizations from autonomous cultures individuals are viewed as independent actors and are encouraged to shape their tasks and implement original ideas.
- Granted, they will not always feel “in control” on their lives, but they are likely to feel so more than managers in organizations from embeddedness cultures – where individuals are expected to follow fatefully organizational goals set by others.

# Correlations of Three Bi-Polar Dimensions of Cultural Values with Managers' Choices in Organizational Scenarios

	Embeddedness versus Autonomy	Hierarchy versus Egalitarianism	Mastery versus Harmony
<b>Percent of managers who view their own manager as a Paternal Figure (N=37)</b>	<b>.58**</b>	<b>.33*</b>	<b>.46**</b>
<b>Percent of managers who view themselves as controlling their fate (N=35)</b>	<b>-.42*</b>	<b>-.35*</b>	<b>-.01</b>



# Hierarchy versus Egalitarianism

**Organizations in hierarchical cultures:** Are likely to emphasize the chain of authority, to assign well-defined roles in a hierarchical structure, and to demand compliance in the service of goals set from the top. Organizational members are expected to put the interests of the organization before their own interests.

**Organizations in egalitarian cultures:** Are more likely to be built upon cooperative negotiation among members who flexibly enact their roles as they try to affect organizational goals. Leaders are likely to motivate others by enabling them to share in goal-setting and by appealing to the joint welfare of all.

# Sources of Social Status

- Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner asked managers **whether family background influenced personal status in their societies.**
- **We hypothesized that the more hierarchical the culture, the more it relies on family background in ascribing status.**
- Hierarchical cultures are based on hierarchal systems of ascribed roles. Family background is likely to be among such ascribed sources of status. In contrast, in egalitarian cultures people are encouraged to perceive each other as moral equals. Relying on family background – a source not controlled by the individual is likely to be see as undesirable or even immoral.

# Expressing Negative Emotions at Work

- Managers were presented with the following scenario: **Suppose you feel upset at work. How likely are you to express these negative feelings?**
- **We hypothesize people will express negative feelings the more egalitarian their culture**
- In organizations in hierarchical cultures individuals are expected to put the interests of the organization before their own. Expressing negative feelings is destructive, and unlikely in such organizations.
- In contrast, egalitarian organizations care about the welfare of their members. Members are encourage to negotiate their interdependencies in the organization and express themselves freely, even when expressing unconventional ideas or negative emotions.

# Correlations of Three Bi-Polar Dimensions of Cultural Values with Managers' Choices in Organizational Scenarios

	Embeddedness versus Autonomy	Hierarchy versus Egalitarianism	Mastery versus Harmony
<b>Percent of managers who agree that status in life highly depends on family background (N=32)</b>	.18	<b>.42*</b>	.07
<b>Percent of managers who state they would express their upset feelings (N=38)</b>	-.18	<b>-.42*</b>	-.28

# Mastery versus Harmony

**Organizations in mastery cultures:** Master, change, and manipulate the environment to attain organizational goals. Are likely to be dynamic, competitive, and strongly oriented toward achievement and success. Develop and use advanced technology to manipulate the environment and promote goal attainment.

**Organizations in harmony cultures:** Are likely to be viewed holistically as systems to be integrated with the surrounding social and natural world. Leaders are likely to consider social and environmental implications of organizational actions and to seek non-exploitative ways to work toward organizational goals.

## **Correlations of Three Bi-Polar Dimensions of Cultural Values with Managers' Choices in Organizational Dilemmas**

	<b>Embeddedness versus Autonomy</b>	<b>Hierarchy versus Egalitarianism</b>	<b>Mastery versus Harmony</b>
<b>The past has ended a long time ago (21)</b>	-.26	-.07	<b>.42(*)</b>
<b>The Future is far away (17)</b>	-.09	.26	<b>.66**</b>

# **What about Corporate Governance?**

**Cultural values impact societal institutions.**

**Like business organizations, economic and legal systems are nested in the societies in which they develop and operate.**

**The values emphasized in the societal structure, form and shape the formal rules and regulations, as well as the prevailing norms and standards of conduct.**

 **Understanding cultural values is a key to understanding corporate governance across cultures.**

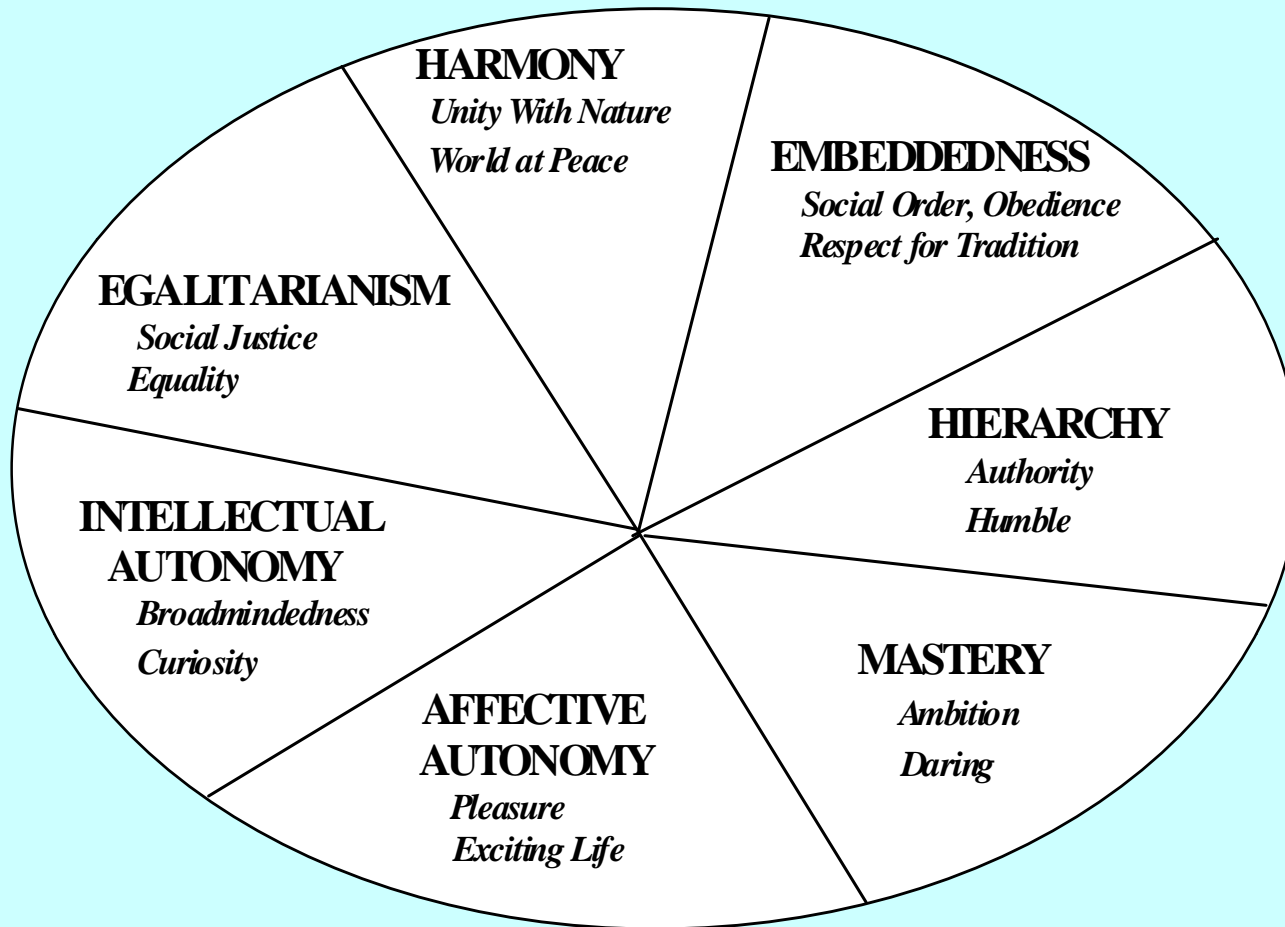
# Additional Information



# Schwartz Theory: Cultural Dimensions of Values

- Relies on instruments validated for cross-cultural equivalence of meaning
- Consider the dynamic relations among cultural dimensions
- World-wide sample
- Replicated among teachers and students

## CULTURAL DIMENSIONS: PROTOTYPICAL STRUCTURE



# What Cultural Values Are NOT

Structure wise:

Cultural values **differ from Norms and Practices**

Content wise:

Cultural values **differ from cognitive styles and emotions**