



WHERE DOES BULGARIA STAND?

Tsvetan Davidkov*

ABSTRACT

The article presents the results of an empiric sociological survey entitled “Organizational Culture in Bulgaria – 2000 – 2002”, which was carried out following the methodology of Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980). It studies the procedure of calculating the indices of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism – collectivism and masculinity – femininity. On the basis of the abovementioned Bulgaria is compared in score rate tables with other (mainly European) countries. An attempt is made to formulate the characteristics of Bulgarian national culture as well as organizational culture in Bulgaria.

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¿DÓNDE SE SITÚA BULGARIA?

RESUMEN

El artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación sociológica empírica titulada “Cultura Organizativa en Bulgaria 2000-2002”, que siguió la metodología de Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980). Estudia el procedimiento de cálculo de los índices de distancia al poder, elusión de las incertidumbres, individualismo – colectivismo y masculinidad – feminidad. Sobre la base de lo anterior se comparan los datos de Bulgaria con otros países (especialmente con los europeos). Se ha realizado el intento de formular las características de la cultura nacional búlgara así como su cultural organizacional.

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The striving for higher quality of our own activity and competitive position makes us constantly ask ourselves: "Where do we stand?" Drawing parallels between ourselves and the others – the Balkan region, Europe, "the world" – provides us with models of comparison and puts us on the right track when planning steps for improving our own activity. The interest in such a type of comparison gains particular strength in the preparation process of Bulgaria to join the European Union.

During the last ten years empiric surveys began to appear in Bulgaria laying the stress on the dimensions of culture in organizations, business and entrepreneurship. As a rule methods are used, which provide the possibility for comparing the results in an international aspect. Such are the following:

SURVEY	SCOPE/ METHODOLOGY USED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Company Culture and Company Behaviour</i> (compiled by K.Todorov), Sofia, 1992. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretic study • Variety of methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davidkov, Ts., D.Kolarova, R.Minkovski, O.Vedur. <i>Organizational Culture in Bulgaria – 1995.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 377 respondents • H.Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chavdarova, T., P.Kabakchieva, <i>Institutional Culture in Bulgaria - 1998.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1240 respondents • original methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rusinova, V., L.Vassileva, S. Zhiliova, B.Andreev. <i>Intercultural Comparison of Stress and Values of Managers at the Work place</i> (in: "Psychological studies", book 1-2, 1999. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1533 respondents – managers (Bulgarians – 249, English – 224, Romanians – 457, Ukrainians – 265, Japanese – 338) • Cooper, C. L., Sloan, S. L., Williams,

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	S., 1988; Spector, P. 1988; Hofstede, 1994)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research team: P.Ivanova, B.Durankev, M.Marinov, H. Katrandzhiev, M.Stoianova. <i>Company Culture in Bulgaria</i> (a survey against the background data about the USA, Japan, Germany, France, Great Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands). UNWE, 2000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2100 respondents Hampden-Turner & Trompernaars. <i>The Seven Cultures of Capitalism</i>. Varna, 1995.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minkovski, R. <i>Organizational Culture in the Hotel Business - 2001</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 371 respondents H. Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davidkov, Ts. <i>Organizational Culture in Bulgaria – 2000-2002</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1200 respondents H. Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gerganov, E., H. Silgidzhan, Y. Genov, S. Karabeliova. <i>Study on the National Culture of Bulgarians and Organizational Cultures (2000 - 2002)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3600 respondents as a whole (Hofstede, 2001) - 2300 respondents) (Hampden-Turner & Trompernaars, 2000) - 2300 respondents)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minkov, M. <i>Why are we different?</i> S., 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theoretic study G. Hofstede

The data presented below is exclusively based on the study *Organizational Culture in Bulgaria – 2000-2002* (Davidkov, Ts.). The results of the other surveys and studies quoted have been used for the purposes of comparison and control.

The tasks set in this text are as follows:

- To inform readers with the data of the study *Organizational Culture in Bulgaria – 2000-2002*. Within the framework of this study to point out the place of Bulgaria among the other countries.

- To offer reference points and initial interpretations for grasping the meaning of these data.

It has to be reminded that in the methodology of Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980) for measuring cultures the following dimensions are used: power distance, uncertainty (precariousness) avoidance, individualism (collectivism), masculinity (femininity)¹. Each of these measures (criteria) provides tools for probing deeper into knowledge and can be used for the better interpretation of the national and organizational cultures studied ².

Remember that:

- **Power distance** characterizes the degree of inequality between employees and their manager.
- **Uncertainty avoidance** shows the way people cope with uncertainty (precariousness) that accompanies us everywhere.
- **Individualism** (as the opposite of collectivism) characterizes a certain type of relationship between the individual and the group (groups).
- The scale **masculinity – femininity** characterizes the separation of gender roles.

1. Power distance. Power distance represents *the relationship of dependence* in society. Major categories while describing this concept are: equality, inequality, privileges; social rank, social status, social roles; degree of dependence; hierarchy; power – basis and sources of power, legitimating power, ways of exerting power; manifesting power, value of the different types of power; obedience; social strata (classes, groups); good – evil; self-identification – perceiving others; rights – obligations; coercion – initiative – self-initiative; mechanisms of social change; certainty – threat; trust – distrust; harmony – conflicts; competitiveness – solidarity – cooperation; styles of management (of making decisions in the organization), etc. (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 1994).

The index of power distance in the methodology of Hofstede (PDI) is calculated by the following variables:

Variable	Empiric indicator
Variable 1. Presence/lack of fear in employees	“How often are employees afraid to express disagreement with their manager in your organization?”

<u>Variable 2.</u> Perception of the boss	“Which one of the managers described ³ resembles most your boss you work with at present?”
<u>Variable 3.</u> Preferred type of manager	“Which one of the types of managers described you prefer to work with?”

The inclusion of the three variables in the formula of PDI is based on the registered statistical interdependence between them.

The formula developed for calculating PDI is the following (Hofstede, G., 1980, p. 103):

PDI = 135 – 25 (the average value of Variable 1) + % (of respondents perceiving their boss as manager type 1 or manager type 2 – Variable 2) - % (of respondents who prefer to work with manager type 3 – Variable 3)

Theoretically the range of PDI value varies from (-90) to 210.

The values of the three variables for Bulgaria are as follows⁴:

Variable	
• <u>Variable 1.</u> Presence/lack of fear in employees	• Average value - 2.7955
• <u>Variable 2.</u> Perception of the boss	• % of respondents perceiving their boss as manager type 1 or manager type 2 – 56.3%
• <u>Variable 3.</u> Preferred type of manager	• % of respondents who prefer to work with manager type 3 – 46.9%

On the basis of these values one gets **PDI** = 75⁵. The score rank of Bulgaria according to the criterion **PDI**⁶ is the following:

Score rank	Country/region	PDI
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1	Malaysia	104
12	Yugoslavia	76
13/14	Bulgaria	75
16/17	France	68
19/20	Turkey	66
21	Belgium	65
25/26	Portugal	63
28/29	Greece	60
32	Spain	57
34	Japan	54
35	Italy	50
39	USA	40
41	The Netherlands	38
43/44/ 45	Federal Republic of Germany	35
43/44/ 45	United Kingdom	35
46	Switzerland	34
47	Finland	33
48/49	Norway	31
48/49	Sweden	31
50	Republic of Ireland	28
52	Denmark	18

53	Israel	13
54	Austria	11

The data can be interpreted on the following basis:

1. Key differences between societies with small or large power distance (general norm, family, school, workplace)⁷

Small power distance	Large power distance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequalities between people should be minimized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequalities between people are both expected and desired
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be, and there is to some extent, interdependence between people enjoying more power and those with less power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less powerful people should be depend on the more powerful; in practice, less powerful people are polarized between dependence and counter dependence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents treat their children as equals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents teach children obedience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children treat their parents as equals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children treat parents with respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers expect initiatives from students in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are expected to take all initiatives in class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are experts who transfer impersonal truths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are gurus who transfer wisdom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students treat their teachers as equals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students treat teachers with respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More educated persons hold less authoritarian values than less educated ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both more and less educated persons show almost equally authoritarian values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchy in organizations means inequality of roles, established for the sake of convenience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchy in organizations reflects the existential inequality between higher-ups and lower-downs

• Decentralization is popular	• Centralization is popular
• Narrow salary range between top and bottom of organization	• Wide salary range between top and bottom of organization
• Subordinates expect to be consulted	• Subordinates expect to be told what to do
• The ideal boss is a resourceful democrat	• The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat or good father
• Privileges and status symbols are frowned upon	• Privileges and status symbols are both expected and popular

Since according to this index Bulgaria falls among the countries with strongly expressed power distance we can assume that for the Bulgarian organizations the right column statements are definitely more accurate and suitable.

The following patterns of thinking and social practices are typical for the Bulgarian society:

- Parents teach their children to obey most of all. Children hold high respect for their parents.
- Both more educated and less educated persons share primarily authoritarian values.
- Strong centralization is popular.
- There exist great pay differences between the people at the top and those at the bottom.
- Subordinates expect to be told what to do and they are not inclined to take the initiative and assume responsibilities.
- The boss – as the father figure is considered a good thing. The boss as the well-intentioned or benevolent autocrat is looked with favour on.
- Privileges and status/rank symbols are popular.

Taken as a whole these characteristics are encountered more often than not among the elderly, among the less educated groups, and among the representatives of the smaller towns and villages.

Depending on the value of the index of one's own organization one can mould one's expectations and foresee the ways of perceiving organizational inequality as well as the patterns of thinking and behaviour stemming from them.

The differences pointed out are closely related with the pattern of thinking in the sphere of *politics and ideas*.

- Thus, for instance, in societies with large power distance the person who is in power is both right and good. The middle class is rather small. The power figures enjoy privileges. Power is displayed by means of ostentation and pomposity. Power is mainly sustained through circles of friends and family relations. The differences between the income of those at the top and those at the bottom of the social pyramid are great (the gap widening by the tax systems).
- Religious and philosophy systems provide grounds for the necessity of stratification and hierarchy. Settling conflicts and any change of the social system seem possible (only) by means of exerting violence (i.e. revolution). Government is autocratic or performed by an oligarchy of people sharing same views. The political spectrum is characterized by strong left and right wings and a weak center⁸.

Taking into account the mentality of Bulgarians and the widely spread social practices one can contend that:

- People in power enjoy great privileges and power is often ostensibly and pompously manifested.
- Power is supported by and relies on friendly circles and family relations to a great extent.
- The income gap between those at the top and those at the bottom of the social pyramid is great and is enhanced by the tax system.
- The predominating attitude of most people is that social change is possible by means of violence rather than by way of a new social contract ("Power is never

given out – it is taken!"). Government is to a great extent autocratic (including an oligarchy of people sharing same views).

Similarly, in Bulgaria the power distance phenomenon is closely associated with age, education and the type of town or village. The patterns of thinking and behaviour are strongly expressed among the elderly, less educated and the representatives of smaller towns and villages.

2. Uncertainty avoidance⁹. Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as: *“the extent to which the members of a particular culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need of predictability: a need of written and unwritten rules”*. (Hofstede, 2001, p. 156, Bulgarian translation) Major categories while describing this phenomenon are the following: security - insecurity - threat; anxiety - calm; tension - stress; fear – psychological comfort; aggression, conflicts; written/unwritten regulations (rules) – nature and scope of rules; stability - change; risk; difference; open (weak-structured) situations – sound-structured situations; time – meaning of time - punctuality; action - inaction; standard – non-standard - innovation; security versus achievement, etc.

In the methodology presented the index of uncertainty avoidance (UAI) is calculated by the following variables:

Variable	Empiric indicator
Variable 1. Rule orientation	“To what extent do you agree with the statement: company rules are the law – they should not be broken even when we think that it is in the organization’s best interest?”
Variable 2. Security/ belongingness of employees	“How long do you think you will continue working for this organization?”
Variable 3. Job stress	“How often do you feel nervous or tense at work?”

The formula is (Hofstede, 1980, p. 164):

$$\text{UAI} = 300 - 30 \times (\text{average value of Variable 1}) - \% (\text{of those who intend to work in this organization less for than 5 years} - \text{Variable 2}) - 40 (\text{average value of Variable 3})$$

The theoretic value of UAI varies from (-150) to 230.

The value of the variable for Bulgaria is the following:

Variable	
<u>Variable 1.</u> Rule orientation	Average value - 2.5240
<u>Variable 2.</u> Security/belongingness of employees	% of those who intend to work in this organizationна for less than – 40.2%
<u>Variable 3.</u> Job stress	Average value - 2.9134

On the basis of these values one gets **UAI = 68¹⁰**. According to the UAI (Hofstede, 2001, p. 157; Hofstede, 1980, p. 165) Bulgaria ranks as follows:

Score rank	Country/region	UAI
1	Greece	112
2	Portugal	104
5/6	Belgium	94
7	Japan	92
8	Yugoslavia	88
10/15	France	86
10/15	Spain	86

16/17	Turkey	85
19	Israel	81
23	Italy	75
24/25	Austria	70
27/28	Bulgaria	68
30	FR of Germany	65
34	Switzerland	58
36	The Netherlands	53
39	Norway	50
44	USA	46
48/49	UK	35
48/49	Ireland	35
50/51	Sweden	29
52	Denmark	23
54	Singapore	8

The data can be interpreted on the following basis:

2. Key differences between societies with weak and strong uncertainty avoidance (general norm, family, school, work place)¹¹

Weak uncertainty avoidance	Strong uncertainty avoidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty is a normal feature of life and each day is accepted as it comes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uncertainty inherent in life is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low stress; subjective feeling of well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High stress; subjective feeling of anxiety

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression and emotions should not be shown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression and emotions may at proper times and places be given vent of/ventilated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable in ambiguous situations and with unfamiliar risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of familiar risks; fear of ambiguous situations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lenient rules for children on what is dirty and taboo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight rules for children on what is dirty and taboo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is different, is curious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is different, is dangerous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel comfortable with open-ended learning situations and concerned with good discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students comfortable in structured learning situations and concerned with the right answers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers may say: "I do not know" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers supposed to have all the answers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should not be more rules than is strictly necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional need for rules, even if these will never work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time is a framework for orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time is money
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable feeling when lazy; hard-working only when needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional need to be busy; inner urge to work hard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precision and punctuality have to be learnt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precision and punctuality come naturally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerance of deviant and innovative ideas and behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppression of deviant ideas and behaviour; resistance to innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation by achievement and esteem or belongingness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation by security and esteem or belongingness

Taking into account the results of the abovementioned study as well as those of other studies, there are grounds to consider Bulgaria as rather falling into the group of countries with *strong uncertainty avoidance striving*. Simultaneously, according to a number of indices there exist characteristics, which refute this clear-cut tendency making it

more complex. If the characteristics of the Bulgarian society are more profoundly considered, it would become apparent that:

- For some of the Bulgarian organizations in this country “time is money”, whereas for others it is a reference point “not to miss lunch”.
- The attitude towards precision and punctuality and the requirements for them are rather flexible.
- There exists fear of taking risks and fear of unknown situations. New ideas and deviant behaviour are rather resisted than fostered.
- Rules are rarely respected; in some cases there are so many rules that they simply do not work. Or the attitude towards the respective rule turns into a question of choice – people observe them and insist others to observe them only when they could benefit from this. Otherwise, whenever rules contradict one’s interests, they are not to be observed and could be broken.
- The level of job stress is rather high.
- Security, respect and belongingness turn out to be strong sources of motivation.

The strong striving for uncertainty avoidance seems to be more typical for the Bulgarians “taken as a whole”. However, the case with entrepreneurs is different, since the UAI is lower with them¹². This fact is manifested in the internal localization of control, the skill to assess and take risks, and the perception of time (“time is money”), etc.

In the light of the index value for one’s own organization, one can mould one’s expectations and foresee the way uncertainty/precariousness is perceived as well as the patterns of thinking and behaviour stemming from it.

The differences resulting from the value of UAP are clearly manifested in the sphere of *politics and practice*. In societies with a *strong striving for uncertainty avoidance*:

- There exists a striving for profound definitions of rules. This fact reflects in the numerous acts and regulations. The slogan runs: “law and order”. Breaking the rules is punishable.
- Institutions frown upon civil initiatives whereas citizens do not respect institutions. Any difference is felt as uncomfortable and not to be tolerated. The majority groups suppress the minorities.

- A cult for the only truth of “the real specialists” is established. A (fundamental) ideology is launched. One belief. One philosophy. One (great) theory. If you are not with me, this means you are against me (Hofstede, 2001, p. 187).

The characteristics pointed out do not hold good for Bulgarian culture exactly as they are formulated.

- As has already been mentioned most Bulgarians are not admirers of rules and order. They would observe the law only if they would benefit and/or if this is unavoidable. But they would not observe the law only for the sake of the idea that law is to be obeyed. In practice one can often encounter clear-cut rules and/or no sanctions when they are violated.
- Some of the institutions, reluctantly though, communicate with the citizens. Taken as a whole, however, civil initiatives are looked upon as layman-like or amateur activities (the opposite of professionalism). As a rule the representatives of institutions consider citizens incompetent. It is a common practice to have no efficient mechanisms for taking advantage of the different opinions and ideas as a resource for both society and the organizations.
- Most of the people feel comfortably with one truth, one belief, and one philosophy. More often than not one could hear the following argument: “... that’s what the newspaper says!”¹³
- The mentality “if you are not with me, you are against me” is widely spread. Differences are perceived as threat rather than a resource that could be taken advantage of.

3. Individualism. The individual and/or the group? “I” and/or “we”? "At the root of the difference between these cultures is a fundamental issue in human societies: the role of the individual versus the role of the group" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 68, Bulgarian translation)

People who were born and grow up in the so-called *extended family*, as a rule they think of themselves (identify themselves) as “we”. “ In most collectivist societies the ‘family’ within which the child grows up consists of a number living closely together; not just the parents and the other children, but, for example, grandparents, uncles, aunts, servants, or other housemates. This is known in cultural anthropology as the *extended family*.” (Hofstede, 2001, p.68, Bulgarian translation). This is typical of collectivist societies. Children who were born and grow up in a *nuclear family* usually develop the

“I” identification. “... most children are born into families consisting of two parents and, possibly, other children: in some societies there is an increasing share of one-parent families. Other relatives live elsewhere and are rarely seen. This type is the *nuclear family*.” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 69, Bulgarian translation). The personal interests come first (and not the interests of the group). This is the most typical form of early socialization in individualist societies (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 68-69).

The main categories by means of which the relationship between the individual and the group is described are the following: in-groups – more open groups; subject(s) of rights, obligations, responsibilities; roles/importance of the individual (within the group, for the group) - roles/importance of the group (in view of the individual, for the individual); interests/priorities of the individual/the group; identification – self-identification; integration - alienation; (inter) dependence (control) - independence (self-control); equality – freedom of the individual/privacy; wealth - independence; owed to the group – owed to the self; compromise; social environment - harmony - confrontation; highly contextual communication – low contextual communication (Hofstede, 2001, p. 82, Bulgarian transl.), culture of shame – culture of guilt, “face”¹⁴ (before the others) – self-respect; aim of education; contract (mutual benefit) versus good – evil; managing groups – managing individuals, etc.

In the methodology presented the individualist index (IDV) is calculated by the following variables:

Variable ¹⁵	Empiric indicator
<u>Variable 1.</u> Challenges	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you <i>challenges</i> , to let you achieve a personal sense of accomplishment?”
<u>Variable 2.</u> Freedom	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you considerable <i>freedom</i> to adopt your own approach to the job?”
<u>Variable 3.</u> Personal time	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to leave you <i>sufficient time for your personal and family life</i> ?”
<u>Variable 4.</u>	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you <i>training opportunities</i> or to improve your skills or

Training	learn new skills?"
<u>Variable 5.</u> Physical working conditions	"To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to have good <i>physical working conditions</i> – adequate work space, furniture, lighting, etc.?"
<u>Variable 6.</u> Use of skills	"To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to let you fully use your <i>skills and abilities</i> on the job?"

The formula is (Hofstede, 1980, pp. 220, 242):

$$\text{IDV} = 50 + 25 \times [0.46 \times (\text{average value of Variable 1}) + 0.49 \times (\text{average value of Variable 2}) + 0.86 \times (\text{average value of Variable 3}) - 0.82 \times (\text{average value of Variable 4}) - 0.69 \times (\text{average value of variable 5}) - 0.63 \times (\text{average value of Variable 6})]$$

The theoretic value of IDV varies from (-172.25) to 222.75.

For Bulgaria the values for these variables are the following:

Variable	Average value
<u>Variable 1.</u> Challenges	1.8126
<u>Variable 2.</u> Freedom	1.9713
<u>Variable 3.</u> Personal time	2.2743
<u>Variable 4.</u> Training	1.7650
<u>Variable 5.</u> Physical working conditions	1.9679
<u>Variable 6.</u> Use of skills (abilities)	1.5971

On the basis of these variables one gets $\text{IDV} = 49^{16}$. The score rank of Bulgaria according to IDV^{17} is as follows:

Score rank	Country/region	IDV
1	USA	91
3	UK	89
4/5	The Netherlands	80
7	Italy	76
8	Belgium	75
9	Denmark	74
10/11	Sweden	71
10/11	France	71
12	Ireland	70
13	Norway	69
14	Switzerland	68
15	Federal Republic of Germany	67
17	Finland	63
18	Austria	55
19	Israel	54
20	Spain	51
21	Bulgaria	49
23/24	Japan	46
29	Turkey	37
31	Greece	35

34/36	Yugoslavia	27
34/36	Portugal	27
54	Guatemala	6

The data can be interpreted on the following basis:

3. Key differences between the collectivist and the individualist societies (general norm, family, school, work place)¹⁸

Collectivist	Individualist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are born into extended families or other in-groups which continue to protect them in exchange for loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone grows up to look after him/herself and his/her immediate nuclear family only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity is based in the social network to which one belongs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity is based in the individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children learn to think in terms of 'we' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children learn to think in terms of 'I'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmony should always be maintained and direct confrontations avoided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking one's mind is a characteristic of the honest person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-context communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-context communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trespassing leads to shame and loss of face for self and group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trespassing leads to guilt and loss of self-respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of education is learning how to do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of education is learning how to learn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplomas provide entry to higher status groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diplomas increase economic worth and/or self-respect

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship employer – employee is perceived in moral terms like a family link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship employer – employee is a contract supposed to be based on mutual advantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring and promotion decisions take employees’ in-group into account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on mutual advantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management is management of groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management is management of individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship prevails over task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task prevails over relationship

To the question whether Bulgaria has to be ranked with the countries having a high individualist index or with the countries having a low level of individualism, most researchers provide proof for the answer: *low level of individualism* (Minkov, 2002). An important argument in support of this statement is the high relative share of the poor and the people with low income, as well as the equality awareness of and desire for such an equality (usually perceived as egalitarianism). In order to realize what the actual situation is, one has to take into account as well the share of Bulgarians born and growing up in extended families and the share of those born and growing up in nuclear families.

Considering the pairs of characteristic features in the above table, it seems we find arguments in support of the statement that the Bulgarian is not a prominent individualist. The university diploma is more often than not a kind of pass to high status groups rather than a sign of social value for the individual. There can be observed “much morality” and little calculated interest in the relationship employers – employees. Exceptions have turned into everyday practice to such an extent that rules get deprived of meaning. Management of groups prevails over management of individuals. Work and private relations are strongly entwined. Communication is contextually charged (people tend to look for hidden layers of meaning underlying the literal meaning of words in any message).

In the light of the index value for one's own organization, one can mould one's expectations and foresee the way individualism (collectivism) is perceived as well as the patterns of thinking and behavior stemming from it.

The differences in the criterion *individualism – collectivism* are clearly expressed in the sphere of *politics and ideas*. Individualistic societies are characterized by the following concepts and practices (Hofstede, 2001, p. 101):

- Personal interests prevail over collective interests and everybody is entitled to his/her own (personal) perimeter. Everyone is expected to have a personal opinion. Personal freedom prevails over ideologies and equality. The realization of every individual is the ultimate goal.
- Restricted role of the state (small government) in the economic system. Economy is based on individual interests. Domestic economic theories provide grounds for pursuing the personal interests of the individual. High per capita GNP is still another characteristic feature.
- Laws and rights are supposed to be the same for all people. Political power is exercised by voters. The media enjoy freedom.

If one applies these criteria to describe the state of play in Bulgarian, the arguments in favour of the statement that the level of individualism is rather low increase. Thus for instance:

- In most of the cases personal opinion is not encouraged. In most of the organizations the best employees have to “dissolve” into the general mass of people. The ideas of equality (perceived as egalitarianism) prevail over the ideas of freedom and privacy.
- The state plays a significant role in economic life. There is a low per capita GDP.¹⁹
- Laws and rules are same for everybody. However, the rich deal better with legal issues than the poor. The media enjoy relative freedom, but errand materials are hardly an exception²⁰.

4. Masculinity. "Every society recognizes many behaviours... as more suitable for females or more suitable for males; but which behaviours belong to which gender

differs from one society to another." (Hofstede, 2001, p.111). These differences can be illustrated by the distribution of men and women over certain professions. Men are presumed to be assertive, competitive and tough; women – to be more concerned with taking care of the home, of the children and to take more ‘tender’ roles (Hofstede, 2001, p. 112). The borderline between societies dominated by *masculinity* or *femininity* is the following: with the former there exists a clear-cut differentiation between gender roles; with the latter - gender roles tend to overlap (Ibid., p. 114).

Major concepts by means of which this phenomenon can be defined are: dominating goals/values; social ideals and priorities; socially just; meaning of life; role models of behaviour; way of handling conflicts. Pairs of categories, which characterize the relation under discussion are the following: consent - decisiveness; timidity - ambition; equality - justice; cooperation - competition; relationships - work; friendliness – (brilliant) mind; fight - compromise; force - weakness; facts - feelings; people and relationships – money and objects; small - large; slow – fast, etc.

In the methodology of G. Hofstede the masculinity index (MAS) is calculated by the following variables²¹:

Variable	Empiric indicator
<u>Variable 1.</u> Challenge	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you <i>challenges</i> ; to make you feel you get a personal sense of accomplishment?”
<u>Variable 2.</u> Advancement	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you opportunities for <i>advancement and promotion</i> ?”
<u>Variable 3.</u> Recognition	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you the <i>recognition you deserve for good performance</i> ?”
<u>Variable 4.</u> High income	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you <i>high earnings</i> ?”
<u>Variable 5.</u> Relationship with the manager	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you a good working <i>relationship</i> with your direct superior?”
<u>Variable 6.</u>	“To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you the opportunity to work with people who

Cooperation	<i>cooperate</i> well with one another?"
<u>Variable 7.</u> Desirable area	"To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you the opportunity to live in an <i>area desirable</i> to you and your family?"
<u>Variable 8.</u> Employment security	"To what extent is it important to you the job you take up to offer you <i>security</i> that you will be able to <i>work for your company</i> as long as you want to?"

The formula is²²:

$$\text{MAS} = 50 - 20 \times [-0.54 \times (\text{average value of Variable 1}) - 0.56 \times (\text{average value of Variable 2}) - 0.59 \times (\text{average value of Variable 3}) - 0.70 \times (\text{average value of Variable 4}) + 0.69 \times (\text{average value of Variable 5}) + 0.69 \times (\text{average value of Variable 6}) + 0.59 \times (\text{average value of average value of Variable 7.}) + 0.48 \times (\text{average value of Variable 8})]$$

The theoretic value of MAS varies from (-147.2) to 240.

For Bulgaria the values of these variables are the following:

Variable	Average value
• <u>Variable 1.</u> Challenges	1.8126
• <u>Variable 2.</u> Advancement	1.9932
• <u>Variable 3.</u> Recognition	1.8989
• <u>Variable 4.</u> High income	1.6235
• <u>Variable 5.</u> Relationship with the manager	1.6785
• <u>Variable 6.</u> Cooperation	1.5943
• <u>Variable 7.</u> Desired area for living	2.0093
• <u>Variable 8.</u> Employment security	1.9259

On the basis of these values one gets **MAS = 50**²³. On the MAS²⁴ criterion Bulgaria rates as follows:

Score rate	Country/region	MAS
1	Japan	95
2	Austria	79
4/5	Italy	70
4/5	Switzerland	70
7/8	Ireland	68
9/10	UK	66
9/10	Federal Republic of Germany	66
15	USA	62
18/19	Greece	57
22	Belgium	54
24	Canada	52
25/26/ 27	Bulgaria	50
30	Israel	47
33/34	Turkey	45
36/37	France	43
38/39	Spain	42
46	Portugal	31
48	Finland	26

49/50	Yugoslavia	21
51	Denmark	16
52	The Netherlands	14
53	Norway	8
54	Sweden	5

The data can be interpreted on the following basis.

4. Key differences between feminine and masculine societies (general norm, family, school and workplace)²⁵

Feminine	Masculine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant values in society are caring for others and preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant values in society are material success and progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and warm relationships are important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money and things are important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everybody is supposed to be modest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men are supposed to be assertive, ambitious and tough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both men and women are allowed to be tender and to be concerned with relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are supposed to be tender and to take care of relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the family, both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the family, fathers deal with facts and mothers with feelings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both boys and girls are allowed to cry but neither should fight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls cry, boys don't; boys should fight back when attacked; girls should not fight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sympathy for the weak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sympathy for the strong

• Average student is the norm	• Best student is the norm
• Failing in school is a minor accident	• Failing in school is a disaster
• Friendliness in teachers appreciated	• Brilliance in teachers appreciated
• Boys and girls study same subjects	• Boys and girls study different subjects
• Work in order to live	• Live in order to work
• Managers use intuition and strive for consensus	• Managers expected to be decisive and assertive
• Stress on equality, solidarity, and quality of work life	• Stress on equity, competition among colleagues, and performance
• Resolution of conflicts by compromise and negotiation	• Resolution of conflicts by fighting them out

The characteristics of masculine and feminine behaviour define us as a nation having rather feminine behaviour. This assessment is based on the following observations:

- In the general case both men and women are expected to be timid and not assertive.
- Sympathy is more often directed towards the weak.
- The prevailing norm for the schools is the average student.
- Managers are more often concerned with equality and solidarity among employees rather than with the just distribution of compensations and competition among them.
- The evaluation comment “he is a good person” prevails over the evaluation comment “he is a true professional”.

Simultaneously, in the modern Bulgaria society:

- The traditional separation of gender roles between men and women seems to be wearing off. Probably because household responsibilities still remain to be “the exclusive right” of women. (*The Bulgarian Woman*, 2003.)

- The number of people, for whom material success, career and advancement attain importance, is increasing.
- The care for relationships is assigned primarily to women. Fathers have to deal with facts and to have the ‘final say’ when it comes to making decisions, i.e. the last word.
- When it comes to settling conflicts the most common strategy is ‘fight out to the end’.

The key differences between masculine and feminine patterns imply certain type of concepts in the sphere of politics and ideas. For masculine societies (Hofstede, 2001, p. 142):

- Performance is the ideal. The ‘big’ and ‘the fast’ are highly respected. Economic growth is the main concern of society. Good armaments are more important than providing aid to the poor countries. Society has a liking for the strong; whenever there are conflicts they should be resolved decisively and by means of force.
- The dominant religions lay the stress on male leadership. A comparatively small number of women hold elective political positions. “Women’s liberation” implies women to be admitted to positions only occupied by men hitherto.

In Bulgaria at present there are a lot of women holding high social positions: in Parliament, in government, in political parties, central and local state bodies, in the judicial system, business, etc. At the same time by emancipation of women it is understood admission of women to positions exclusively occupied by men before. The situation is such that, whether jokingly or not, voices are raised in men’s defence and emancipation.²⁶

Suggestions to reflect on:

1. Baring in mind the differences between organizations with *small and large power distance* how would you describe the organization you work for? Provide arguments.
2. Adduce arguments in favour of the contention that the organization you work for is characterized by *strong uncertainty avoidance*. Now find proofs in favour of the opposite contention.
3. We are *individualists* / We are *collectivists*. Which of the two statements holds good of your organization? Adduce arguments.

4. What are the major differences between *male* and *female* societies? Describe your organization in the light of these differences.

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¹ The most recent studies of Hofstede include another dimension as well. That is the *long-term – short-term* orientation. Societies with long-term orientation strive for adapting their traditions to the present context. As a rule they are keen on saving; the savings quota is very high; funds are accumulated for the purposes of investment. There exists apparent perseverance accompanied by achieving slow results as well as readiness to obey for the sake of a specific goal (Hofstede, 2001, p. 223 and the following). There are no data available for Bulgaria about this index.

² Hofstede's methodology is primarily used for comparing national cultures. However, there exist enough grounds this methodology to be used for the better understanding of the culture of organizations.

³ The following description of the types of managers has been used: **Manager type 1**. He usually makes his decisions quickly and announces them to his subordinates in a clear and categorical style. He expects them to fulfill his decisions as they are without any objections. **Manager type 2**. He usually makes his decisions quickly, but before assigning them to anybody he tries to explain them in detail to his/her subordinates. He points out the reasons for making his decision and answers all the questions. **Manager type 3**. Before making his decision he usually consults his subordinates. He listens carefully to their advice, considers them and then announces his decision. Everybody is expected to loyally work for the implementation of this decision no matter whether it is in accordance with the advice of the subordinates. **Manager type 4**. Whenever an important decision has to be made he usually summons a meeting – he presents the problem and tries to reach a common accord. If such a consensus is reached, then he adopts the common position as a decision. If consensus is impossible to reach, then he makes the decision himself.

⁴ The data used is from *Organizational Culture in Bulgaria 2000 - 2002* (1200 respondents).

⁵ For the purposes of comparison: in another survey of 1995 r. (Davidkov, Ts., Kolarova, D., Minkovski, R., Vedur, O.) with 377 respondents the value of this index is **PDI = 80**.) The data presented can also be compared with *Company Culture in Bulgaria* (a survey against the background data about the USA, Japan, Germany, France, Great Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands). UNWE, University research assignment № RA 2103 – 7, 2000.

⁶ The data about 53 countries, Bulgaria excepted, is taken from Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980, pp. 104, 106; Hofstede, 2001, p. 33). European countries, for which there are data available, as well as the US, Japan and the countries with the lowest and the highest score ratings of the respective index are also included in the comparison tables.

⁷ Hofstede, 2001, p. 49.

⁸ See Hofstede, 2001, p. 56.

⁹ Further in the text "uncertainty" and "precariousness" are used synonymously.

¹⁰ Just for comparison: in another survey of 1995 (Davidkov, Ts., Kolarova, D., Minkovski, R., Vedur, O.) with 377 respondents the value of this index is **UAI = 81**.

¹¹ Hofstede, 2001, p. 174.

¹² By *entrepreneurs* we mean here people having their own business.

¹³ In Bulgaria at present there are numerous editions of newspapers, magazines, as well as electronic media channels and broadcasts (including Internet editions), but for some people the truth boils down to *what their newspaper says*.

¹⁴ "Face is lost when the individual, either through his action or that of people closely related to him, fails to meet the essential requirements placed upon him by virtue of the social position he occupies" (Ho, 1976, p. 867) – quoted from Hofstede, 2001, p. 83, Bulgarian translation.

¹⁵ The fact that these six variables are included as dimensions of IDV is based on their statistic value as being “work goals”. Personal time, freedom and challenge make up a factor group (the high score of these values presupposes high scores of the rest of the variables). The high importance of these work goals is typical of individualist attitudes. Training, physical working conditions and the use of skills also make up a factor group. The importance of these work values is typical for collectivist attitudes. (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 70-72).

¹⁶ For comparison purposes: in another study of 1995 (Davidkov, Ts., Kolarova, D., Minkovski, R., Vedur, O.) with 377 respondents the value of this index is **IDV = 51**. When interpreting this comparison table one has to be very careful since the data about Bulgaria are from 2000 - 2002, whereas the data about the other countries are rather outdated. The level of individualism is proven to depend on wealth. The wealth of the countries from the table has changed for the last thirty years.

¹⁷ Hofstede, 2001, p. 157; Hofstede, 1980, pp. 165.

¹⁸ Hofstede, 2001, p. 92.

¹⁹ According to the data of CIA World Fact Book (2002) GDP per capita for 2002 is 6 600 USD. For the purposes of comparison: Austria - 27 700; Belgium - 29 000; Denmark - 29 000; Finland - 26 200; France - 25700; Germany - 26 600; Greece - 19 000; Italy - 25 000; The Netherlands - 26 900; Norway - 31 800; Portugal - 18 000; Spain - 20 700; Switzerland - 31 700; Turkey - 7 000; The United Kingdom - 25 300; USA - 37 600;

²⁰ According to the data provided by the Institute of PR (see A Taste of Corruption in the Media, Capital newspaper, October 4 -10, 2003) Bulgaria rates 35th of 66 countries rated by corruption index in the press; the country which rates first is with the lowest level of corruption, whereas the one rating 66th - with the highest.

²¹ The inclusion of these eight variables as components of MAS is based on their statistical assessment as “work goals”. Income, recognition, promotion in the job hierarchy (advancement) and the challenge make up a factor group (the high score of one of these values presupposes high scores of the others). The significance of these work goals is typical for the male behaviour models. Work goals as good relationship with the manager, cooperation, and desirable area for living, employment security also make up a factor group. The significance of these values is characteristic of female behaviour models. See (Hofstede, 2001, p. 113).

²² See Hofstede, 1980, p. 277, 299.

²³ For the purposes of comparison: in another survey of 1995 (Davidkov, Ts., Kolarova, D., Minkovski, R., Vedur, O.) with 377 respondents the value of this index is **MAS = 49**.

²⁴ See Hofstede, G., 1980, p. 279 and Hofstede, G., 2001, p. 116 for the data about the countries (Bulgaria excepted).

²⁵ Hofstede, 2001, p. 133.

²⁶ This view is a reaction to the strong participation of women in some of the occupations, for instance teachers.