

The six cultural dimensions that we have discussed in class are examined, and their presence among cultures quantified, by Hofstede Insights. While these scores are of course relative and generalized, the comparison between two countries offers interesting insights. Here, I look at indulgence, individualism, and long-term time orientation among France and the United States. These three dimensions, as well as power distance, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance, are all interconnected and interdependent with each other. For instance, the French tend to practice more restraint because their long-term orientation demands less of them throughout their day or week, leaving them feeling less of a need to 'let loose' and/or reward oneself. Another example is France's feminine orientation reflecting their long-term orientation (and vice versa) in their beautiful architecture.

Indulgence (vs. restraint) refers to the level of control among members of society; indulgence can be negative and indicative of a lack of self control, or in some cases can be indicative of enjoyment and living life to the fullest. The US receives a score of 68 whereas France receives a 48. An example is Americans tend to indulge in alcohol more heavily compared to the French. In France, it is common for individuals to enjoy a glass of wine with dinner, savoring the taste and appreciating the cultural significance of wine. However, in the United States, it is more likely for individuals to consume multiple glasses of alcohol during a single occasion. The concept of "blacking out," which refers to consuming excessive amounts of alcohol to the point of memory loss or loss of consciousness, is unfortunately a more frequently used term to describe American nights out. Hofstede Insights mentions Americans' "Work hard play hard" mindset; this ties into their tendency to indulge in that after a long, eight hour work day Americans feel a need to reward themselves and unwind. The French, however, generally have less stressful and taxing days, eliminating such a need for indulgence.

Individualism (vs. collectivism) refers to the level members of the culture feel they are working as a part of a group or standing alone. The US has an individualism score of 91, whereas France receives a 71. While both French and American culture are both individualistic in terms of a sense of responsibility primarily toward yourself and your nuclear family, Americans put much more of an emphasis on personal successes and following your own dreams. The entrepreneurial spirit, 'climbing the ladder', self-reliance, and personal freedoms are highly valued and ingrained in American culture. The French generally care less about 'creating their own path' to success and are more satisfied with being like others financially or otherwise. The French celebrate personal success less, and the success of their organizations and groups more.

Long-term and short-term time orientations refer to the way cultures focus on immediate gratification or long-term planning. The United States has a score of 26 here, compared to France's score of 63; the two cultures are very different in terms of time and how they organize it. French culture's long-term orientation is fostered in various aspects of

their society. One example is the implementation of the 35-hour workweek, which exemplifies their prioritization of leisure time and the value in gradual progress over immediate outcomes. This approach to work-life balance showcases the French emphasis on personal well-being and the appreciation of non-work-related activities; they simply 'work to live' rather than 'living to work'. The concept of a long-term commitment to a job is also highly valued in France. Rather than viewing employment as a required, tedious task, the French tend to perceive it as a stable and enduring aspect of their lives, fostering a sense of loyalty and dedication. This perspective encourages individuals to invest time and effort in their work, nurturing long-term relationships and contributing to the growth of their organizations. In contrast, the American approach to work often exhibits a more short-term orientation, especially in lower-level positions. With a desire for tangible results and a tendency to seek new opportunities, Americans frequently switch jobs, aiming to find fulfillment and advancement with more immediacy.

The 35-hour work week also reflects the French culture around meals and ties back into the long term orientation; lunch is a one to two hour break in the middle of the day, meant for socialization, relaxation, and cultivating relationships with those you dine with. In America, however, a quick, pre-prepared lunch at your desk or in your office's break room is more common. Americans focus on capitalizing on every second of the day, and do not emphasize breaks during the 9-5 work day.

A final example of French culture's long-term orientation is their cities and products are made to last; quality and longevity are emphasized in their food, goods, and infrastructure. Beautiful buildings that have been standing for 300 years (and some much longer) were built with future generations in mind; they take pride in constructing and maintaining buildings that stand the test of time, with many structures proudly illustrating a history throughout many centuries. These architectural masterpieces like the Notre-Dame Cathedral, Château de Versailles, and the Louvre Palace, embody the French commitment to preserving their cultural heritage and leaving a lasting legacy for centuries to come. In America, we tend to be more satisfied with a 'quick fix'. Many people do not value quality or longevity over price. We look for the cheapest and quickest construction, rather than producing a cultural structure.