5 Dimensions of Culture

IDIS 290 proposal for a CCE Service/Internship Commitment
Individualist/Collectivist

**Individualist Cultures:**
- Focus on oneself and one's individual identity.
- Value is put on being self-sufficient.
- Independence is greatly stressed and valued.
- In general, people tend to distance themselves psychologically and emotionally from each other.
- One may choose to join groups, but group membership is not essential to one's identity or success.
- *Example: The U.S. has an individualist culture.*

**Collectivist Cultures:**
- Sense of self comes from one's membership and role in a group, such as one's family or work team.
- Belief that the survival and success of the group ensures the well-being of the individual, so that by considering the needs and feelings of others, one protects oneself.
- Harmony and the interdependence of group members are stressed and valued.
- Group members are relatively close psychologically and emotionally, but distant toward non-group members.
- *Example: China and India are both collectivist societies*
5 Dimensions of Culture

1. Individualist/Collectivist
2. Power Distance
3. Comfort With Uncertainty
4. Locus of Control
5. Time
Power Distance

Low Power Distance Cultures:
• More interaction exists between the boss and his/her employees.
• The boss is more democratic, and freely delegates responsibility.
• It's okay to disagree with or question the boss.
• The boss sees himself/herself as one of the group.
• One may choose to join groups, but group membership is not essential to one's identity or success.
• Example: Australia and the U.S. are low power distance cultures.

High Power Distance Cultures:
• Greater distance exists between the boss and subordinates.
• Power is centralized and generally is not shared.
• The boss does not delegate responsibility or reward initiative.
• The worker does not disagree with or question the boss.
• The boss sees himself/herself as on one level, workers on another.
• Example: Russia and China are high power distance cultures.
Comfort With Uncertainty

High Comfort With Uncertainty:
- Fewer laws exist and less emphasis is placed on conformity.
- It's okay to break certain laws or rules for practical reasons.
- It's okay to bypass the chain of command if necessary.
- Conflict can't always be avoided.
- Taking risks is acceptable.
- Example: The United Kingdom and Ireland have a high level of comfort with uncertainty.

Low Comfort With Uncertainty:
- More laws exist and greater emphasis is on obeying laws and conforming.
- It's never good to break laws or bypass the chain of command, whatever the reason.
- Conflict must be avoided; risks are not attractive.
- Interactions are more formal.
- Different is dangerous.
- Example: Russia and Germany have a low level of comfort with uncertainty.
Locus of Control

Internal Locus of Control:
- Control over outside events is largely internal, within the individual.
- Emphasize the strength of will and determination; circumstances do not have to be accepted as they are.
- There are no limits on what I can do or become, so long as I set my mind to it and make the necessary effort.
- Life is in large part what one makes of it.
- Example: Cultures in North America have an internal locus of control.

External Locus of Control:
- Control is considered to be external to the individual.
- Many aspects of life are predetermined, and cannot be controlled.
- There are limits beyond which we cannot go and certain givens that cannot be changed and must be accepted.
- Life happens TO you.
- Example: Cultures in the Middle East and South America have an external locus of control.
Time

**Monochronic:**
- Time is a fixed resource, and a limited amount of it is available.
- The needs of people are adjusted to suit the demands of time-schedules, deadlines, etc.
- People do one thing at a time and finish it before starting something else, regardless of circumstances.
- *Example: The United Kingdom and Germany have a monochronic conception of time.*

**Polychronic:**
- Time is the servant and tool of people.
- Time is adjusted to suit the needs of people.
- More time is always available, and one is never too busy.
- It's not necessary to finish one thing before starting another.
- *Example: India and Greece have a polychronic conception of time.*