

# ISO Relationship Series

# Friendship & Building Community

April.26 2024



## Friendship & Community Building

Ice Breaker:

**Find a new friend in this room and share your experiences making friends with international & domestic students. You can also discuss any cultural shocks you've experienced.**

# Today's focus

- Key concepts of American Friendship
- Insights from community leaders on friendship and building **your** community

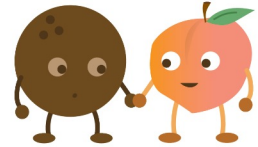


## Get to know U.S. culture by making American friends

- Helpful to have a cultural informant
- Americans who have traveled/studied abroad are usually more open to making international friends



# Peaches vs. coconuts



- Stereotypes of Americans: friendly but superficial  
<https://iso.mit.edu/americanisms/american-friendship/>
- Article: [The Paradox of American Friendliness](#)  
Friendliness vs. intention to be friends  
Peach vs. coconuts
- Visual – Americans are like a peach, warm & fuzzy on the outside; hard pit inside, hard to crack (they are very private and don't want to rely on friends too much; they really value their space and privacy)
- Many other cultures could be considered a coconut: hard to crack but once you do, the inside is sweet (always a friend)

# Friendship in the United States

- Students have **different classmates every year** in elementary (primary) school
- In middle school and high-school, classes switch every hour like MIT; different classmates in each class
  - Therefore, Americans are accustomed to having many **surface-level** friendships
- Students make friends in classes but often get to know each other better through **common activities**

# Friendship in the United States Cont..

- Americans meet and develop friendships through **similar** activities, roommates, school, and work
- **Americans considers many people “friends”**: acquaintances, people they see occasionally, only at church/synagogue/mosque, only in school, and they also have “best friends.”
- **Americans are busy**– if they say “Let’s get coffee!” they could have the best intentions but forget about it or not have time. It’s usually not personal. They highly value their privacy and personal space (including time)
- Encourage them to **set a date and time and remind them.**

# How to make new friends

- Same classes or department; Attend same event
- **Similar Hobbies/activities**
- Ask for email, social media info, or phone number  
Sometimes **asking for email** address is less 'personal'
- **Propose** several dates/times and **follow up** again before giving up.
- Don't forget to **confirm** your meeting the day of (otherwise, they may not show up!)
- Don't be afraid to be rejected!



# Friendship & Dating

- Dating and relationships can be **confusing**, even for Americans! Asking someone for a cup of coffee could be considered a “date.”
- **Clarify** if it’s a date or friend meetup – ask if you’re not sure.
- If one person **pays**, it could be interpreted as a date; if not sure, just split the bill.
- **“Let’s hang out”** – could be friendship or romantic interest – if you are interested, you could just go and see what the vibe is; if you want to make sure it’s as a friend, you should clarify: “Sure, as friends, right?”

# GlobeSmart, Aperian Global

- GlobeSmart Profile –increase self-awareness
- FREE for the MIT community: <https://globalsupport.mit.edu> (Take this assessment!)
- 5 different spectrums of characteristics examined

Independent – Interdependent

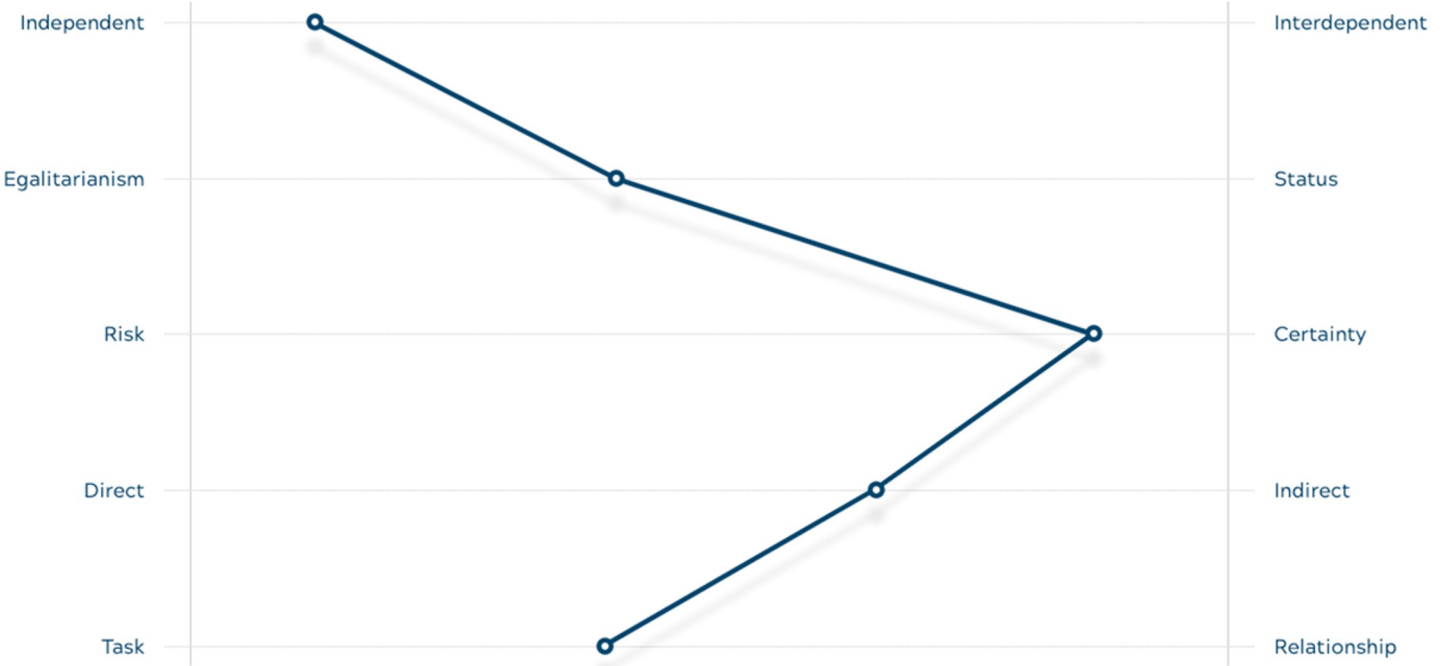
Egalitarianism – Status

Risk – Certainty

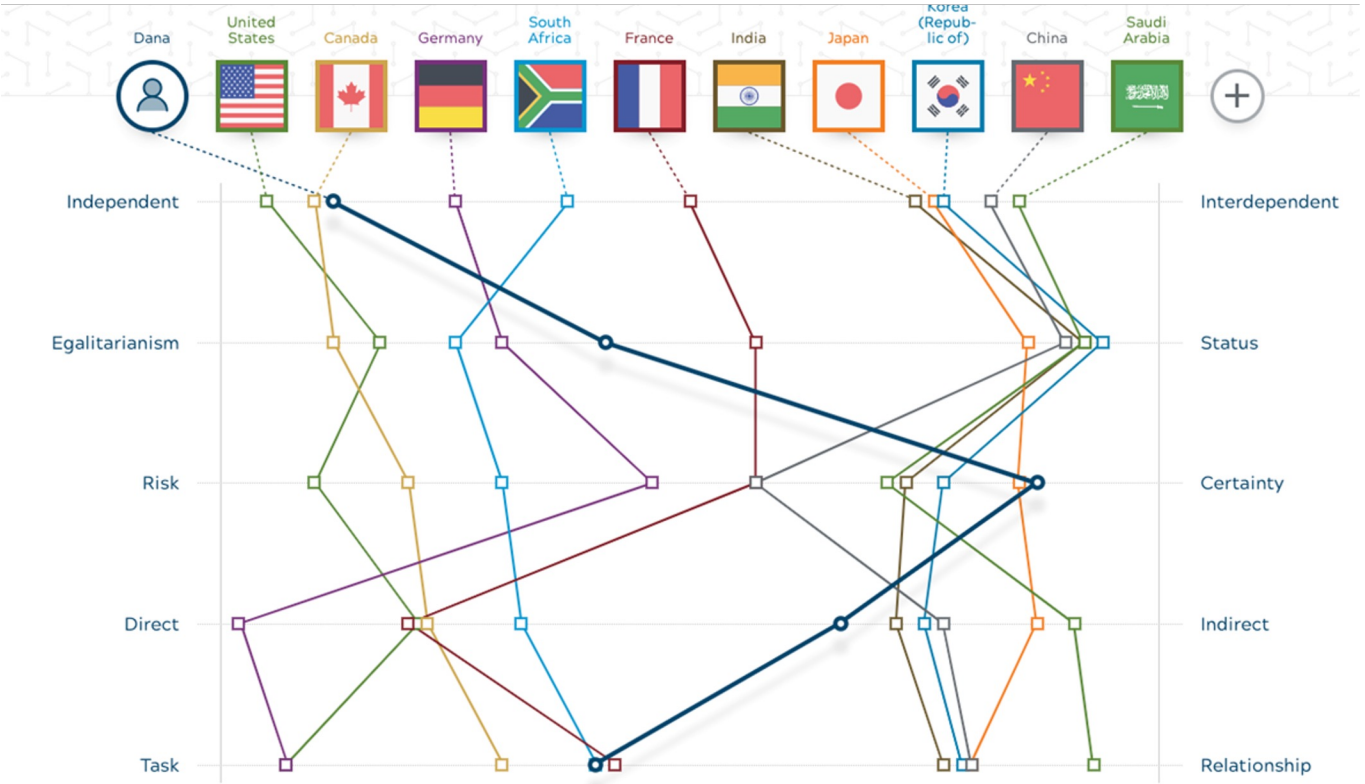
Direct – Indirect

Task – Relationship

# Use GlobeSmart Wisely - Dana's Profile

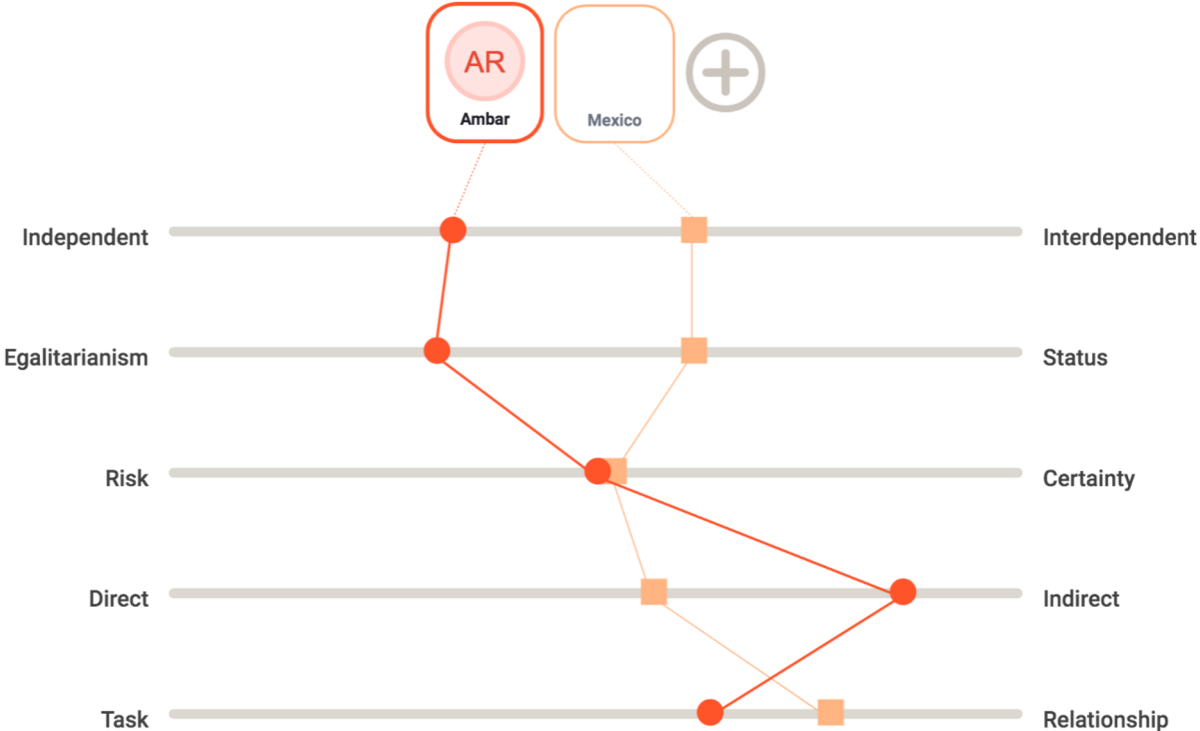


# GlobeSmart Profile Comparisons



*Placement of points on each dimension for the selected group are based on the median of the data collected and are not intended as a definitive statement about any group or individual.*

# Use GlobeSmart Wisely - Ambar's Profile



**ISO Relationship Series**  
**Student's Insights**



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