



Monologism of Hofstede's Static Model vs Dialogism of Fang's Dynamic Model: Contradictory Value Configuration of Cultures through the Case Study of Farsi Proverbs

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Abstract

Among various cultural models, the dichotomy of static versus dynamic models has provided a fertile ground for research. Although a number of static models are suggested, the dominant trend in almost all static models is provided by Hofstede who focuses on cultural differences along four major dimensions (power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity) and reduces “the complex phenomenon of culture in simple and measurable terms” (Fang, 2010, p. 156). The main concern is whether static bipolar models can cope with the requirements of the globalized era when cross-cultural communication “in an increasingly borderless and wireless workplace, marketplace, and cyberspace” (Fang, 2012, p. 2) is needed. Studying Fang’s dynamic cultural model versus Hofstede’s static cultural dimensions theory, the present paper, through the case study of Iranian culture, hypothesizes that dynamic models, such as Fang’s (2005, 2012), which recognize the paradoxical essence of cultures, emphasize all-dimensional cultural nearness. In Fang’s model, cultures are dialogic and open for cross-cultural interaction rather than monologic and segregated.

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1. Introduction

Culture has always been a matter of interest for many scholars and the debate over static versus dynamic cultural models has been a productive area of research. In static models (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1991, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005; Kluckhohn, 1952) core values are stable over time and what can come to be the subject of change is the behavioral part. Static models have a bipolar either/or approach to categorize cultural values.

Geert Hofstede, the chief representative of the static paradigm of culture, uses an 'onion' metaphor to describe cultures (Hofstede, 1991; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) and impart the point that cultures "are extremely stable over time" (2001, p. 34) because the core values are stable. Hofstede (2001, 2005) focuses on differences and theorizes that there are four dimensions of cultural differences: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. In his functionalist model cultures are, for example, either masculine or feminine with almost no culture triumphing on both femininity and masculinity. Hofstede's (1980, 1991) static model, dominant in cultural studies for long (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006), despite its merits, cannot meet the requisites of the globalized era where cross-cultural communication, cultural interaction, and cultural nearness seem more crucially needed than ever.

In Hofstede's static bipolar paradigm, first and foremost, not only culture is regarded as stable and unchanging (1991, 2001, 2010), but also it is "captured as a situation-free, context free, and time-free phenomenon" (Fang, 2012, p. 14) unaffected by diverse historical and political events. Secondly, in Hofstede's paradigm cultural differences are considered as problems and referred to as "culture shocks" (Hofstede, 1980 210; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 325). Thirdly, the issues of "national cultural learning" (Fang, 2012, p. 18), global interaction and cultural collision have remained under-researched.

After Hofstede's unprecedented study, some other studies were done in the same domain including, but not limited to, the scientifically-

oriented study of Schwartz (1992), the practically-oriented study of Trompenaars (1994), and the society-oriented studies of House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta (2004). However, the main concern is that all these studies and the similar ones follow Hofstede's trend of reducing "the complex phenomenon of culture in simple and measurable terms" (Fang, 2010, p. 156) neglecting the point that cultures are inherently dynamic to be able to encompass new arising or former dormant values associated to new communal experiences. As Kumbalonah (2013) states, culture reflects communal experience.

A new cultural model, which is capable of coping with the requisites of the globalized era and surpasses the restrictions of static models, is Fang's Yin Yang model. In Fang's (2005, 2010, 2011) model, when 'cultural collision' happens, the fertile process of cultural learning can open (Fang, 2005–2006, 2010) whereby different cultural values can coexist. The integration of two cultures can even lead to the emergence of "negotiated culture" (Brannen & Salk, 2000) which is multi-dimensional, multi-layered, and multi-value oriented.

The present paper studies Hofstede's systematic national cultural differences manifested through four major dimensions, later on referred to as indexes, namely uncertainty avoidance index (UAI), power distance index (PDI), masculinity versus femininity index (MAS), and individualism versus collectivism index (IDV). Iranian culture is chosen as the case study for the present research and Farsi proverbs come to form the paradigm of the corpus of the research for the reason that proverbs are wholesale reflections of a nation's culture (Adekunle, 2007; Herzberg, 2012; Mieder, 1993, 2008; Skandera, 2008; Sobania, 2003; Stone, 2006; Taylor, 1931).

The paper means to study Hofstede's (1980, 1994, 2007) bipolar cultural view versus Fang's Yin Yang four propositions of cultural model (2005, 2011) with the ultimate purpose of analyzing whether Hofstede's view of cultures is feasible in Iranian culture or not. Demonstrating the coexistence of paradoxes in each cultural dimension of Hofstede's model testifies to the practicality of Fang's Yin Yang model for studying cultures in the globalized era since

absorbing cultural differences is crucial for cultural survival and for the enhancement of cross-cultural interaction. Previous static cultural models, by focusing on cultural differences, secluded cultures from global cross-cultural interactions.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Hofstede's Static Cultural Dimensions Theory

Hofstede (2001), the chief representative of the static paradigm of culture, theorizes that "cultures, especially national cultures, are extremely stable over time" (p. 34) because the core values are stable. Hofstede (1991, 2001), uses an 'onion' metaphor to describe cultures. He maintains that an onion consists of different layers that can be peeled off until the core. At the core of the onion lie the basic assumptions, values, and beliefs which are stable because they are inherited. On the outer surfaces of the onion, we see symbols, heroes, and rituals that are 'practices' of culture (Hofstede, 1991). These outside layers, which are the behavioral parts of the model, may change over time.

For Hofstede (1994), cultures hardly ever change and, more importantly, cultures distinguish one nation from the others as culture is "the collective mental programming of the mind which distinguishes one group or category of people from those of another" (Hofstede, 1994, p. 627). Hofstede (2005) studies cultures along four dimensions, which are referred to as cultural differences indices and include power distance index (PDI), collectivism versus individualism index (IDV), masculinity versus femininity index (MAS), and uncertainty avoidance (UAI). Later on, Hofstede (1991, 2010) added two other dimensions: long-term orientation versus short-term orientation and indulgence versus self-restraint. The fifth and sixth dimensions, which are not in the original model, are not the focal points of this study.

The first dimension, power distance, looks at the degree of inequality accepted and expected among people of unequal ranks. At one extreme there exist low-power distance cultures and at the other extreme there exist high-power distance cultures. In high-power distance cultures, inequalities among people are accepted, clear differences of status are

conventional, and people are almost used to clear hierarchical differences as they are expected to obey the superiors. That is, there is a clear difference and distance between the employee and the boss. In a word, in large power distance nations, relations are based on respect, subordination, status and formality. On the contrary, in low-power distance cultures, hierarchical differences are de-emphasized. There is much more equality of opportunities among people and as such it is not quite easy to give orders or to receive orders. In small power distance nations, hierarchical positions of individuals are less considered in relations since relations are based on equality.

The second dimension in Hofstede's paradigm is individualism versus collectivism (IDV) which looks at the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. Individualism is the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of a group. Individualistic societies focus more on the individual than on the group. In such societies, the ties between individuals are loose and people's main concern is their close family members. According to Hofstede, children from individualistic societies grow up in nuclear families (1991, p. 50) consisting of the immediate family members. In individualistic attitude, individuals act according to self-interest, personal decisions are not unusual, and in the workplace incentives and bonuses are given out based on the individual's performance. According to Hofstede, employees from individual societies act according to their own needs in the workplace and organize the work so that they can do it individually (Hofstede, 1991).

On the opposite extreme, there exist collectivist societies where people are integrated in strong cohesive groups. Hofstede (1991) defines *collectivistic societies* as societies where people are integrated strongly from the beginning. These are the so-called in-groups where the members show unquestioned loyalty. In collectivist cultures, children grow up in "extended families", consisting of not just parents and siblings but also grandparents, uncles etc. These children are brought up to think in terms of "we" and the "*power of the [we] group*" (Hofstede, 1991, p. 50) is a main issue they grow up with.

The third cultural dimension is masculinity versus femininity. MAS index means the degree to which a society reinforces the traditional patriarchal model of male dominance. In masculine cultures, gender discrimination is remarkably evident. There is a high gap between men and women: Males dominate the society, possess power positions, and make most decisions while females are subordinated, dominated, and controlled by males (Hofstede, 2005). In masculine societies men are supposed to be tough, assertive, ambitious, and focused on material success while women are more tender, modest and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede, 2005). In such societies, power, competition, and control are dominant values and conflicts are resolved through fight. In feminine societies, on the other hand, both men and women are tender, modest, and concerned with the quality of life. In these cultures, males and females are treated as equals (Hofstede, 2005). Dominating values in the society are caring for others, preservation, modesty, tenderness, solidarity, compromise, and conciliation. Managers seek consensus and conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation.

The fourth cultural dimension is uncertainty avoidance defined as the “extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations” (Hofstede, & Hofstede, 2005, p. 167). The UAI focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertain, unstructured, and ambiguous situations (Hofstede, 2005). A high rank in uncertainty avoidance indicates a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. In cultures with a high rank of uncertainty avoidance, people feel quite uncomfortable with unexpected or unscheduled situations. They feel uncertainty is a threat and must be fought continuously. Clear rules, laws, controls, regulations and norms are dominating values in these societies. In a culture with a high uncertainty avoidance index, people are expected to be punctual, scheduled, rule-oriented, and formal. Forethought, planning, and programing are dominant values.

On the opposite side, there exists low UAI. In cultures with low UAI, there is a higher tolerance for ambiguity as people accept uncertainty as a feature of life. In such societies people are more open to differing perspectives, divergent opinions and diversity which are

values that pave the way for innovation. Change, taking risk and diversity are dominating values.

As evident from Hofstede’s definition and discussion of indices, cultures are either feminine or masculine, either collectivist or individualist, either comprised of the index of high uncertainty avoidance or composed of the index of low uncertainty avoidance, and finally, they have either the index of high power distance or the index of low power distance. In other words, cultures are categorized in a bipolar way; in an either/or way and can never triumph on a both/and perspective.

Such a way of categorization makes Hofstede’s model a “pre-globalization and pre-Internet phenomenon” (Fang, 2011, p. 5) which cannot cope with the requirements of the “borderless and wireless” (Fang, 2010, p. 166) global village where a holistic rather than a bipolar approach in cultural business and management is needed. In the globalized era, bank transfer, knowledge transfer, information sharing and “cultural collision” (Fang, 2005–2006, 2010) can happen in a time lapse of less than a moment. Henceforth, dichotomy, bipolarism, separation and segregation seem pointless. Fang’s cultural model has struggled to overcome the drawbacks of Hofstede’s model.

2.2. Fang’s Yin Yang Cultural Model

Based on the dialectical dualistic Chinese philosophy of Yin Yang, Fang (2005, 2011) uses the ‘ocean’ metaphor to describe cultures. A culture encompasses different values. Depending on the context, situation, and time, some values come to the surface while others remain dormant, at the bottom of the ocean, to be awakened under different circumstances in a way that “at any given point in time, some cultural values may become more salient, i.e., rise to the surface, while other cultural values may be temporarily suppressed or lie dormant to be awakened by conditioning factors at some future time” (Fang, 2011, p. 6). Fang’s Yin Yang cultural model is a dynamic holistic dualistic and dialectical model which can cope with the requisites of the globalized era, namely knowledge transfer, cross-cultural interaction and trans-national communication—as its focus is on *cultural nearness* rather than *cultural differences*.

Fang's innovative Yin Yang model is a holistic, dynamic, and dialectical (Chen, 2002; Li, 1998, 2008; Peng & Nisbett, 1999) view of culture incorporating change as the essence of the globalized era. Fang's Yin Yang cultural model (2005, 2011) triumphs on the four following propositions:

Proposition 1: If there exist {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vn'} in a culture, {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vn'} can coexist in the same culture depending on the situation, context, and time.

Based on Fang's first proposition, oceans of values do exist in every culture. There is absolutely no limitation for the range of values in a national culture. As a result, contradictory values can coexist in cultures.

Proposition 2: To guide action in a given context at a given time, human beings choose the most relevant value(s) from the full spectrum of potential value orientations ranging from {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vn'} to {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vn'}.

The second proposition focuses on the situationality of cultural value configuration. While the first proposition emphasizes the existence of an ocean of values in a culture, the second proposition explicates that depending on the context, situation, and time, one value is selected and comes to the surface of the ocean while other values remain dormant. In this view, "there exists no absolute truth; truth is embedded in and associated with situation, context, and time" (Fang, 2011, p. 12).

Proposition 3: In a culture, in a particular context and at a particular time, some values {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vn'} can be promoted, while other values {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vn'} can be suppressed, thus resulting in a unique value configuration.

Change, transformation, modification and adjustment to new contexts are essential for the survival of cultures. During the first years after Iranian Revolution (1979), talking about the former kings, having a bad covering (bad hejab), adopting the lifestyle of rich people, and using luxurious housewares were all severely condemned. However, nowadays, all these formerly-considered taboos are legitimized and even considered as prestigious way of life.

Proposition 4: Each culture is a unique dynamic portfolio of self-selected globally available value orientations ranging from {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vi'} to {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vi'} as a consequence of the culture's all-dimensional learning over time.

In today's world no culture can remain intact from the influence of foreign concepts, values, beliefs, ideologies and styles. Cultures collide and interact and out of such collisions and interactions, cultures diachronically and synchronically configure their "unique dynamic portfolio of self-selected globally available potentials in value orientations" (Fang, 2011, p. 21).

In sum, Fang's four propositions emphasize the essence of change, contradiction and paradox in national cultures. His model offers a new perspective on cultures which can encourage cultural tolerance, cultural nearness, cultural negotiation and cultural interaction rather than cultural difference and cultural seclusion.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

A total of 40 Farsi proverbs form the corpus of this study. In each dimension, it was tried to choose the proverbs with an existent equivalent in English or an existent translation. Moreover, it was attempted to choose the proverbs which reflect the dimension under study better than other proverbs. And finally, proverbs reflecting national cultures were chosen. Proverbs tell much about people's traditional way of experiencing reality, the proper or expected way of doing things, values and warnings, and rules and wisdom (Adekunle, 2007; Herzberg, 2012; Mieder, 1993, 2008; Skandera, 2008; Sobania, 2003; Stone, 2006; Taylor, 1931).

Taylor (1931) indicates that proverbs are associated with folk wisdom: "a proverb is a saying current among the folk" (p. 3). Almost all cultures have their own proverbs. According to Sobania (2003), "Proverbs are found in most languages, each encapsulating a small piece of cultural knowledge" (p. 66). Sohn (2006) believes that proverbs are condensed culture. Proverbs are defined as expressions of national character (Clasbery, 2010; Keck & Wood, 1998; Mieder, 2001; Mieder & Sobieski, 2003;

Sohn, 2006) and “cultural signs” (Skandera, 2008, p. 206).

Situation-bound, context-bound, and time-bound proverbs are not fixed; they are constructed to meet the requirements of a situation. This partly explains the coexistence of contradictory proverbs in a language. Consequently, this paper studies the coexistence of contradictory proverbs along Hofstede’s (2001) four cultural dimensions in Farsi proverbs as a reflection of contradictory value configuration of Iranian culture.

3.2. Procedure

Farsi proverbs were categorized along four dimensions of Hofstede’s (1980, 1991, 2005) static cultural model. To provide the proper English translation of these proverbs utmost effort was made to find the closest English equivalent and for the cases where the equivalent did not exist, an exact translation was provided by the researcher for the sake of the present paper.

After finding the proper equivalent or translation, or in some cases providing the proper translation of the proverbs in English, the value, wisdom and insight of the proverbs are extracted and discussed. Next, proverbs which impart contradictory values are arranged just along the first group of proverbs. Finally, the contradictory value configuration of the proverbs is studied along the four propositions of Fang’s Yin Yang cultural model.

Table 1

Farsi Proverbs with High Power Distance Index

Farsi Proverb	English Translation or Equivalent
Kabootar ba kabootar, Baaz ba baaz	Birds of a feather flock together
Piaz ham khodosh ro dakhele miveha karde	Onion also calls itself fruit
Ma invare jooob, to oonvare jooob	We stay on this side of the channel, you stay on the other side

All these proverbs emphasize the observation of status, rank, nobility, position and hierarchy in social relations. However, there are lots of other proverbs which contradict the aforementioned proverbs and make Iran seem a country in possession of small power distance culture. There are proverbs which treat people

4. Results

4.1. Power Distance Index

Hofstede studied power distance index (PDI) in 50 countries and 3 regions. According to his analysis, power distance is high in Latin, Asian and African countries, while it is smaller for Germanic countries. The PDI falls into a range between 11 and 104; however, the theoretical range of the index is from -90 which means no power distance to + 210 which means supreme power distance (Hofstede, 1983). In Hofstede’s research study, Iran gained the rank of 58, which implies that Iran is closer to the side of high power distance. However, in Iranian milieu, there are factors which both support and contradict such a theory.

There are old sayings in Farsi language which imply the existence of a fixed hierarchical status and the consequent lack of equality among social classes. For example, there is a proverb which says (Pish az akhond menbar naro) or (Do not go to the platform before the clergyman). The proverb refers to the dignified position of clergymen and the fact that all people should respect the religious leaders. The other Farsi proverb which directly refers to considering the age and status of people says (Asiyaab be nobat) or (to turn your mill, you should stand in the queue). In Iranian culture the proverb is used when someone is in a hurry to do something before the older ones. Proverbs with the implication of high power distance in Iranian culture are not few. Some are as the followings:

as equals. (Atash ke gereft, khoshk va tar ba ham misoozand) or “when there is a fire, the dry and the wet will burn equally”. It means that disasters don’t know the king from the slave.

While on a general national level the proverbs which imply high power distance are dominant

in the workplace and educational institutions, in parties, social revenues, and similar milieus, proverbs which imply low power distance are dominant. According to Proposition 1: If there exist {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vn'} in a culture, {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vn'} can coexist in the same culture depending on the situation, context, and time. That is "depending on the situation, context, and time" (Fang, 2011, p. 12), one selects the relevant proverb. The choice of one proverb is related to the context and not the core values. That is, people in a given culture are mentally surrounded by many potentially competing value orientations from which they choose the ones that are most relevant to the situation at hand, i.e., primed (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Mok & Morris, 2010). Moreover, based on proposition I: "At any given point in time, some cultural values may become more salient, i.e., rise to the surface, while other cultural values may be temporarily suppressed or lie dormant to be awakened by conditioning factors at some future time" (Fang, 2011, p. 6). The co-existence of paradoxical values and contradictory proverbs delineate the potentiality of a culture to "embrace opposite traits of any given cultural dimension" (Fang, 2011, p. 2).

4.2. Individualism versus Collectivism Index

Based on Hofstede's table, on the top of the scale stands the United States with the score of 91 at the 50th place which means that the US is the most individualistic country, while Guatemala stands at the bottom with the score

of 6 which means that Guatemala is the least individualistic or the most collectivist country (Hofstede, 1983). Hofstede comes to the overall conclusion that individualism prevails in Western societies, while collectivism prevails in Eastern and less developed countries: "Asian countries all scored ... collectivist" (Hofstede, 2007, p. 417). Moreover, almost "all rich countries scored high on the Individualism Index whereas almost all the poor countries scored low" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, pp. 78-79).

Gaining the score of 41, Iran is the 27th most individualistic country, which means that Iran is a relatively individualistic country. However, there are both individualistic and collectivistic aspects in Iranian culture. There are many Farsi proverbs with the implication that one should be independent and rely on no one. There is a Farsi proverb which goes:

(Bayad dastet ro az zanoot begiri va boland shi) or (If you want to stand up, put your hand on your knee so that you can use your own leg as your support).

The other Farsi proverb says (Kas nakharad poshte man joz nakhone angoshte man). The equivalent of this Farsi proverb in English is "a man's best friends are his ten fingers" and its translation is "If my back itches just my own fingers can help". Again the proverb implies one should be independent of any external aid. Some other Farsi proverbs with individualistic implication are as the following:

Table 2
Farsi proverbs with high Individualistic Index

Farsi Proverb	English Translation or Equivalent
Ashpaz ke do ta shod, aash ya shoor mishe ya bi namak	Too many cooks spoil the broth
Hame ra nemitavan az khod razi negah dasht	You can't please everyone
Ke dige sherakat nayayad be josh	A joint pot does not boil

There are also many proverbs in Farsi language which support the collectivism of Iranian culture. A Farsi proverb says (Yek dast seda nadareh) or (One hand makes little help), in the

sense that more hands (metonymy for people or helping hands) help more. Other Farsi proverbs with collectivist implications are as the following:

Table 3*Farsi Proverbs with High Collectivist Index*

Farsi Proverb	English Translation or Equivalent
Khahi nashavi rosva hamrange jama'at sho	When in Rome, do as the Romans do
Cho ozvi be dard avarad roozegar Degar ozvha ra namanad gharar	When the head aches, all the body is out of tune
Bani adam a'zaye yekdigarand Ke dar afarinesh ze yek goharand	All men are members of the same body
Hamrange jama'at shodan	To go with the stream

Individualism and collectivism co-exist in Iranian culture; it is just the temporal context that determines which one should be dominant at a particular moment. Fang writes: "I posit that potential paradoxical values coexist in any culture and they give rise to, exist within, reinforce, and complement each other to shape the holistic, dynamic, and dialectical nature of culture" (2011, p. 2). While Hofstede uses deterministic statements to categorize countries as either individualistic or collectivist, Iran can be categorized as neither individualistic nor collectivist as both behaviors co-exist and this counts for the perfectness of this culture as according to the tenet of 'holistic duality' of Yin Yang "a phenomenon or entity cannot be complete unless it has two opposite elements" (Li, 1998, p. 416).

4.3. Masculinity versus Femininity Index

Based on Hofstede's table, Sweden's MAS index is 5 and its rank is 1, which indicates that Sweden is the most feminine country. On the other side of the extreme is Austria with a MAS index of 79 and a rank of 49, which explicates that Austria is the most masculine country. In the same table, Iran scores 43 and stands as the 17th country. According to this categorization, Iran falls on the feminine side, which would probably be surprising for some Iranians. There

are studies that contradict Hofstede's categorization of Iran as a feminine country by delineating the values that Hofstede would classify as masculine.

There are many proverbs which show Iranian culture as possessing the inherent characteristics of a feminine culture. Mediation and compromise, the characteristics of feminine culture, are highly valued in Iranian culture.

Hafiz says (Asayeshe do giti tafsire in do harf ast/ba doostan morovat, ba doshmanan modara) or (if you want to rest in peace, both in this world and in the world after, you should act gently with your friends and moderately with your enemies).

A life based on compromise rather than incitement is commendable. One should struggle not to provoke others. As said (Ase boro, ase biya, ke gorbe shakhet nazane) or (Move cautiously so that the cat does not hurt you). If one observes the grounds of moderation he will be safe.

Modesty is encouraged. According to PooriyaVali, another great Iranian poet, (Oftadegi amooz agar talebe feyzi/ Hargez nakhorad ab zamini ke boland ast) or (If you want to become prosperous, go and learn modesty/As the high lands never receive water).

Table 4*Farsi Proverbs with High Feminine Index*

Farsi Proverb	English Translation
Derakht harche barash bishtar mishavad, sarash forootar miayad	As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined
Cho doshnam gooyi, doa nashnavi, Bejoz koshteye khish nadravi	As you sow, as you reap
Cho natavan bar aflak dast andakhtan, zaroori ast ba gardeshash sakhtan	What can't be cured must be endured.
Kam bebar, zood bebar, hamishe bebar	Win small, win early, win often

At the other extreme pole, there are proverbs which delineate Iranian culture as masculine.

Some Farsi proverbs with such connotations are as the following:

Table 5
Farsi Proverbs with High Masculine Index

Farsi Proverb	English Translation or Equivalent
Dast pishe zaval nade, Hamleh behtarin noe defa ast	Attack is the best form of defense
Be marg begir, ta be tab razi shaved	Ask much to have a little
Khashm be adam shoja'at midahad Khashm shamshire tiz va borran ast	Anger edges valor
Naborde ranj ganj moyasar nemishavad	Nothing ventured, nothing gained

The first three proverbs praise boldness and aggressiveness and the fourth admires the virtue of hard work. Having both feminine and masculine aspects, Iranian culture challenges Hofstede's either/or cultural model in which every country is categorized on one side of the two opposite poles as either masculine or feminine. After all, "culture in action is full of paradoxes, diversity and change" (Fang, 2011, p. 11).

4.4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UA)

Hofstede studied UAI in 50 countries and 3 regions. Based on Hofstede's research, UAI is high in Latin countries, in Japan, and in German speaking countries. It is lower in Anglo-Saxon, Nordic, and Chinese culture countries. Singapore, with the score of 8, occupies the first place which means that Singapore has the lowest uncertainty avoidance culture. On the other extreme is Greece with the score of 112 and the 50th place, which means that Greece has the highest uncertainty avoidance cultural index. Iran with the score of 59 occupies the

20th place, which categorizes Iran as high in UAI.

There are proverbs which highly recommend caution. These proverbs consider cautiousness as the characteristic of a wise man:

(Adame dana be neshtar nazanad mosht) or (A wise man avoids edged tools) with the implication that a wise man avoids dubious situations.

(Ehtiyat sharte aghl ast) or (Every wise is cautious) is a Farsi proverb which emphasizes the necessity of fighting with dubious situations.

In the Iranian culture, there are numberless proverbs which recommend not to haste but to take time and consider all aspects. As a case in point, (Ajaleh kare sheytan ast) or (Haste is from the Devil) is a proverb which highlights the importance of slow and thoughtful actions. Some other proverbs which recommend caution, carefulness and thoughtfulness are as the following:

Table 6
Farsi Proverbs with high Uncertainty Avoidance Index

Farsi Proverb	English Translation or Equivalent
Roozeyeh shak dar nagir!	When in doubt, do nothing!
Sange bozorg alamate nazadan ast.	Great promise, small performance.
Kar az mohkam kari eyb nemikonad.	Always have two strings to your bow.
Bi-godar be ab nazan!	Look before you leap!

The above-mentioned proverbs simultaneously praise cautiousness, thoughtfulness, and restraint

and warn against too much ambitiousness. Along all the proverbs with high UA, there are

proverbs with low UA implications. These proverbs encourage one to be reckless and fearless as a timid person resembles a dead man who risks nothing, gains nothing and wins nothing:

(Harke tarsid mord, harke natarsid bord) or (No venture, no gain) in the sense that if you do not

risk you cannot expect to gain anything.

(Shoj'a yek bar mimireh, tarsoo hezar bar mimireh) or (A coward dies a thousand times, a brave just once) with the implication that fear can be as much destructive as death and that being bold is the requirement of a fruitful action.

Table 7

Farsi Proverbs with Low Uncertainty Avoidance Index

Farsi Proverb	English Translation or Equivalent
Adame tarsoo hezar bar mimireh.	Cowards die many times before their death
Tanav'o chashnie zendegi ast.	Variety is the spice of life
Har che pish ayad khosh ayad.	All is for the best
Aroose mamlekat aan dar kenar girad tang Ke booseh bar labe shamshire aabdar dahad	Faint heart never won fair lady

The co-existence of proverbs with high UA and low UA shows the existence of paradoxes and contradictions in Iranian cultural value configuration.

5. Discussion

There are some key principles in Hofstede's (2007) theorization of culture. First and foremost, in his model, cultural differences are emphasized; different histories, different cultural behavior and different management skills are emphasized across different national borders. Next, bipolar terminology is used to categorize cultures in a way that in Hofstede's paradigm, every national country-specific culture comes to have a fixed indexing. Cultures are categorized in terms of either/or; for example, a culture is either collectivist or individualistic, feminine or masculine, high or low in uncertainty avoidance, and finally high or low in power distance. Moreover, according to Hofstede, cultures hardly ever change.

However, the case study of Farsi proverbs as reflections of Iranian culture, revealed the coexistence of opposites along every index. According to proposition 1: If there exist {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vn'} in a culture, {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vn'} can coexist in the same culture depending on the situation, context, and time. That is "depending on the situation, context, and time" (Fang, 2011, p. 12), one selects the relevant proverb. People are

surrounded by many competing values from which they choose the ones that are relevant to the situation at hand, i.e., primed (Hong et al, 2000; Mok & Morris, 2010). This is in accordance with proposition 2: To guide action in a given context at a given time, human beings choose the most relevant value(s) from the full spectrum of potential value orientations ranging from {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vn'} to {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vn'}.

Moreover, based on the situationality of proposition 1: "At any given point in time, some cultural values may become more salient ...while other cultural values may be temporarily suppressed or lie dormant to be awakened by conditioning factors at some future time" (Fang, 2011, p. 6). This is in accordance with Proposition 3: In a culture, in a particular context and at a particular time, some values {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vn'} can be promoted, while other values {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-Vn'} can be suppressed, thus resulting in a unique value configuration.

The co-existence of contradictory proverbs delineates the potentiality of a culture to "embrace opposite traits of any given cultural dimension" (Fang, 2011, p. 2) and causes the dynamic nature of the culture. The point counts for the uniqueness of Iranian culture. Based on Proposition 4: Each culture is a unique dynamic portfolio of self-selected globally available value orientations ranging from {'+V1', '+V2', '+V3', ... '+Vi'} to {'-V1', '-V2', '-V3', ... '-

Vi' as a consequence of the culture's all-dimensional learning over time.

The findings of this study are in line with Bakhtin's theories of dialogism, heteroglossia and stratification. Bakhtin (1981) explicates the heteroglossic nature of language as the following:

Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. (p. 291)

Stratification is present in every language and is responsible for the heteroglossia (*raznorecite*): "Heteroglossia ... is another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse*" (Bakhtin, 1998, p. 40). At any given moment language is extremely heteroglot due to the languages of heteroglossia and every language of heteroglossia carries in it a particular value system. Heteroglossia is not simply the condition of multiplicity of voices that exists in language, but also diversity of what is hidden, what is carried and what is imposed by language and that is culture, ideology and meaning:

Actual social life and historical becoming create within an abstractly unitary national language a multitude of concrete worlds, a multitude of bounded verbal ideological and social belief systems; within these various belief systems (identical in the abstracts) are elements of language filled with various semantic and axiological content and each with its own different sound. (Bakhtin, 1998, p. 32)

The key characteristic of the heteroglossic world is 'dialogism'. Language is inherently 'dialogic' as diverse glosses and diverse speech acts, constantly 'address' each other. 'Dialogism', is basically "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole—there is a constant interaction

between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (1981, p. 426).

Language, according to Bakhtin, is extremely heteroglot, with every glossia coming to the surface under suitable time, place, and conditions. Bakhtin considers language as a "social phenomenon" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 291) characterized by diversity. Language is not a de-contextualized static system, rather language is ideologically, culturally, politically, socially, historically, economically and even religiously charged.

Extended on language, which is by essence a dynamic system, Fang's four propositions of cultural model can be re-written as:

Proposition 1: If there exist {'+V1 ', '+V2 ', '+V3 ', ... '+Vn'} in a language, {'-V1 ', '-V2 ', '-V3 ', ... '-Vn'} can coexist in the same language depending on the situation, context, and time.

Proposition 2: To guide action in a given context at a given time, human beings choose the most relevant glossia from the full spectrum of potential existing glossia within a national language.

Proposition 3: In a national language in a particular context at a particular time some glosses can be promoted, while other glosses can be suppressed, thus resulting in a unique value configuration of language.

Proposition 4: Each language is a unique dynamic portfolio of diverse glosses as a consequence of language orientation and re-orientation.

Based on Bakhtin's argument (1981), it can be inferred that language and culture are both stratified, situating in them diverse strata. Depending on proper context, situation, and condition, one stratum comes to the surface while other strata remain hidden waiting for other proper contexts to appear. Language and culture mutually stratify each other; language is a stratifying force for culture and culture is a stratifying force for language and the point leads to the particular spatial and temporal value configuration of both 'social phenomena'. Synchronically, language has a particular cultural value configuration which may come to be overturned diachronically. And, the same is

true about culture; culture has a particular linguistic value configuration which can be surpassed diachronically by other value configurations manifested in the emergence of a hidden stratum.

Overall, studying Farsi proverbs along the four cultural dimensions of Hofstede's model revealed the co-existence of paradoxes which by itself indicates the coexistence of contradictory values in Iranian culture. Realizing contradictions in one's own culture paves the way for cross-national and cross-cultural communication. In the "functionalist" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and "deterministic" (McSweeney, 2002) Hofstede's 'onion' model of culture, or essentially in any static model of culture, cultural differences lead to cultural collision:

When different 'onions' meet, they will collide. Similarly, when different national cultures meet, they will collide. Cultural differences will be accentuated, and cross-cultural clashes and conflicts will take place because each culture has its own indigenous stable history, beliefs, norms, and value systems that hardly change over time. (Fang, 2005, p. 75)

In Hofstede's model, "cultural differences" (Fang, 2011, p. 4) lead to "cultural distance" (Kogut & Singh, 1988) rather than *cultural contact*. However, "the Yin Yang perspective of culture emphasizes the need to understand the intrinsic paradoxical nature of culture" (Fang, 2011, p. 12), which stimulates cross-cultural interaction. Yin Yang perspective of culture is a "holistic, dynamic, and dialectical world view" (Li, 1998) with the capacity to encompass change, contradiction and paradoxes which are the essence of globalized era. In one such model, the survival of cultures depends on the dialogic interaction. Realizing the point paves the way for dialogue as an "obvious master key" (Holquist, 1990) and dynamic interactions of cultures and languages which are the essence of dialogism: "Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole—there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 426).

In a similar study on Chinese culture (Fang, 2012), parallel findings were discovered. It may

be inferred that similar studies on other languages and cultures might confirm this research and hence increase the possibility of the generalization of the findings. The point is additionally supported by the facts that first Fang's model is about cultures in general, second proverbs do exist in all languages and above all Hofstede's research was a broad study, performed on 50 countries,

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