Cultural Origins of Behavior

Inquiry Questions:

- How does culture influence behavior?
- Are cultures comparable?

Etic vs. Emic approach to research

Two ways to approach cultural research:
Etic- culture examines as if from above/outside
Emic- trying to understand a culture from within

What are the advantages/disadvantages to each approach?

Difficulty in Cross-Cultural Research

Cultures are unique and inherently difficult to compare; process of acculturation is different.

Research methodology/theory comes from Euro-American contexts; may lack validity in other regions.

Researcher bias

Geert Hofstede
Maastricht University, Netherlands

Attempted to simplify and standardize cross-cultural research

Used 40 countries to develop 5 dimensions of culture

Explains human behavior across cultures

Hofstede

Working for IBM Europe in 1965

Sent questionnaires to 117,000 employees worldwide

Completed initial study in 1973

Found certain trends in the analysis of data

Individualism vs. Collectivism (Hofstede 1980)

Describes the importance given to group belonging and integration

Individualistic cultures- people tend to act independently

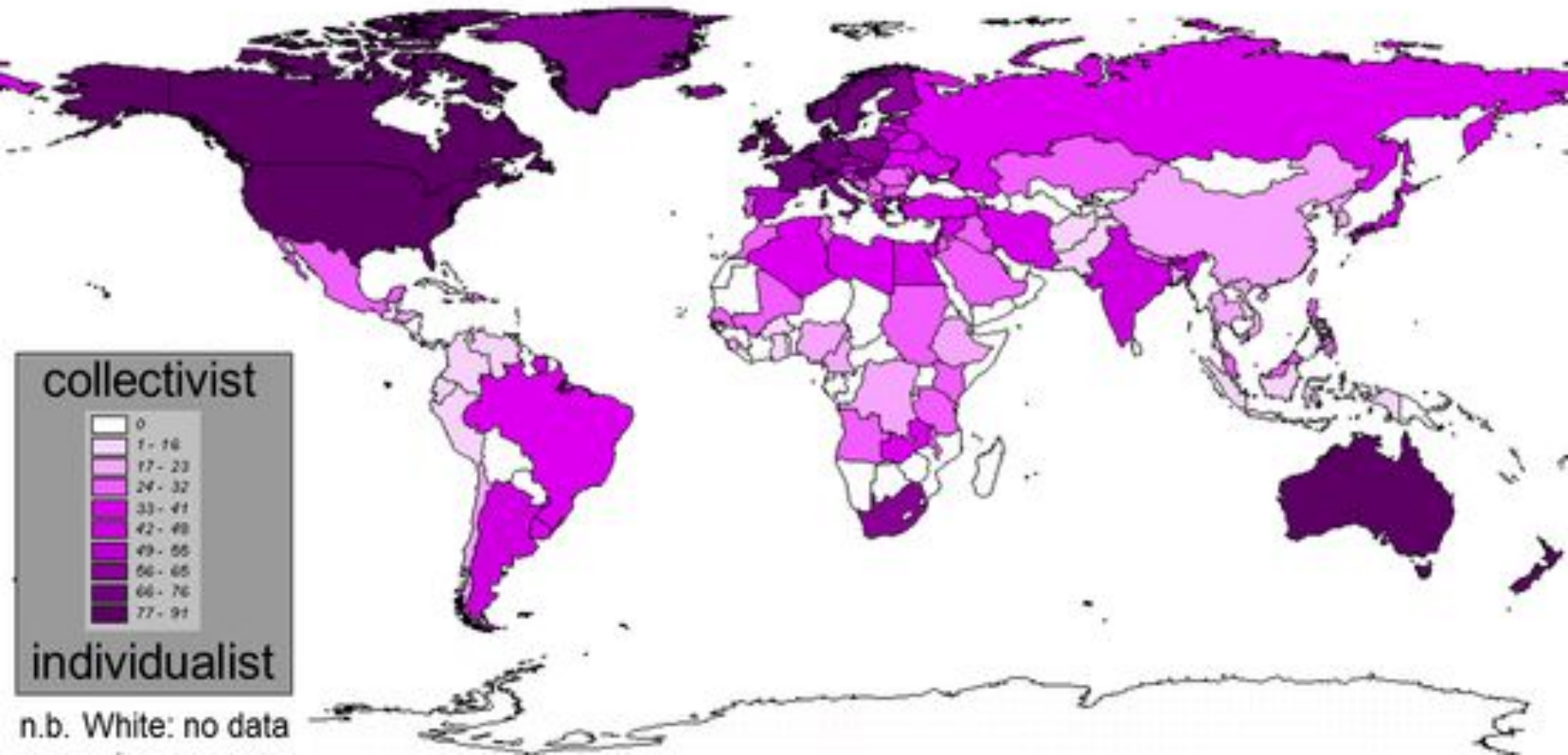Collective cultures- people emphasize group loyalty & cooperation with others
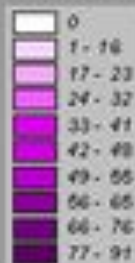
Traits of Individualistic Cultures

Uniqueness

Self-Sufficiency

Independence

Autonomy

verywell

Traits of Collectivistic Culture

Social rules focus on promoting selflessness

Working as a group

Doing what's best for society

Families and communities have a central role

Collectivism – Individualism World map

collectivist

|	
	0
	1 - 16
	17 - 23
	24 - 32
	33 - 41
	42 - 48
	49 - 55
	56 - 65
	66 - 76
	77 - 91

individualist

n.b. White: no data

Power Distance Index (PDI) (Hofstede 1980)

The extent to which people accept unequal distributions of power

High PDI culture- the boss makes all the important decisions, and employees accept the authority of their superiors.

Low PDI culture- decisions are made more collaboratively, and all employees expect some say in how things are done
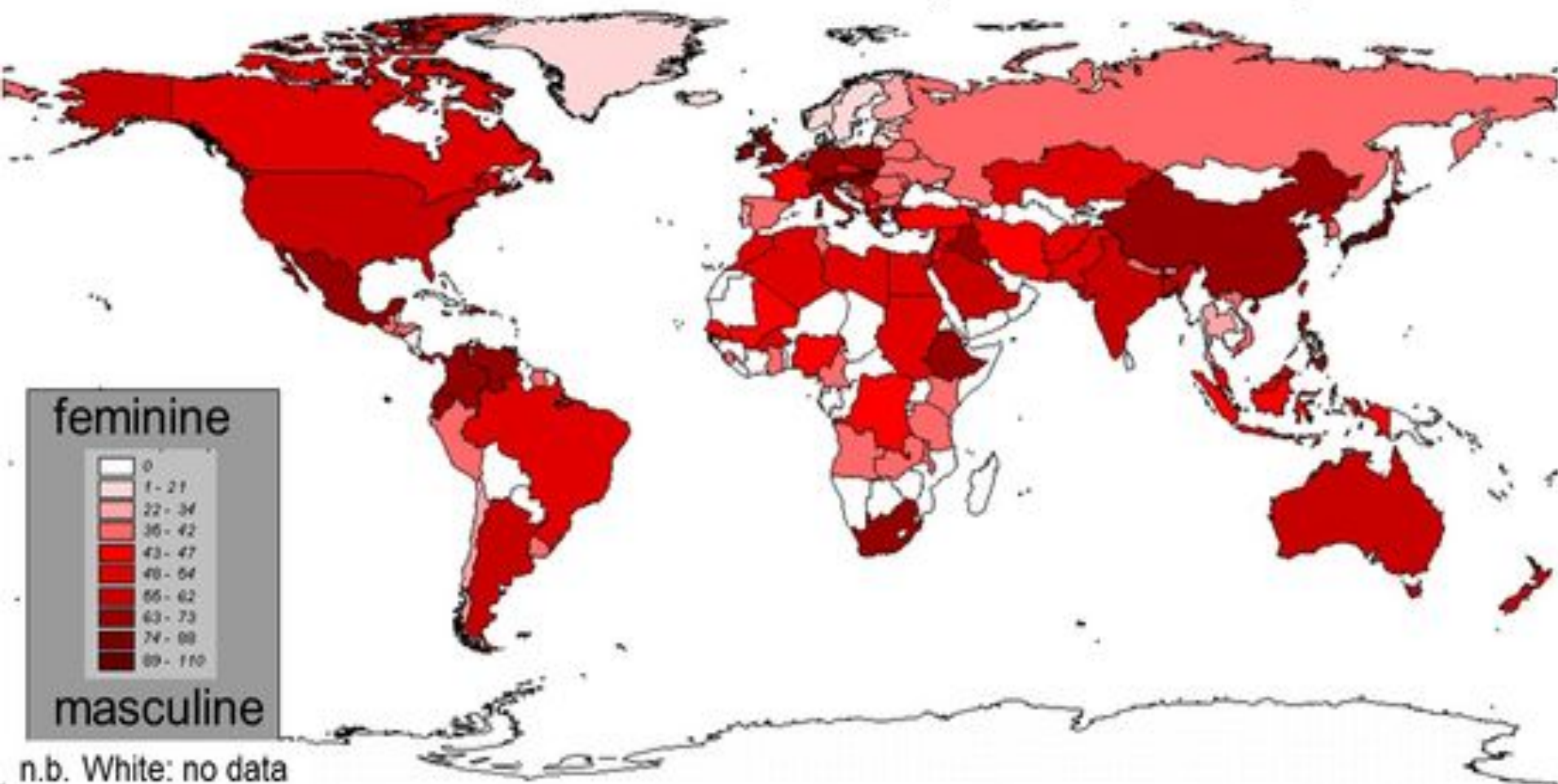
Power Distance World map

small

	0
	1 - 22
	23 - 40
	41 - 50
	51 - 57
	58 - 61
	62 - 67
	68 - 74
	75 - 85
	86 - 104

large
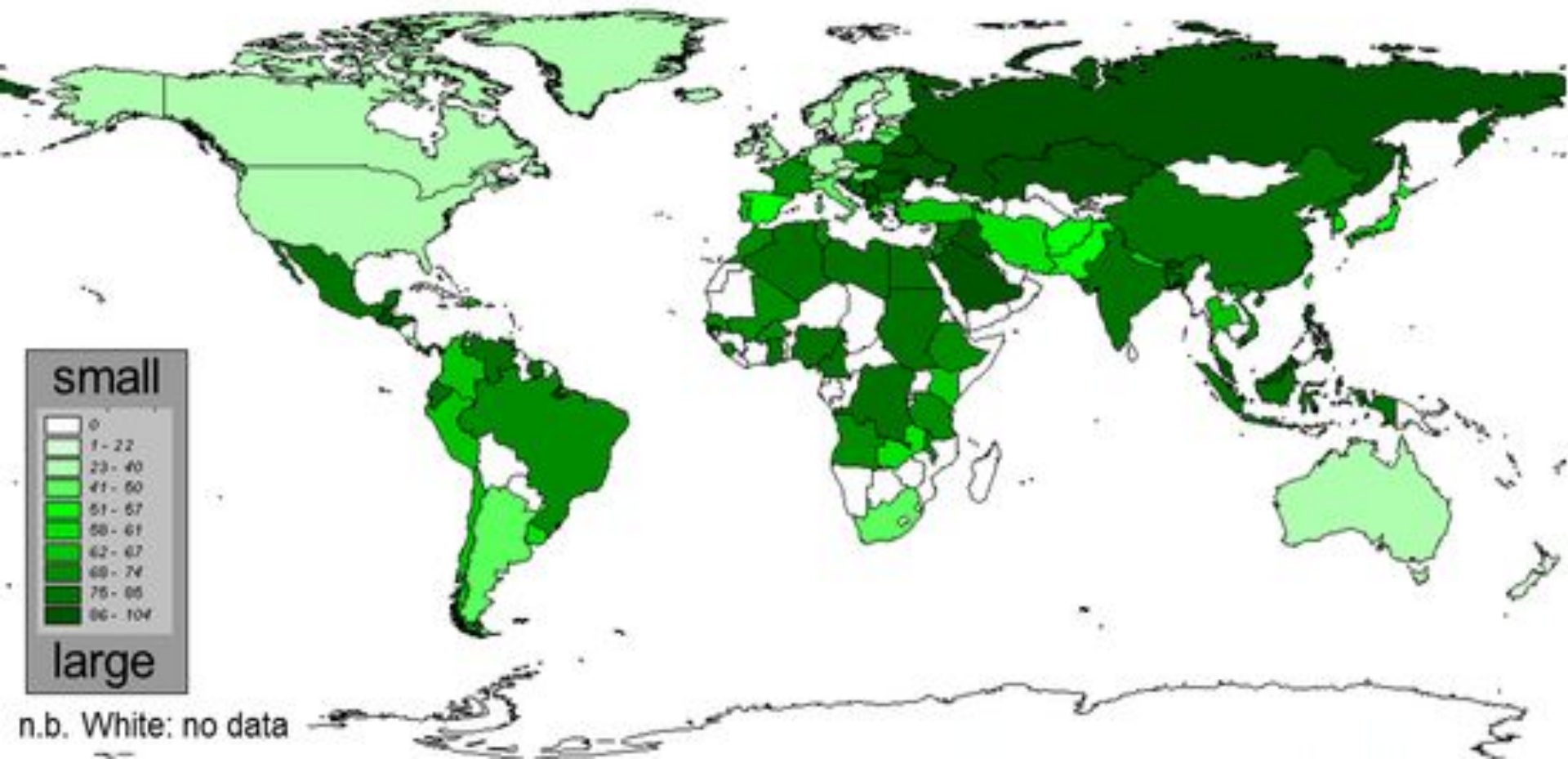
Masculinity vs. Femininity (Hofstede 1980)

The importance given to achievement and striving for success.

Masculine culture- there is more competition, focus on material rewards, and assertiveness.

Feminine culture- there is more emphasis on cooperation, modesty and quality of life

Femininity - Masculinity World map

feminine

	0
	1 - 21
	22 - 34
	35 - 42
	43 - 47
	48 - 54
	55 - 62
	63 - 73
	74 - 88
	89 - 110

masculine

n.b. White: no data

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (Hofstede 1980)

Describes tolerance for ambiguity.

High uncertainty avoidance- tend to be strict rules and guidelines that establish how things must be done.

Less uncertainty avoidance- more acceptance for different ways of doing things, and a more free-flowing environment.

Uncertainty Avoidance World map

unc.tolerant

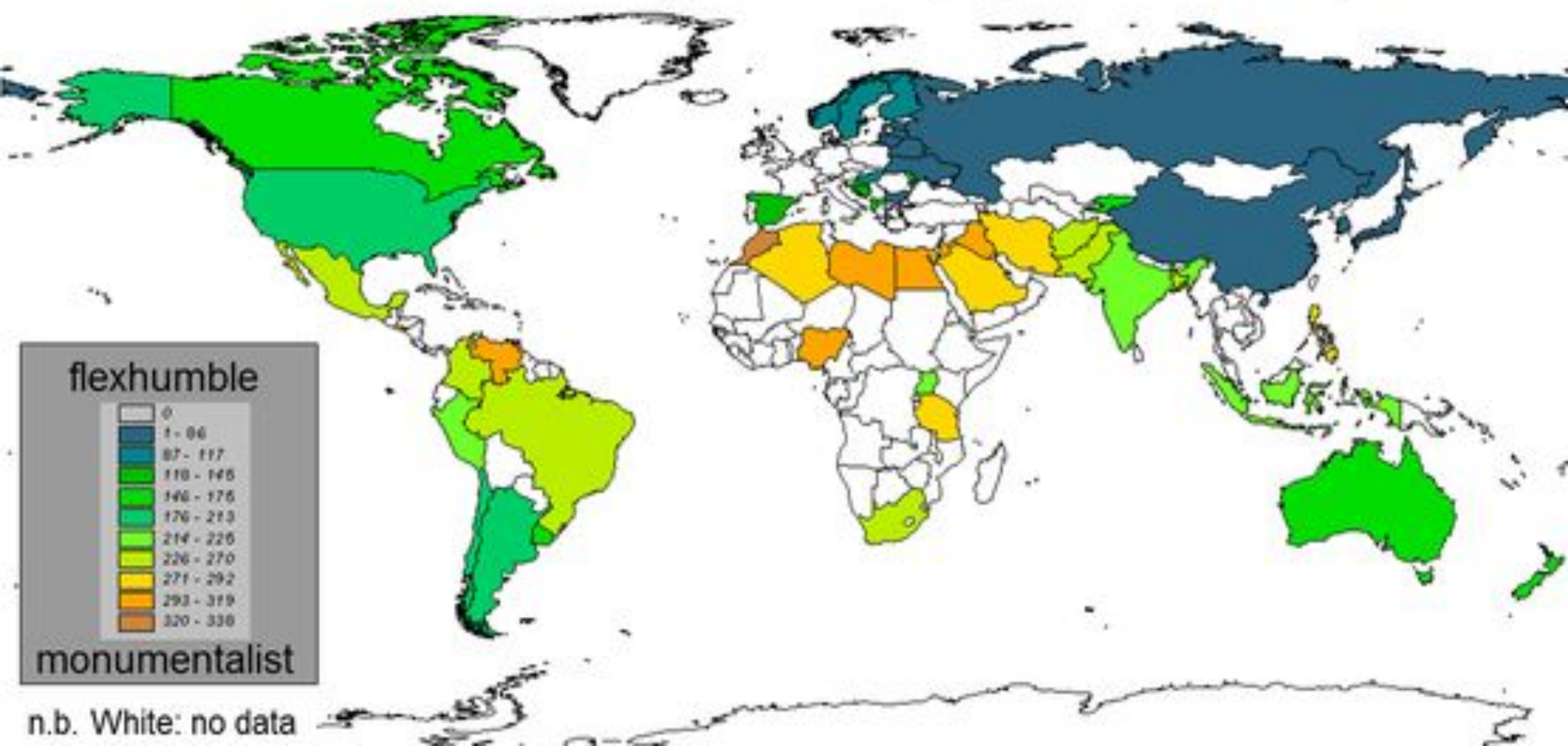|	
	0
	1 - 36
	37 - 46
	47 - 53
	54 - 60
	61 - 70
	71 - 82
	83 - 88
	89 - 96
	97 - 112
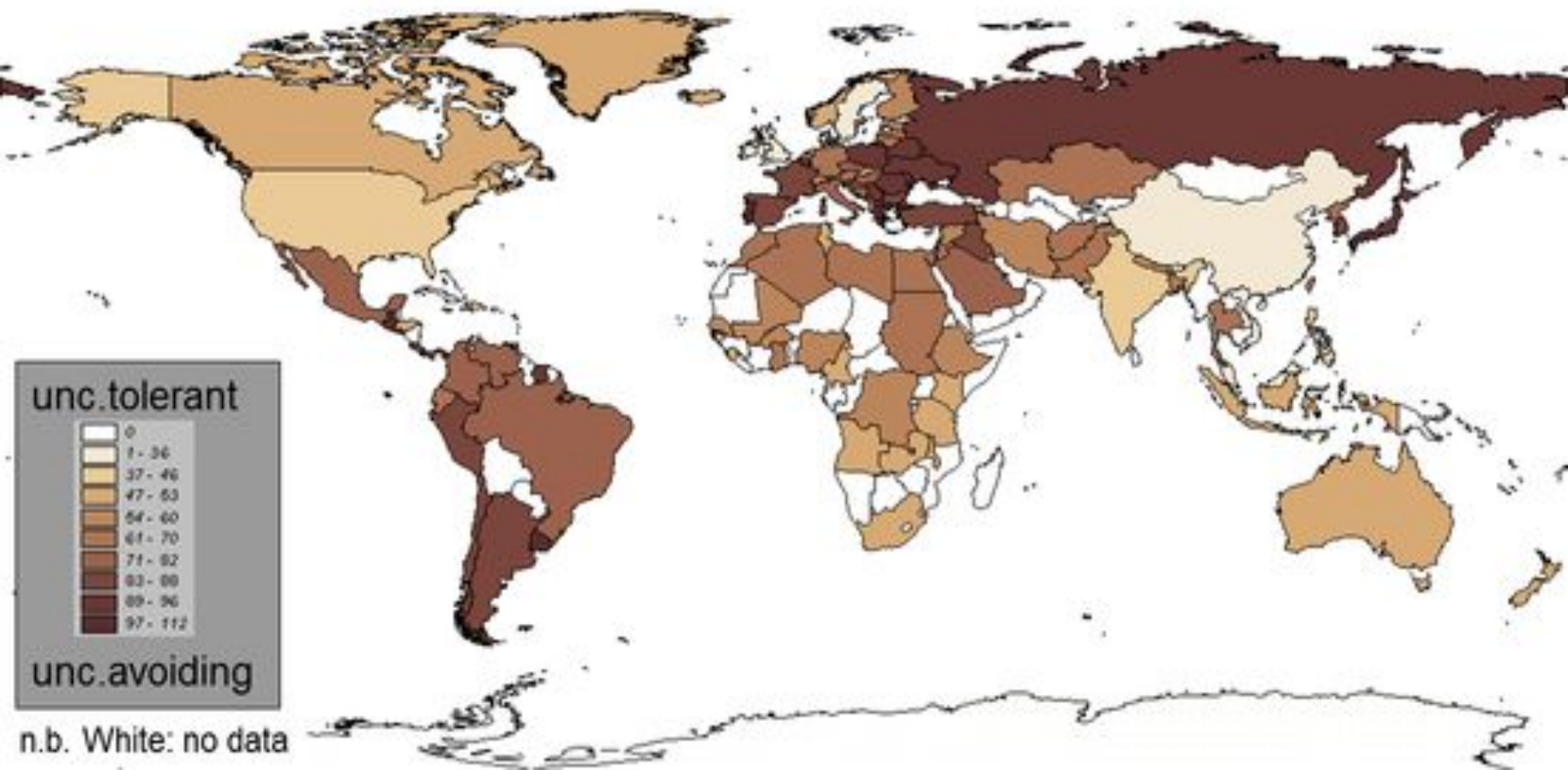
unc.avoiding

n.b. White: no data

Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation (Hofstede 1991)

Describes how people think about time.

Short-term culture- focus on the past and the present, and tend to seek immediate gratification.

Long-term culture- focus on the distant future, and are willing to delay immediate gratification in favor of working towards long-term goals

Short-term orientation (Monumentalism) – Long-term orientation (Flexhumility) World map (based on WVS)

flexhumble

| 0 |
| 1 - 86 |
| 87 - 117 |
| 118 - 145 |
| 146 - 176 |
| 176 - 213 |
| 214 - 226 |
| 226 - 270 |
| 271 - 292 |
| 293 - 319 |
| 320 - 338 |

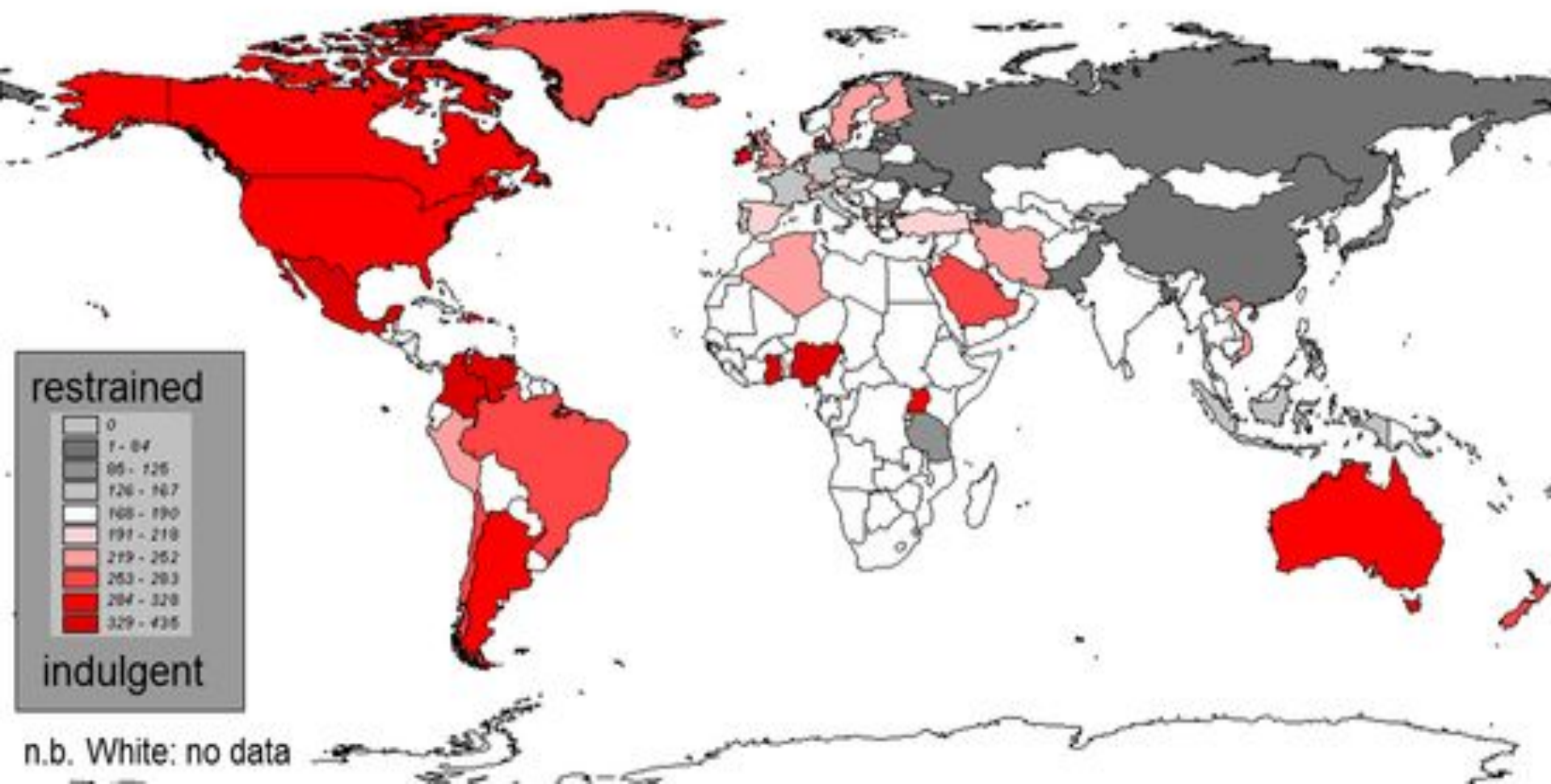monumentalist

n.b. White: no data

Indulgence vs. Restraint (Hofstede 2010)

Indulgent culture- it is good to be free, following your impulses is good

Restrained culture- life is hard and duty, not freedom, is the normal state of being

Indulgence - Restraint World map (based on WVS)

restrained

- 0
- 1 - 84
- 85 - 126
- 126 - 167
- 168 - 190
- 191 - 218
- 219 - 262
- 263 - 283
- 284 - 328
- 329 - 435

indulgent

n.b. White: no data

Advantages with Hofstede's Research

1. First large-scale attempt to quantify cultural differences
2. 100,000 participants overall makes findings particularly reliable due to large sample size in each country
3. Further research into dimensions provide supporting evidence

Problems with Hofstede's Research

1. National cultures are complex and cultural dimensions do not act in isolation
2. Each dimension may be expressed differently in each culture. (ie. collectivism in Korea is not the same as collectivism in Kenya)
3. Dimensions also assume values are shared by all the people within a country
4. Research only surveyed IBM workers who may not be representative of wider population of their country

USA
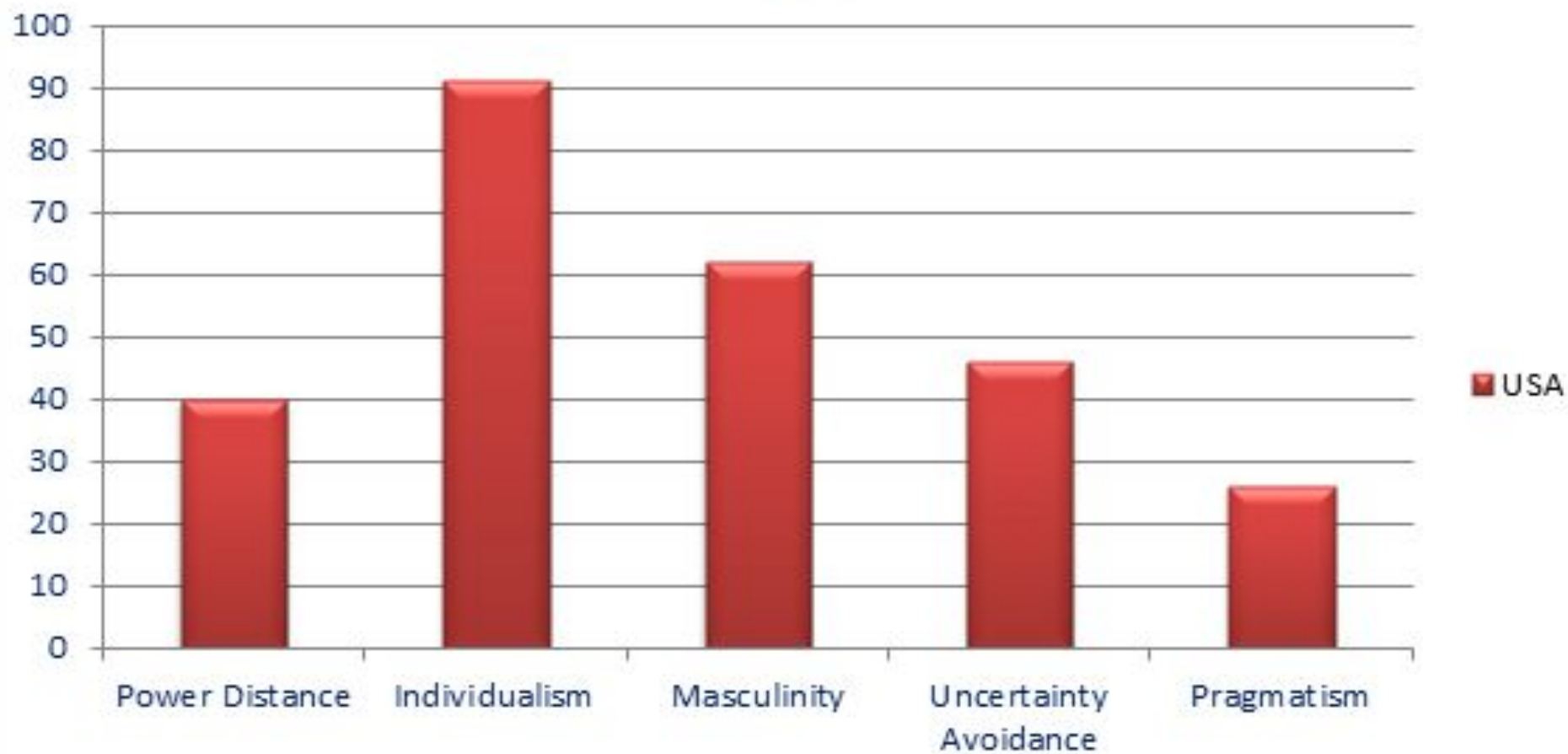
Exit Slip

Discuss the strengths and limitations of cross-cultural research in relation to one cultural dimension.

Triandis (2001) Univ. of Illinois