



# Cultural Dimensions Part 2: Application to National Descriptions

NSD IDEA Council - August 10, 2021

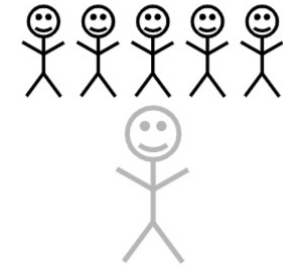
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# Reminder - 3 Cultural Dimensions

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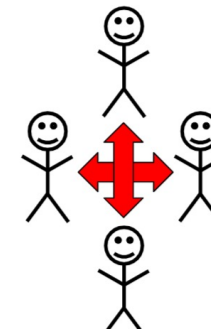
- Individualism vs. Collectivism

- The extent to which people feel independent as opposed to interdependent



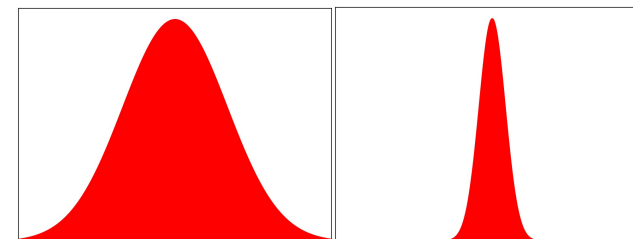
- Power Distance

- The extent to which less powerful members of organizations/society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally



- Uncertainty Avoidance

- A society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity



# Application of Cultural Dimension Theory

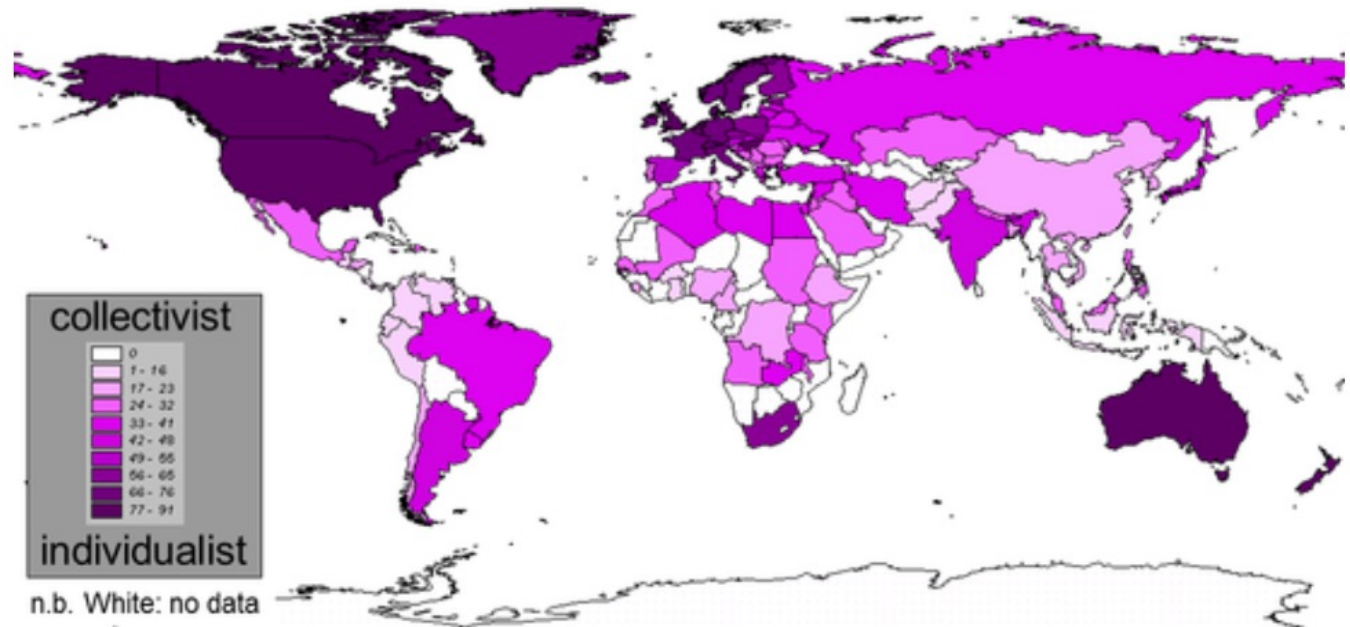
- One obvious way to ‘slice’ society and consider cultural dimension theory is along national boundaries
- Extensive studies have done exactly this and can give an interesting overview of the world community ‘at a glance’

# Individualism vs. Collective

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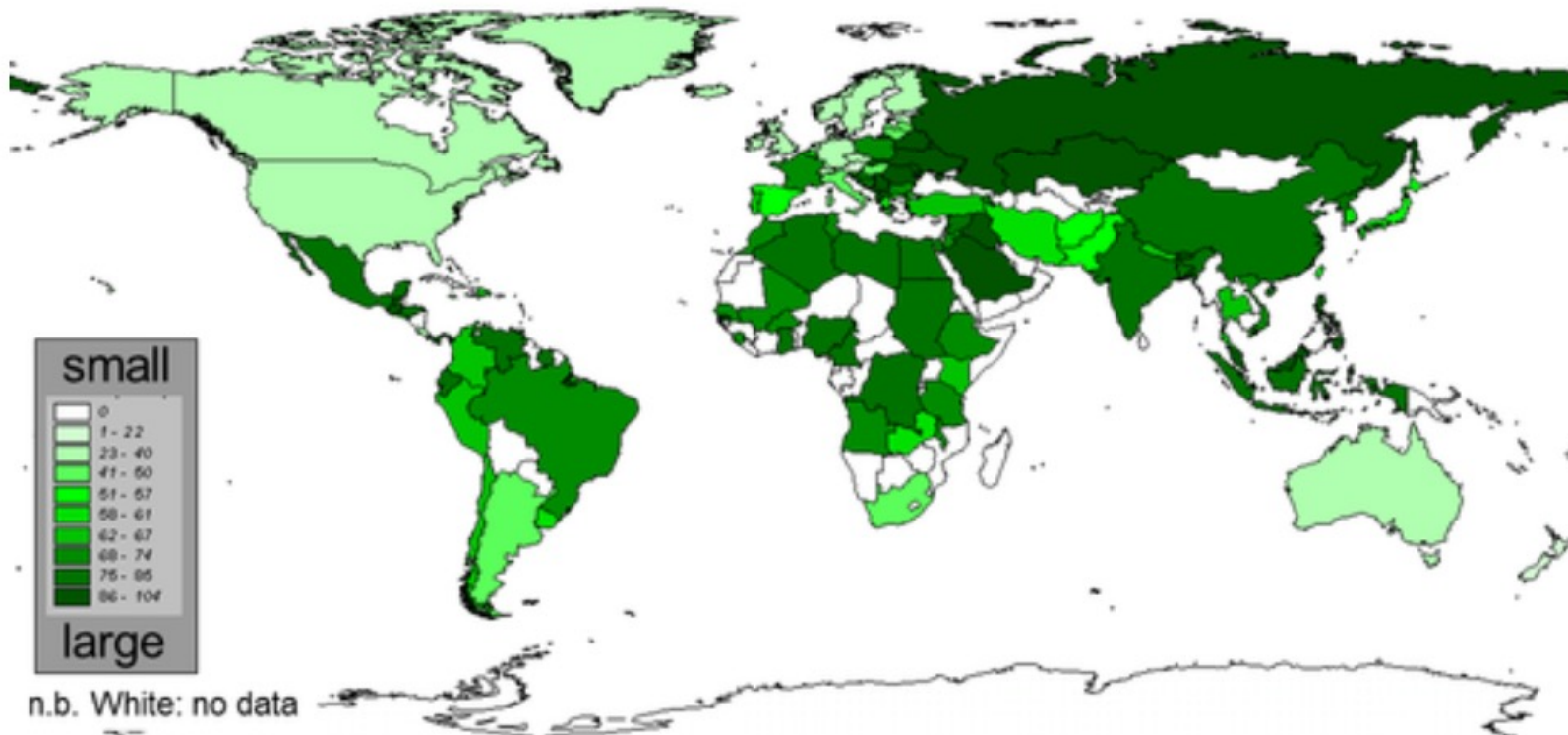
- There is a clear tendency for first world 'western' countries to be much more individualistic in nature

Collectivism – Individualism World map



# Power Distance

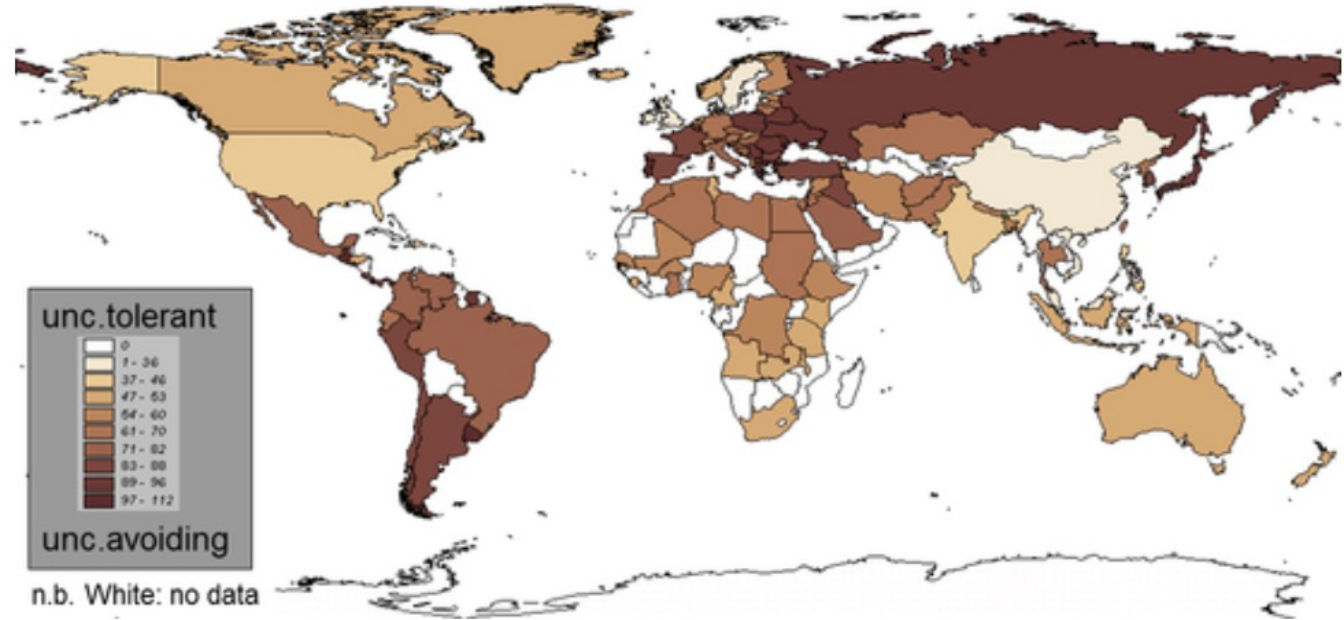
Power Distance World map



- Groupings again roughly correspond to first world western countries with low power distance
- In this case though, it's not as clear - there is substantial variation in this dimension across Europe

# Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty Avoidance World map



- Uncertainty avoidance has very different distribution globally - the USA stands out as one of the most uncertainty tolerant nations

# What does this NOT tell us?

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- The absolute numbers tell us very little - what are useful are the world-wide patterns, and relative values
- All of these dimensions over-simplify
  - What can be substantial in-country variations are lost
  - These are essentially somewhat insightful stereotypes - in no way can this type of analysis replace one-on-one interaction and getting to know people

# What can we learn then?

- This type of cultural dimension analysis can be a tool for us
- Consider letters of reference
  - You know the letter writer - great, you can effectively “read between the lines”
  - You don’t know the letter writer...
    - Their country of origin, and the analysis shown might help you to interpret the subtleties within a letter more effectively



# A few examples

- A letter has a ‘cold’, or ‘distant’ tone
- The letter is brutally honest and hyper-direct
- A letter seems to promote the team, and doesn’t hype the candidate directly

# A few examples

- A letter has a ‘cold’, or ‘distant’ tone
  - ⇒ Look at the power-distance metric
- The letter is brutally honest and hyper-direct
  - ⇒ Consider uncertainty avoidance
- A letter seems to promote the team, and doesn’t hype the candidate directly
  - ⇒ The individualistic vs. collectivist metric is relevant here

# Thank you

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- If you have any comments/questions/feedback, please contact us:

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