



SEMINARIO

“Tightness-Looseness: A Fractal Pattern of Human Difference”



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Over the past century, we have explored the solar system, split the atom, and wired the Earth, but somehow, despite all of our technical prowess, we have struggled to understand something far more important: our own cultural differences. Using a variety of methodologies, my research has uncovered is that many cultural differences reflect a simple, but often invisible distinction: The strength of social norms. Tight cultures have strong social norms and little tolerance for deviance, while loose cultures have weak social norms and are highly permissive. The tightness or looseness of social norms turns out to be a Rosetta Stone for human groups. It illuminates similar patterns of difference across nations, states, organizations, and social class, and the template also explains differences among traditional societies. It’s also a global fault line: conflicts we encounter can spring from the structural stress of tight-loose tension, and our data show that they have important implications for success in international mergers & acquisitions and expatriate adjustment, and can also help to explain some of today’s most puzzling political trends and events. An understanding of this template can help us develop more empathy and to bridge out cultural divides.

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ore 11.00 - Aula “Ezio Ponzo”
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