

Cross Cultural Leadership – 15.996

Lecture Notes

Class Three – Social Dimensions

- *Assertiveness*
- *Gender Differentiation*
- *Uncertainty Avoidance*
- *Power Distance*
- *Cross-cultural dialogue*

Read:

- *Javidan, Mansour and House, Robert J. “Cultural Acumen for the Global Manager: Lessons from Project GLOBE.” Organizational Dynamics, Vol. 29, No. 4, pages 289-304, Spring 2001.*
- *House, Robert J.; Hanges, Paul J.; Javidan, Mansour; Dorfman, Peter W. and Gupta, Vipin. Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies. Thousand Oaks, California, 2004, pages: 410, 411; 365, 366; 622, 623; 539, 540; 250, 251; 573, 574.*
- *Schneider, Susan and Barsoux, Jean-Louis. Managing Across Cultures (2nd edition). Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2003, pages 87-95.*

Agenda

- Welcome.
- Context for this week’s theory
- Assertiveness
- Gender Differentiation
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Power Distance
- Cross-Cultural Dialogue
- Next Week’s Assignment

Context for this week's theory

Reminder -- Late 1960s – Geert Hofstede

Founded and managed personnel research dept of IBM Europe.

Surveyed 116,000 IBM employees in 40 countries on preferences around management style and work environment

- 4 dimensions where differences by country were significant
 - power distance
 - uncertainty avoidance
 - individualism/collectivism
 - masculinity/femininity
 - 5th = long term view (Asia)

GLOBE takes “masculine/feminine” and creates 2 categories

- assertiveness
- gender differentiation

Additional studies did not always get the same results. Dimensions still useful – even though results variable. (World is different – not just IBM being studied)

Process:

Same as last week. Dimensions posted on board. Teams explain where their regions fit along the dimension and tell stories.

Content:

Assertiveness and Gender Differentiation

(Schneider & Barsoux) High masculine

1. Task not relationships
2. Motivation by money and things, not quality of life
3. Leadership – ensure bottom line profits and set targets
4. “Feminine” leader would safe-guard employee well-being and demonstrate concern for social responsibility

(GLOBE) – Gender Differentiation = society maximizes gender role differentiation. Who gets status and decision-making power

(GLOBE) Assertive = society encourages people to be tough, confrontational, assertive and competitive (not modest and tender). Can-do vs. cooperation and harmony.

Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity.

(Schneider & Barsoux) High uncertainty avoidance

1. More formalization, more written rules and regs
2. Risk avoidance

3. Motivated by stability and security
4. Leaders – plan, organize, coordinate, control

(GLOBE) society seeks orderliness, consistency, structure

NOTE – Be explicit about difference between discomfort in unstructured situations (are there traffic rules for crossing the street) and “risk avoidance”

Power distance, the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.

(Schneider and Barsoux) High power distance

1. More hierarchy
2. More supervision (narrow span of control)
3. More centralized decision-making
4. Motivated by status and power
5. Leaders revered or obeyed as authorities

(GLOBE) – expectation that power is shared Unequally.

Correlation across two dimensions:

Hofstede found that there was a correlation between power distance and uncertainty avoidance that provided insight into the kinds of organization that tend to be successful in those environments.

See chart, p. 93 in:

Schneider, Susan, and Jean-Louis Barsoux. *Managing Across Cultures*. 2nd ed. Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2003, pp. 87-95.

Cross Cultural Dialogue

Each lead team does a presentation. Five minutes plus Q&A is fine. I look for themes and variations. Then I lead a discussion – looking for similarities across cultures as well as differences. And always – stories, stories, stories.

If there is not enough time for discussion, I will hold that over for the next week.