



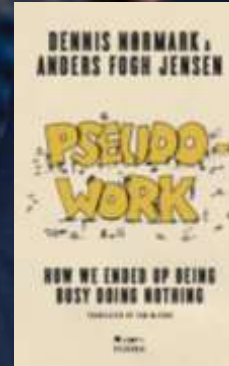
Cultural understanding for stone age brains

Dennis Nørmark

- MSc, Anthropology

- Writer of several books on Danish Culture and on cultural understanding in business and organizations

- Former chief consultant, head of training and conceptualizing chief consultant at Living Institute, Voluntas and MindLab



Menu



Why Culture?



Cultural Intelligence and
high performance teams



The differences that make
a difference

Why spend time on
culture...?



Mars Climate Orbiter (UK/US)

Crashed: 1999

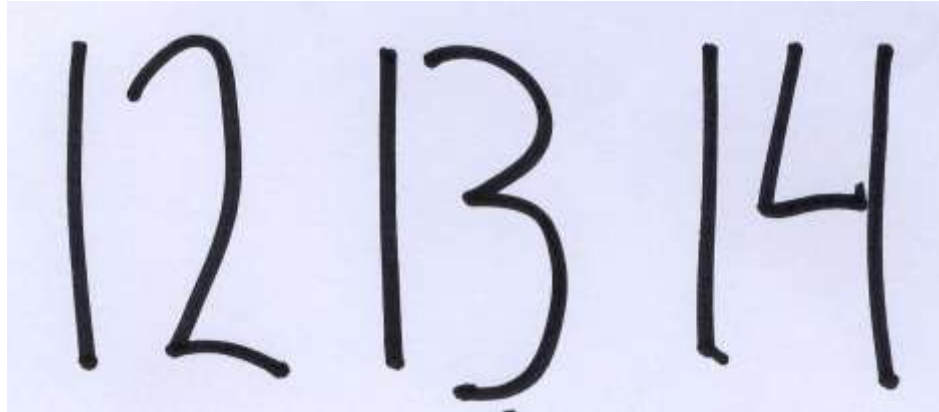
Cost: \$125 mio

Culture – A definition

Culture is an *interpretive community*. It guides the members of a certain group and it forms the expectations to behaviour and norms of others. It is a *network of meaning* structured by some central values regarded as **significant, true** and even **self-evident** by the members of this community. Values that have proven to be useful and constructive in the community's involvement with their social and ecological reality.

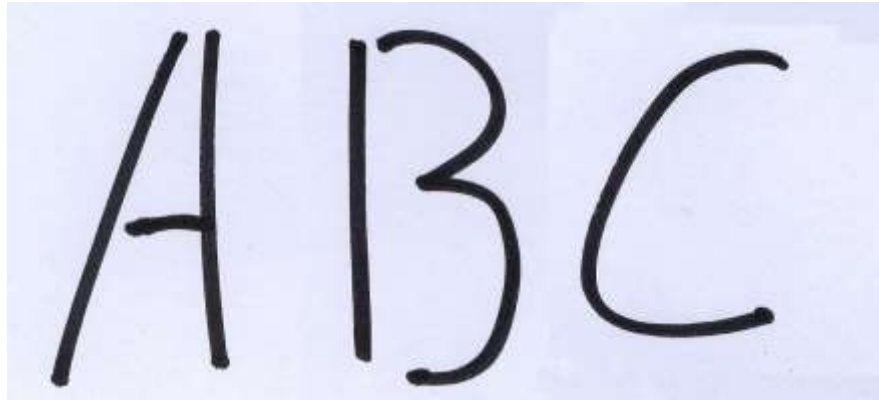
Cultural Intelligence for Stone-Age Brains

Half of you close your eyes



Look closely at these numbers

And the other half



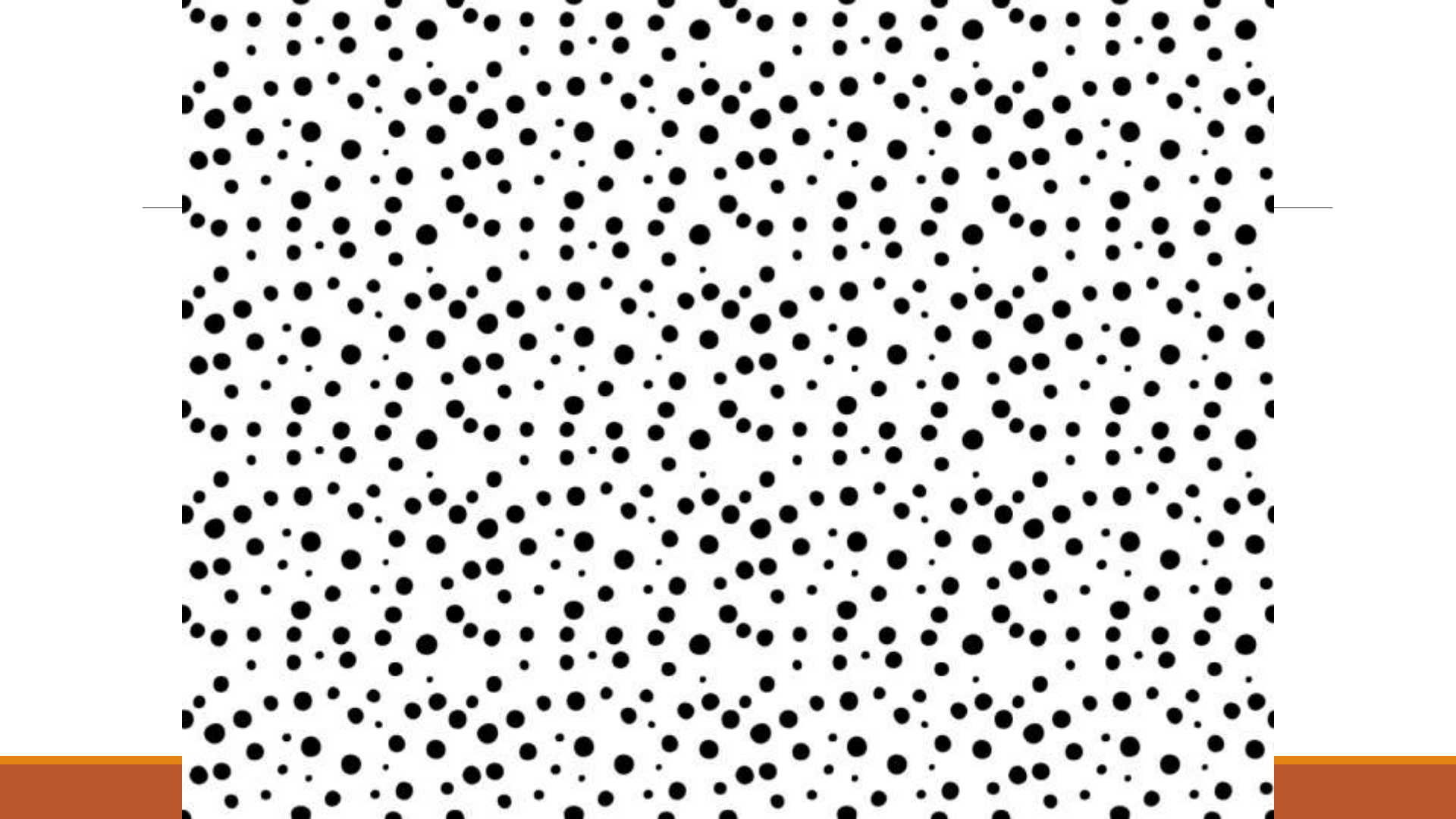
Look closely at these letters

Now everybody

What have we here?



Who is right?





Creating trust

Behaviour prediction

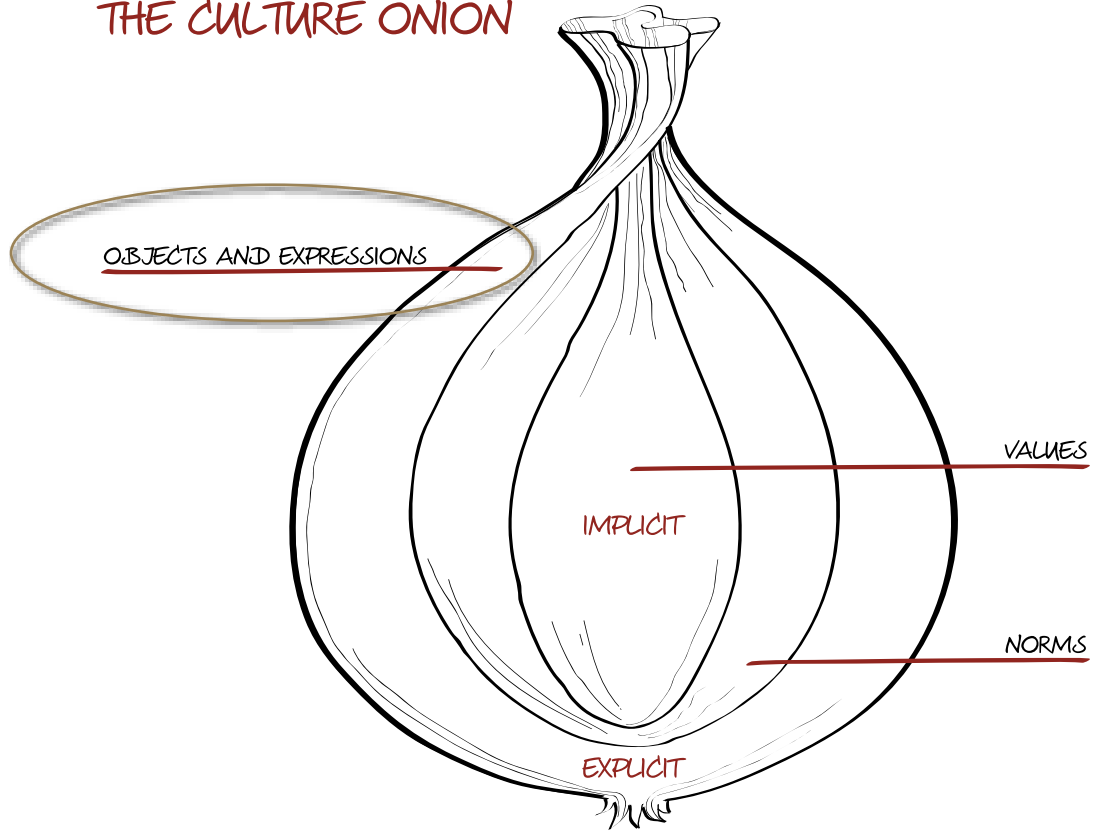
Minimizing misunderstandings

Collective planning





THE CULTURE ONION





Objects and expressions



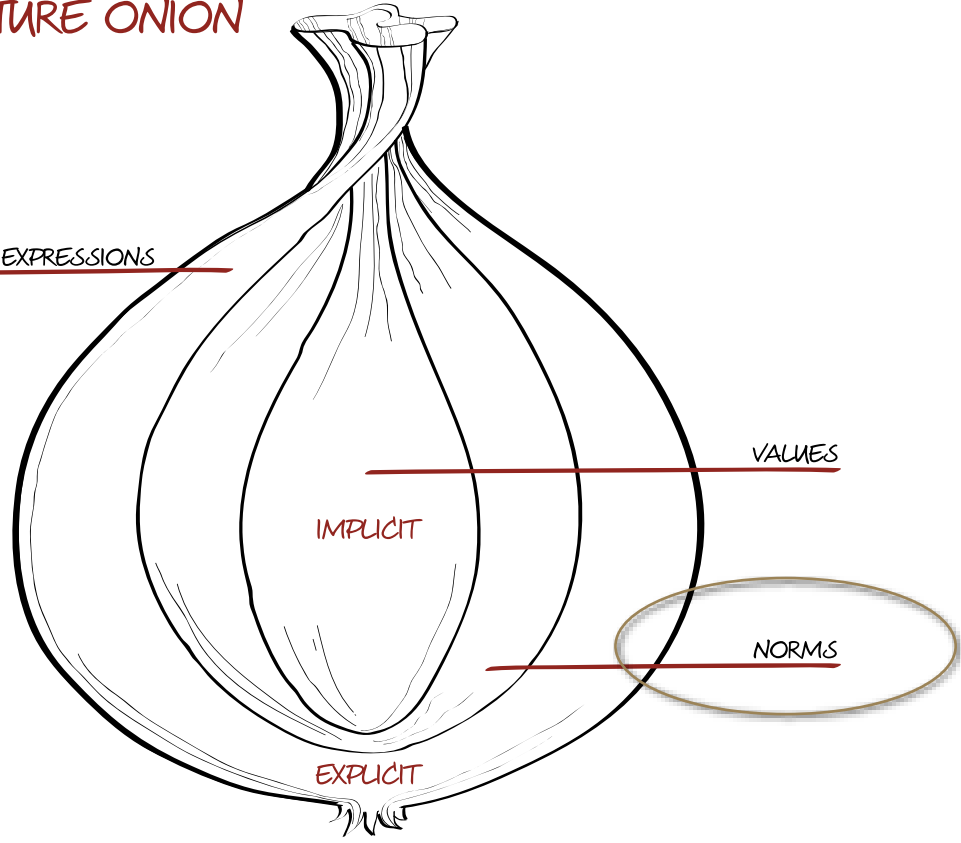
Flag = Hurray



Source: Richard Jenkins (2011)

THE CULTURE ONION

OBJECTS AND EXPRESSIONS



VALUES

NORMS

IMPLICIT

EXPLICIT

Godmorgen!





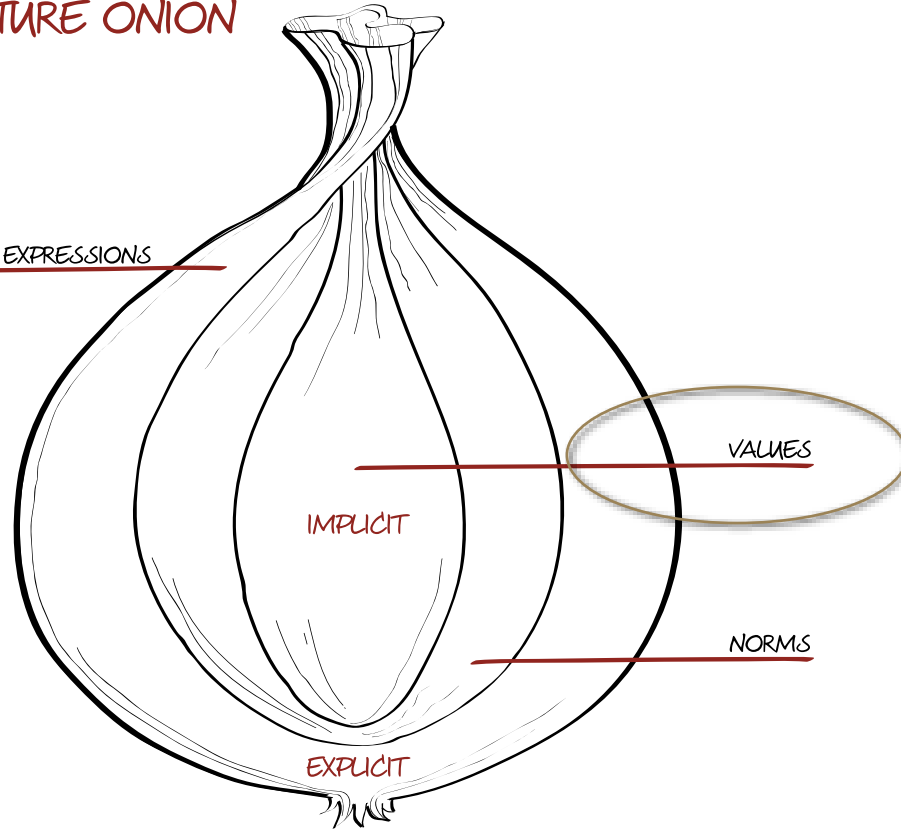


Carlsberg Probably the best beer in the world.

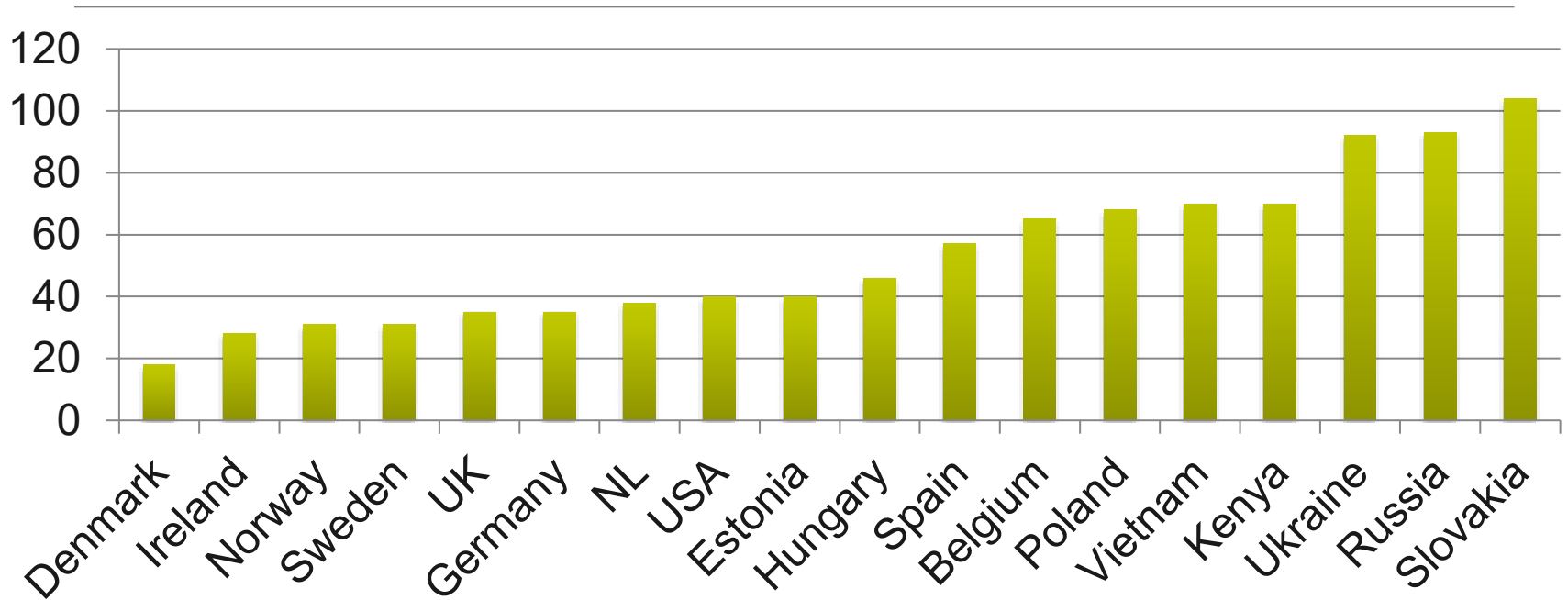
Communication

THE CULTURE ONION

OBJECTS AND EXPRESSIONS



Values - Powerdistance



Source: Gert Hofstede

What is cultural intelligence?

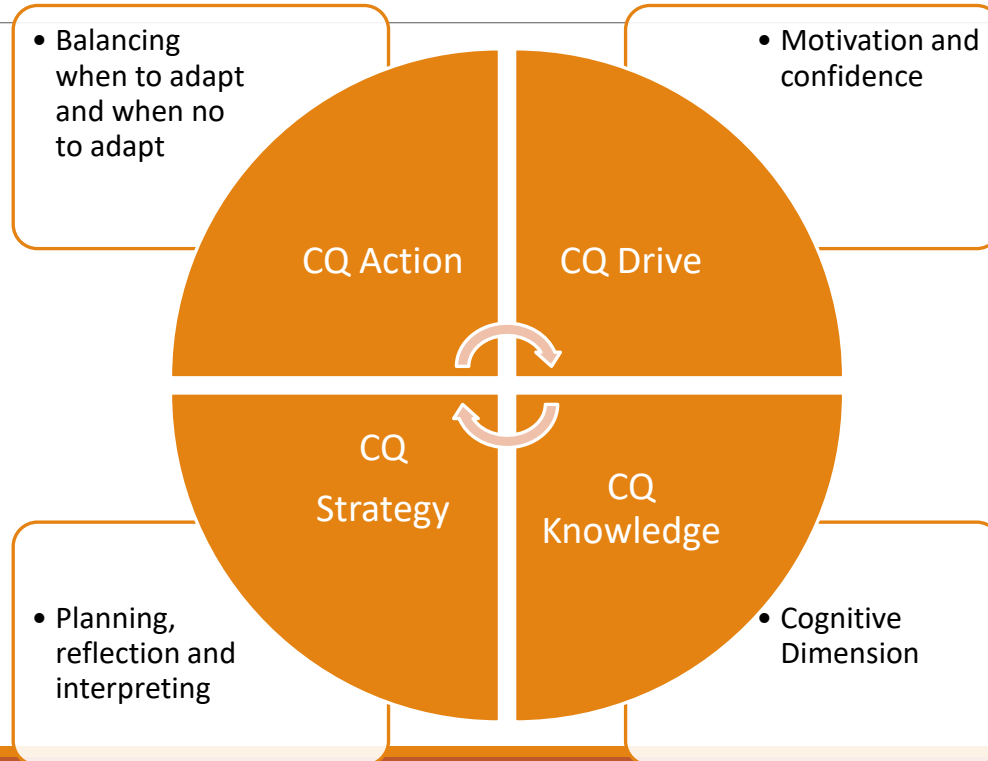
WHAT IS NEEDED IN A TEAM TO BE OR BECOME THAT?



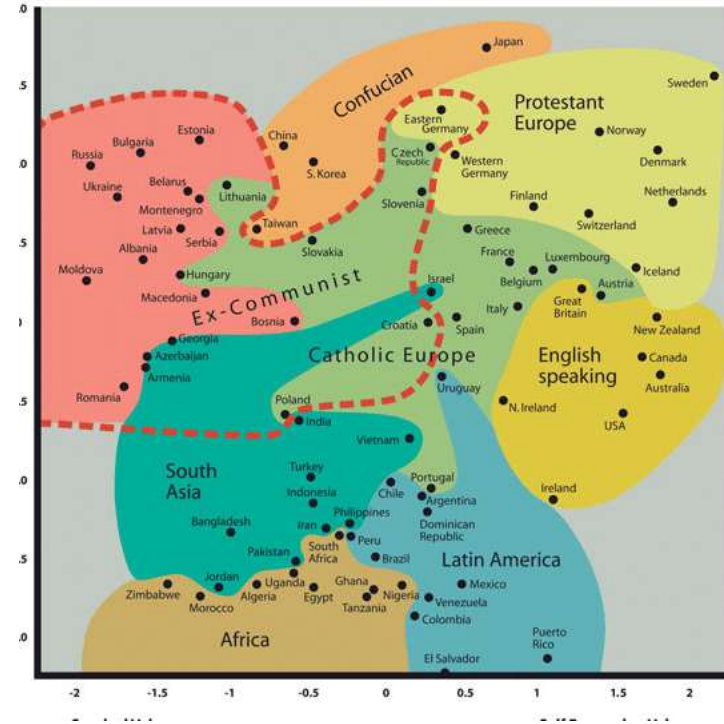
Why can some individuals move in and out of lots of cultures easily and effectively while others can't?



Cultural Intelligence (CQ)



Cultural Mapping

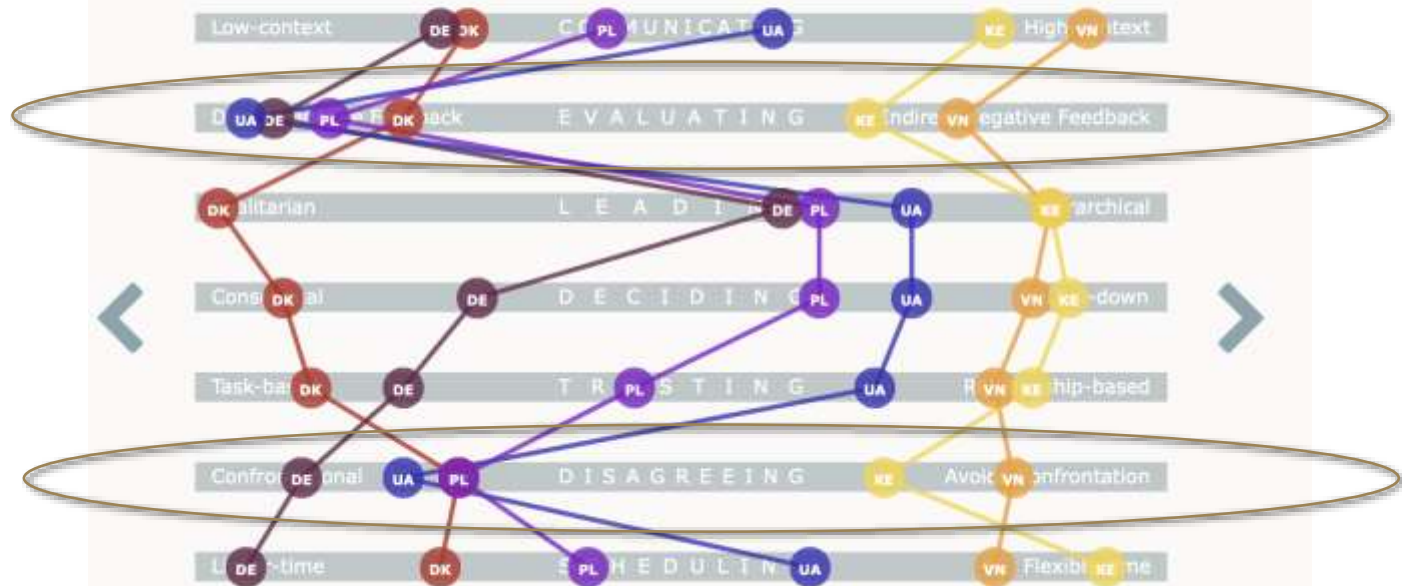


the COUNTRY MAPPING TOOL

▼ Select Countries to Map

Read Descriptions of Culture Map Dimensions

● Denmark ● Germany ● Vietnam ● Kenya ● Ukraine ● Poland



Culture and work



LEADERSHIP AND
DECISION MAKING



COLLABORATION
AND TRUST



TIME PERCEPTION



COMPLIANCE AND
RISK



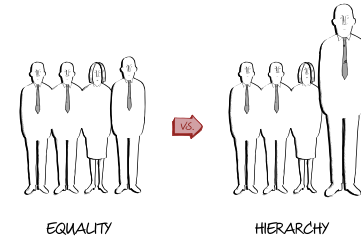
COMMUNICATION

Power Distance

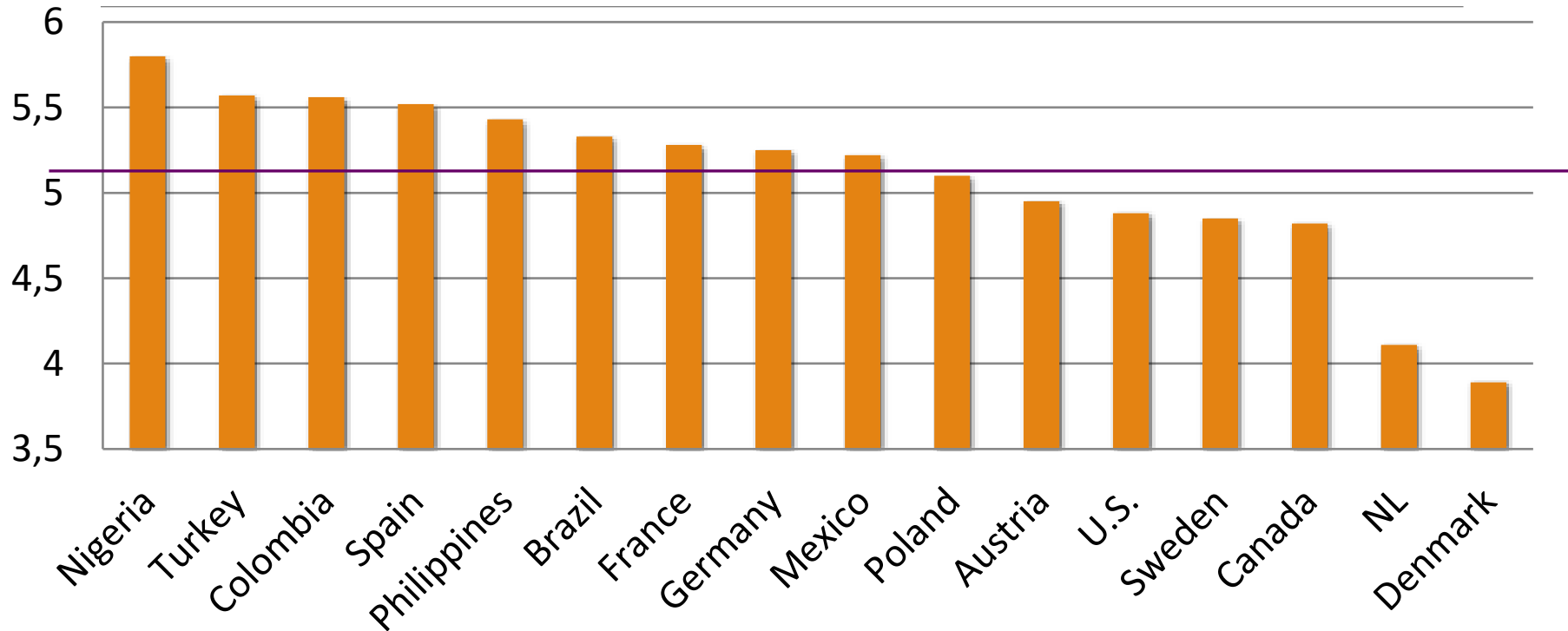
Which statements are you most in agreement with?

A: Subordinates are first of all obliged to follow the directions of their leaders, even if they know or strongly feel that the leader is wrong

B; Subordinates are also professionals and needs to be guided by their professional conscience, so they can diverge from what the leader has told them, if they know or strongly feel that the leader is wrong.



Power Distance: Society Practice

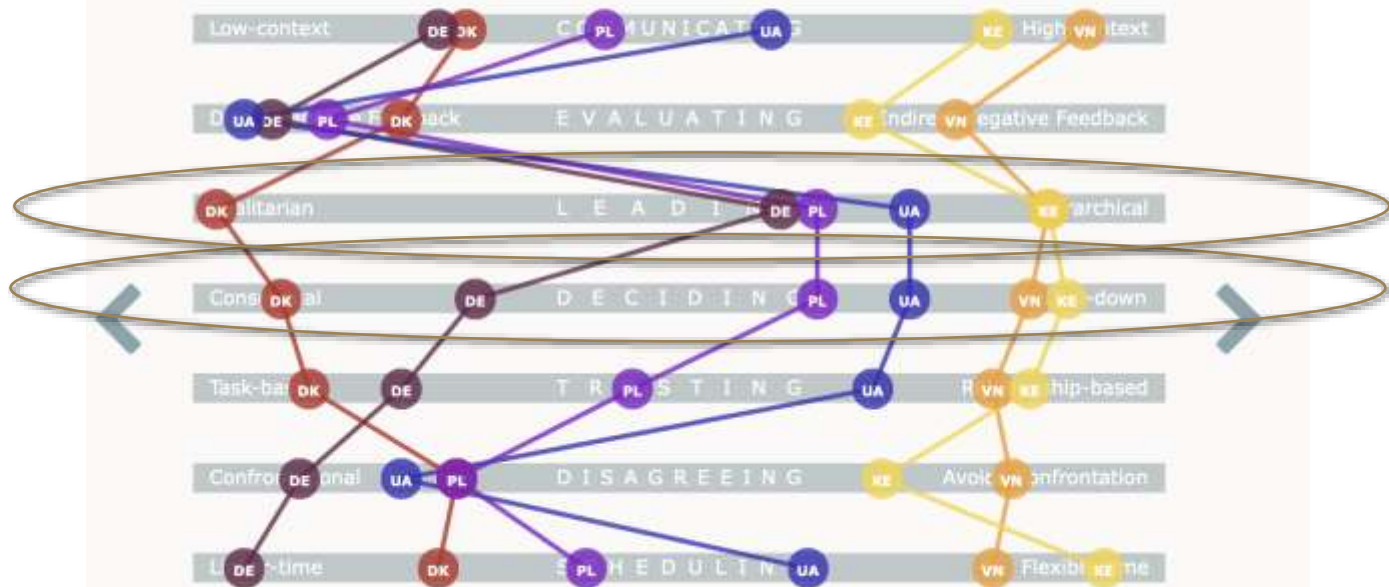


the COUNTRY MAPPING TOOL

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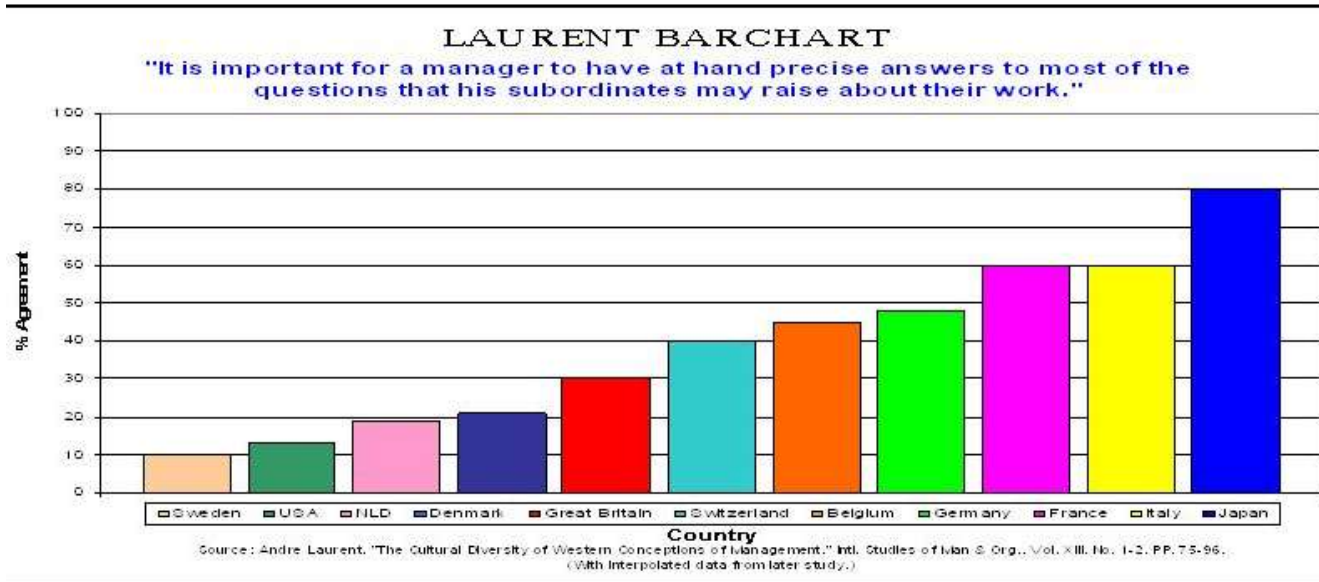
Question

- You are told to do A by your manager
- You realize during the work, that B would be a better thing to do
- The manager is unavailable
- What do you do?

Choice

Choice

Technical expert vs General manager



Power Distance in Denmark

Managers are team players and coaches before “captains”

Solutions found together with team members
(involvement)


Giving orders are “the last possible resort” (reserved for
emergency situations)

Managers are accessible

Managers are ready to be openly criticized and argued
with

Chain of command can be by-passed if necessary

Managers lead by example (not leading by instructions,
rule & command).




Soft management

"I have looked at the material and I think the best approach would be to do as Henry suggested in his mail"

"We have discussed it in the management group and I hope you agree this is the right thing to do forward"

"I have certain reservations about what you suggested, and I think we should go with what I originally suggested"





**The mooncake
story**

Decision Making

Which statements do you think best summarizes good management?

A: I think a good manager is a competent decision maker and is hired to do just that. He collects information and data from the people involved, and of course also opinions, but consensus is not of strong importance to him.

B; I think it's better to wait with decisions to most people have had the chance to give their input and opinions. Managers need to have as a first priority, to get as many people as possible "on board"



For a diverse team this means

Managers need to define the management role

The amount of empowerment of the individual allowed/expected

The amount of involvement expected

The information flow: Coming from employee and up the chain, coming from manager down the chain

What is viewed as relevant involvement and what is viewed as micromanagement?



Relationship orientation

If you are thinking of the type of relationship you need to have with your business partner, which statement do you agree with the most:

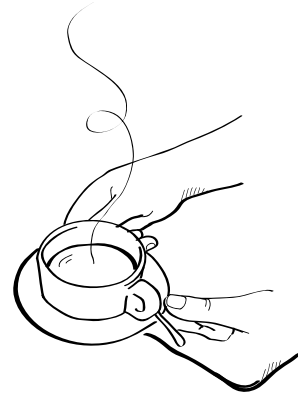
A: It's very important that this relationship is warm and personal. I need to like this person and get behind the facade before I feel comfortable doing any business with him or her

B: It's nice if I feel that my business partner is an ok person, but it's not needed for me to do business with him that I personally enjoy his company. I think you need to be professional and focus on the business. They might be good and skilled even though I personally do not enjoy their company

Knowing me, knowing you



IDEAL
FOCUSED
CULTURES



RELATION
FOCUSED
CULTURES

Question

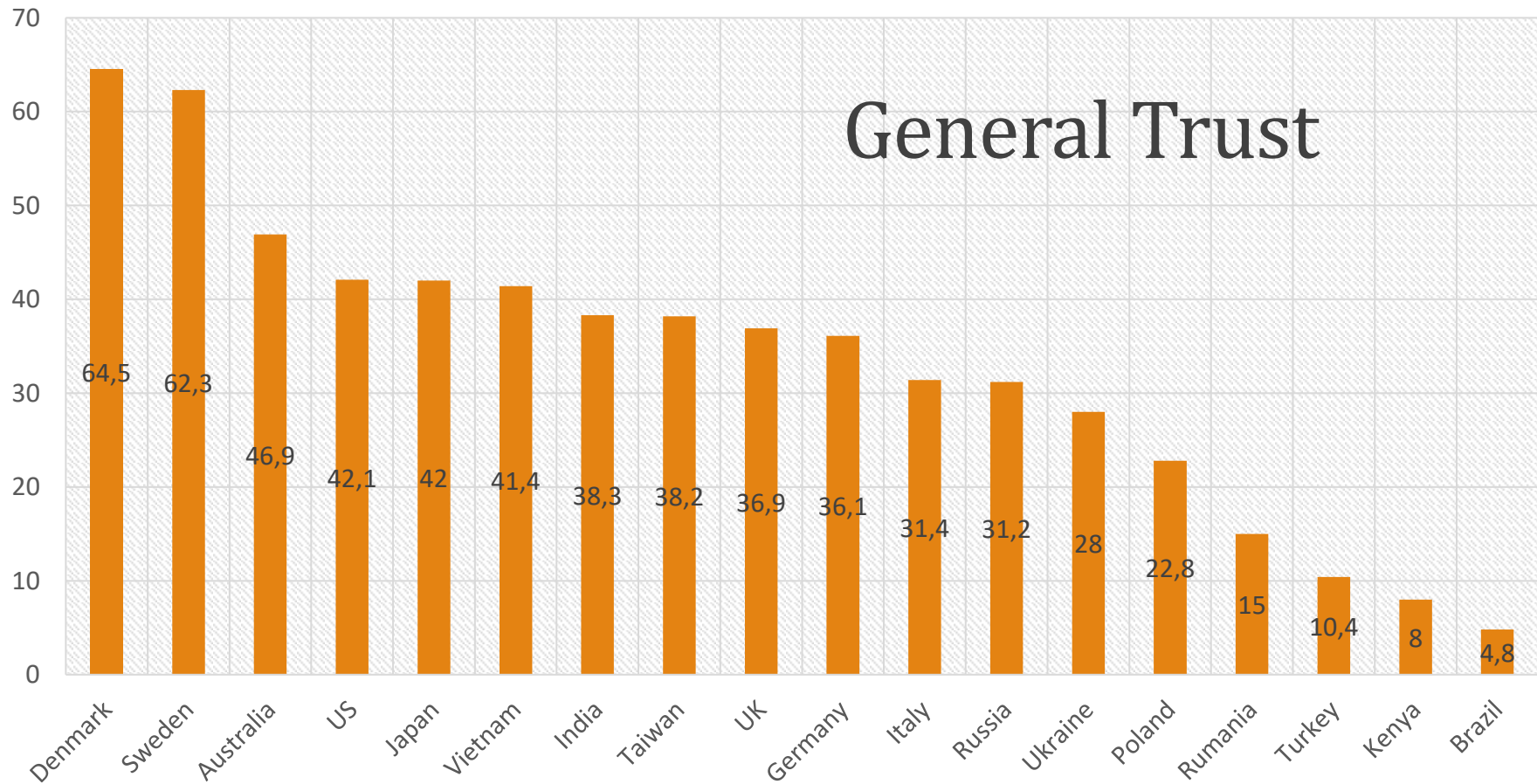
Do you think you can
trust a person you do not
now

A: Yes, you can

B: No, you can't be too
careful



General Trust



What creates trust?

Relationship



Facts and information



Honesty



Authoritarian manager



Performance



Deadlines are kept







- “The Danes are not a nation in its normal sense, but a tribe; that is their community strength and the reason for their unshakeable trust in each other”
- - Sir James Mellon, former British Ambassador to Danmark


Default trust in Denmark

Ensured by homogeneity, conformity and insisting on sameness, same interests and equality of understanding

Receiving rules, check-lists and standards can be viewed as non-trusting behaviour

Tolerance for mistakes is higher, getting the job done fast, has high priority

Pragmatism is valued over rules, compliance and necessary steps (I trust you can make it work)



A pro-active society

- Speak up! – if you want to get heard
- Ask for help! – if you need help
- Invite! – if you want to get invited anywhere
- Ask for feedback – if that is what you need
- For a Dane no news is good news, silence means things are okay....

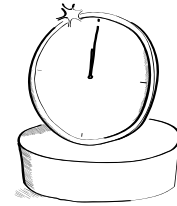
ASK

Time Perception

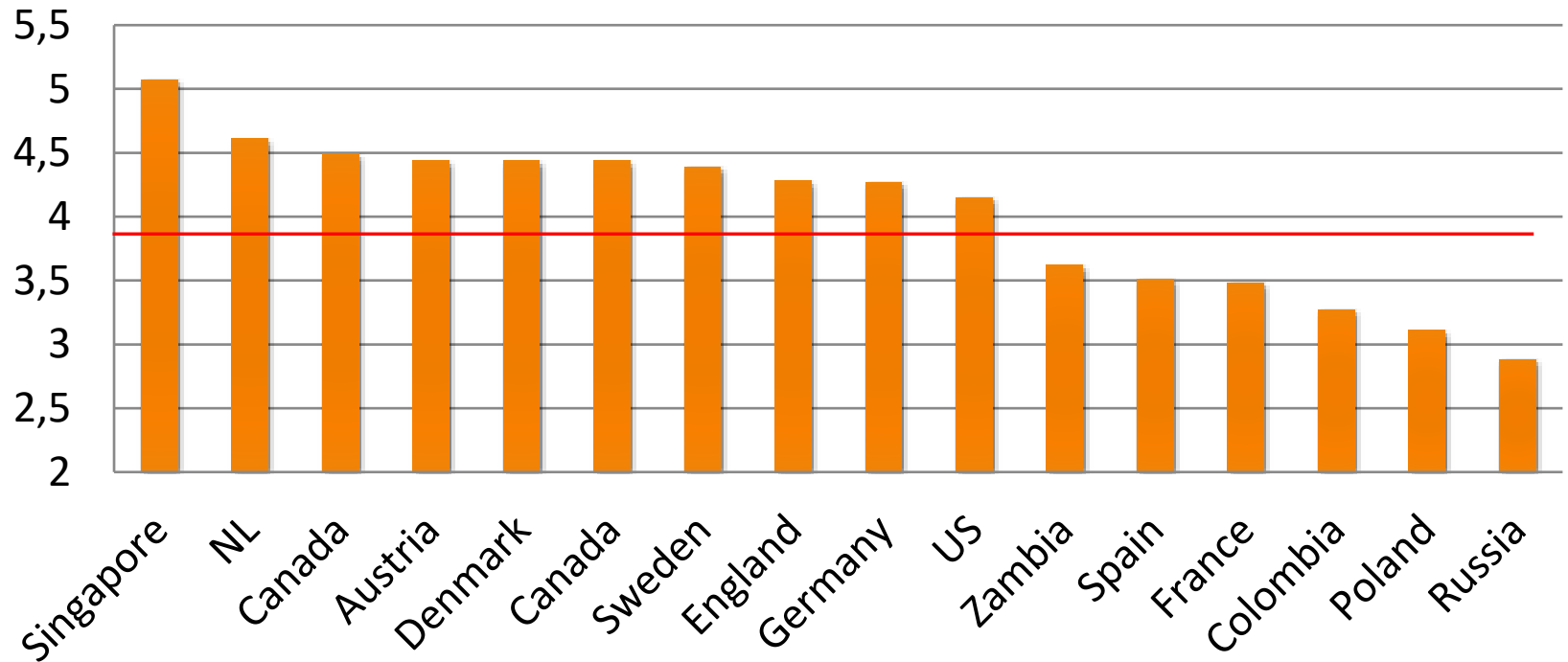
Which statement do you agree with the most:

A: Punctuality is important. People need to be able to rely on you, and other people need to understand if you are too busy to talk or to have a spontaneous meeting with them.

B: Life is full of unexpected events. Sometimes people who are important to you take up unexpected time and you get delayed. People should understand that.



Future Orientation: Society Practices

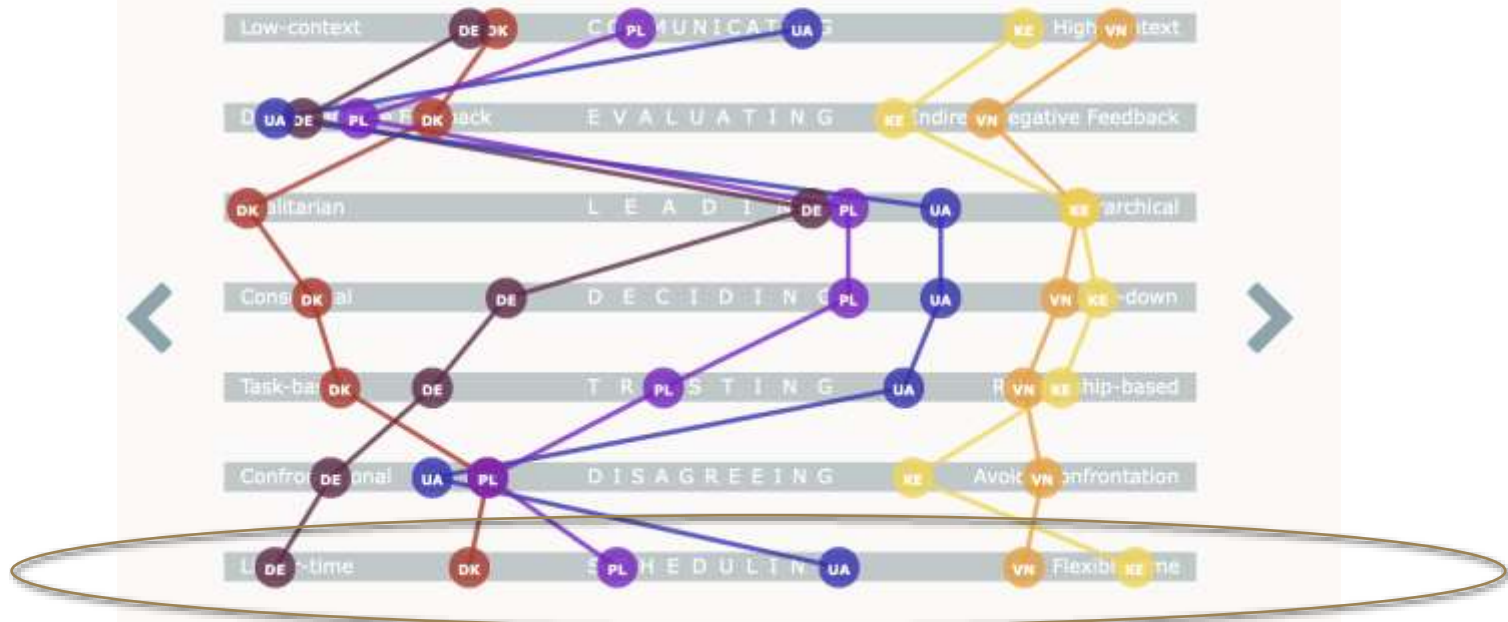


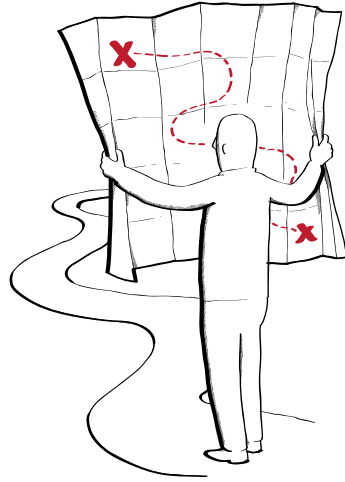
the COUNTRY MAPPING TOOL

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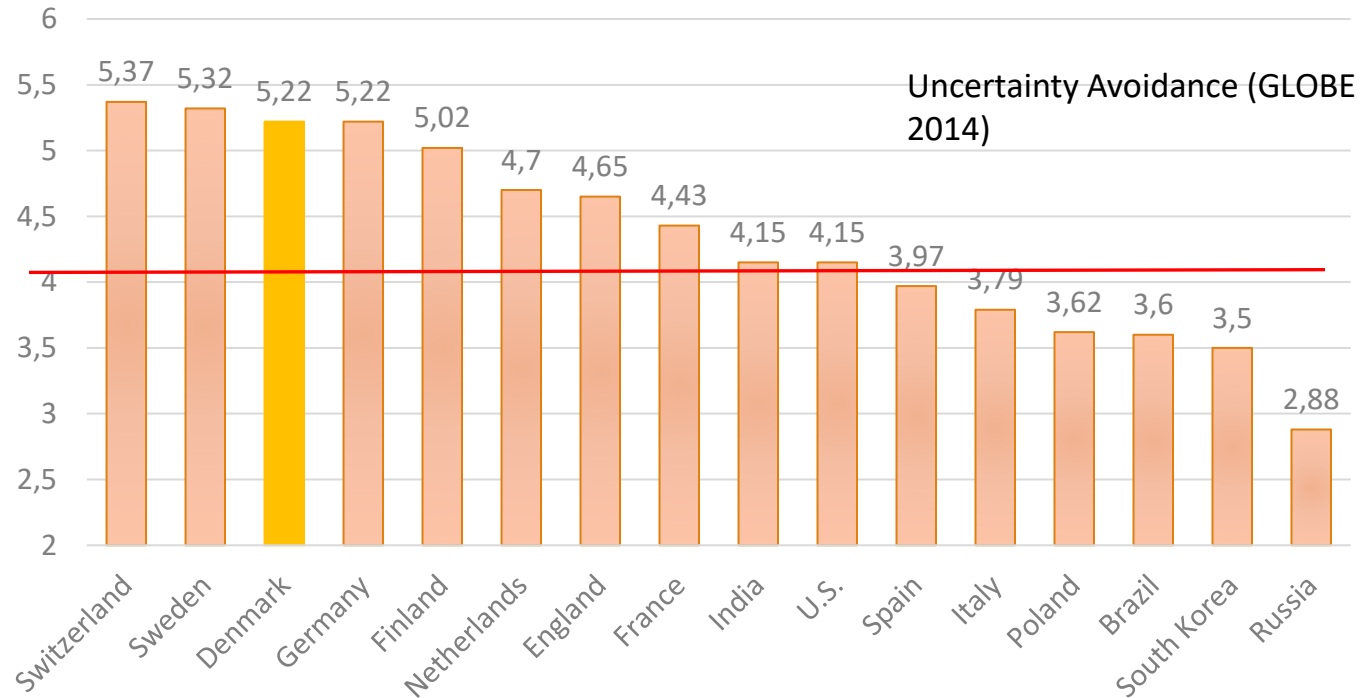
UNCERTAINTY AVOIDING CULTURES

Use formality in interactions with others.
Are orderly and keep meticulous records.
Rely on formalized policies and procedures.
Take moderate, carefully calculated risks.

UNCERTAINTY TOLERANT CULTURES

Use informality in interactions with others.
Are less orderly and keep fewer records.
Rely on informal norms for most matters.
Are less calculating when taking risks.

Organized or unflexible?









Fishki.net











“Danes invite the number of people they have chairs for”

British expat

Denmark



Overall Ranking

30th out of 52

Happiness Level



64% 71%
Denmark Global

Expats in Denmark



Average Age & Gender Split

43.9
Years old

48% 51%
Male Female

0.8%
Prefer to self-describe



Top Reasons for Moving

21%
For love
18%
Found a job on their own
10%
For their partner's job



Top Income Groups

23%
75,000-100,000 USD
16%
100,000-150,000 USD
16%
Less than 12,000 USD



Working Hours

38.7 h
Per week
15%
Part time
85%
Full time



Top Sectors

13%
IT
12%
Healthcare
11%
Education



Quality of Life Index

8 out of 52

- 17 Travel & Transit
- 12 Environment & Climate
- 36 Leisure Options
- 12 Health & Well-Being
- 1 Safety & Security



Ease of Settling In Index

47 out of 52

- 45 Local Friendliness
- 48 Finding Friends
- 45 Culture & Welcome



Working Abroad Index

1 out of 52

- 30 Career Prospects
- 2 Salary & Job Security
- 1 Work & Leisure
- 2 Work Culture & Satisfaction



Personal Finance Index

41 out of 52



Expat Essentials Index

29 out of 52

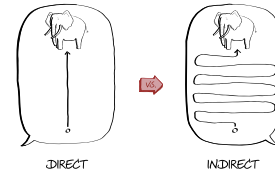
- 3 Digital Life
- 16 Admin Topics
- 45 Housing
- 33 Language



Communication Style

What sort of communication do you think is the best?

A: "I think the most important thing is to be honest with each other. It's easier and quicker if you just talk about the issues as you see it. Wrapping things in will only distance you from each other."



B: "Honesty is important, but you have to be careful about what you say so that you don't seem disrespectful. It's better to politely insinuate that something is wrong and hope that they guess the meaning, and in that way you both save face."

Value priorities

Honesty

Courtesy



"This question will require further study"

"It might be difficult"

"I'll see what I can do"

"I'll think about it"

"It's not a big problem"

"I need to report to the boss"

"We will see"

"Maybe"

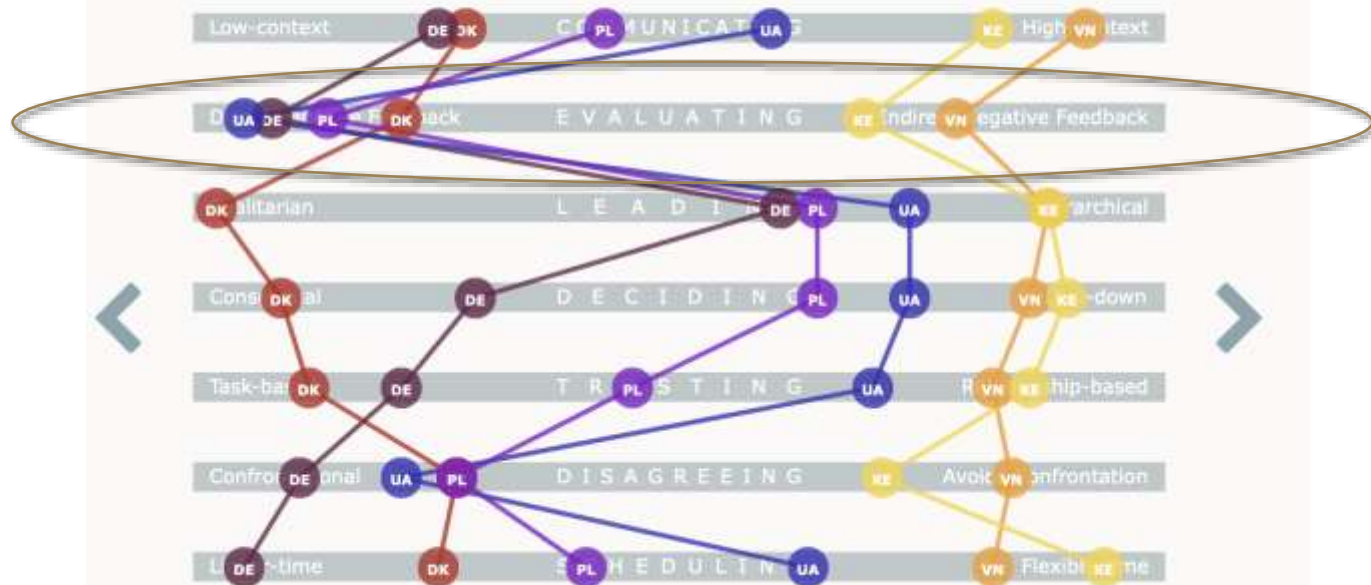
"Yes, yes"

the COUNTRY MAPPING TOOL

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Group Dynamics in communication (consider)

Do you expect people to speak up if they want to say something?

How do you interpret people who say nothing?

Do you believe ideally everybody should say something, share opinions and give input? And why?

How do you make sure you are understood and in agreement?



Statement

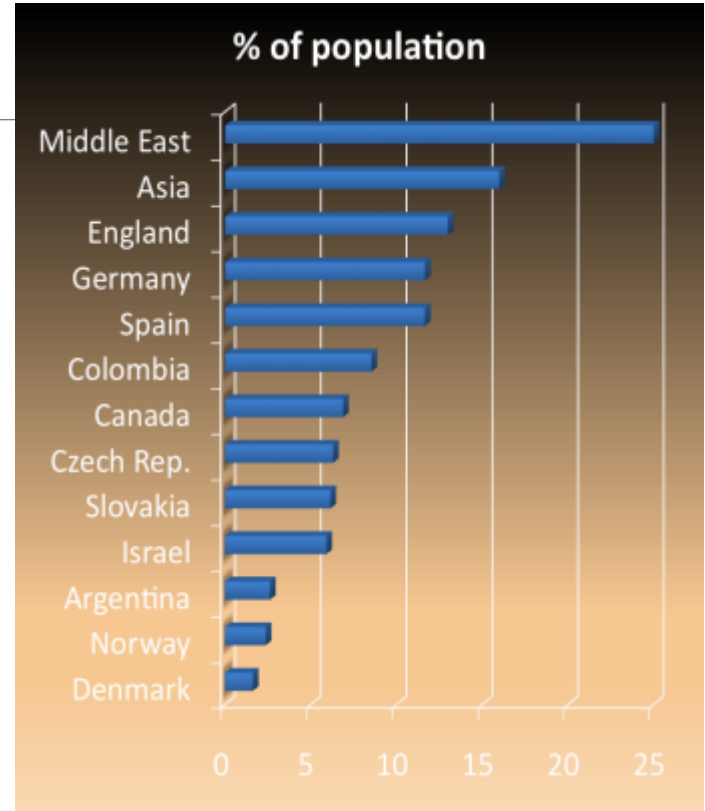
Danes have a better sense of humour than people with different nationalities

59%

Political sensitivity

In Denmark there are fewer taboos and I high tolerance for a relaxed approach to sensitive issues.

Humour, irony and sarcasm are considered an appropriate part of professional dialogue



Humour

Danes value

- Self irony
- Deescalate conflicts with irony and humour
- Mild critique through sarcasm
- Have less sensitivity about race, religion, gender etc.

**MADE IN PARIS
BORN IN DENMARK**

*Save Denmark's declining birth rate
with a romantic city holiday*

Mont Blanc
PARIS, FRANCE 1.395,-

Le Noxone
PARIS, FRANCE 1.595,-

Des Arenes
PARIS, FRANCE 1.795,-

SPIES
Do-it-for-Denmark.dk

Striking the balance



Transparency and **disclosure** when it comes to cultural differences



Knowledge about cultural differences



Clear communication and agreement about **targets**



Collaboration across cultures is a compromise where the team **target is the key**



Allow for local cultural autonomy where it **isn't in conflict with the target**





Challenge but **do not devalue** – respectfully disagree





Trust is a **universal in all teams** all though the enablers might be different


Heaven is where:

the police are British, 


the chefs Italian, 


the mechanics German, 


the lovers French, 


and it is all organized by the
Swiss. 

Hell is where:

the police are German, 

the chefs British, 

the mechanics French, 

the lovers Swiss, 

and it is all organized by the
Italian. 