# 1E – collective notes about Cross-Cultural Awareness/culture theory

Culture theory: Edward T. Hall

Edward T. Hall was an American anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher who is known for his high and low context cultural factors. He believes we communicate and act differently depending on our nationality. In his book "Understanding cultural differences" published in 1990 together with Mildred Hall, he writes about high and low context cultural factors and focuses on four aspects:

* Language: the way we communicate.
* Time: the way we perceive time.
* Space: the way we perceive space (and place).
* Message: the way we act on and decode messages.

Hall divides cultures into two categories, namely low-context cultures and high-context cultures.

**Low-context cultures:**

Low-context cultures are cultures in which words (spoken or written) and a direct way of communicating play an important part.

monochronic cultures

**High-context cultures:**

High-context cultures are cultures where people communicate much more by means of nonverbal communication.

polychronic cultures

He believes that some cultures can be more low-context and some can be more high-context. But he also says that a country can not have a full low- or high-context culture.

### **monochronic**

monokron – det at arbejde efter en bestemt tidsplan og at gøre én ting ad gangen/to work according to a certain schedule and to do one thing at a time

### **polychronic**

polykron – flere ting  foregår på samme tid og ikke efter nogen bestemt/more things take place at the same time without a systematic structure

Example of low- and high-context cultures:

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| **High-Context Cultures** |
| Japan |
| Arab countries |
| Greece |
| Spain |
| Italy |
| England |
| France |
| North America |
| Scandinavian countries |
| German-speaking countries |
| **Low-context Cultures** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Fast messages** | **Slow messages** |
| Prose | Poety |
| Headlines | Books |
| A communique | An ambassador |
| Propaganda | Art |
| Cartoons | Etchings |
| TV commercials | TV documentary |
| Television | Print |
| Easy familiarity | Deep relationships |
| Manners | Culture |

## **Language**

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| --- | --- |
| **High context** | **Low context** |
| * In high context cultures, communication is largely implicit, meaning that context and relationships are more important than the actual words. Very few words are necessary. * High context cultures communicate more by means of non-verbal communication such as facial expressions and gestures. | * In low context cultures, on the other hand, people rely on the spoken word so the message is communicated almost entirely by the words and therefore needs to be explicit. * Low context cultures are very frank and direct, and will call a spade a spade. |

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## **Time**

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| **High context** | **Low context** |
| * High context cultures are typically polychronic. Polychronic people see time as fluid. * Punctuality and structure are not as important and deadlines are something to aim for not to meet at all costs. * Similarly, polychronic people work with multiple tasks at once, switching back and forth from one to the other. | * Low context cultures are typically monochronic. Monochronic people see time a commodity to be spent or saved. * Monochronic people make and adhere to strict deadlines and all activities are divided into linear segments. * Monochronic people focus on one task at a time and do things in a very systematic way. |

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## **Space**

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| **High context** | **Low context** |
| * Each person surrounds himself with an invisible bubble of space which expands and contracts depending on the situation. * Space is communal. * People tend to stand close to each other when they communicate and their bubble of space is small. | * Space is compartmentalised. * People keep a distance when they communicate and their bubble of space is rather big. |

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## **Message**

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| --- | --- |
| **High context** | **Low context** |
| * In a slow message culture, personal rapport is important and these cultures foster long lasting and deep-rooted relationships. * The relationship is more important than the task. * High commitment to long-term relationships. | * In a fast message culture, people tend to make many shallower, short-term relationships. * The task is more important than the relationship. * Low commitment to relationships. |

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## **High-and low context Cultures**

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| --- | --- |
| **High-context Cultures** | **Low-context Culture** |
| ↑ Japan | ↓ England |
| ↑ Arab countries | ↓ France |
| ↑ Greece | ↓ North America |
| ↑ Spain | ↓ Scandinavian counties |
| ↑ Italy | ↓ German-speaking countries |

Culture theory: Geert Hofstede

**Geert Hoofstede´s theories talks about the 6 dimensions.**

* power distance
* individualism vs collctivisim
* masulinity vs femininity
* uncertainy avoidance
* Long-term orientation vs short-term orientation
* indulgence vs resistan

**High ower distance vs. low power distance**

He had divided power distance in two categories.

* High power distance
* Low power distance

High power distance - it is about that there is a pronounced hierarchy in the culture and you talk to a leader as they are a leader and respect them and that you don’t talk to an employee like they are the leader.

e.g. China has a pronounced High power distance in their Culture.

Low power distance - it is about that all people are equal and there is flexibility. all people are at the same point in a hierarchy and there isn’t a pronounced difference.

e.g. in the corona shutdown in denmark, we had a lot of flexibility, where we all have a specific area to focus about.

**Individualisme vs. Collectivism**

Individualisme **-** In countries the population define themselves in the termes of “I” you see yourselves as an individual. They prefer to take care of only themselves and their close family.

Collectivism - In the collectivist countries the polpulations define themselves in the terms of “we” and they work and see the population as a group. They look after other people even though they aren't related and they expect others to do it.

**Masculinity vs femininity**

Masculinity - you will find material rewards, heroism, assertiveness and preference achievement, these societies are often more competitive.

Femininity- in these societies there are more focus on modesty, cooperation, quality of life, caring for the weak in societies that are more consensus-oriented.

**Uncertainty avoidance high vs. Uncertainty avoidance low**

Uncertainty avoidance high - Here they maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior, they are intolerant of unorthodox ideas and behavior. People feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and the fact that the future is unknown

Uncertainty avoidance low - There they are scoring low on uncertainty avoidance and maintain a more relaxed attitude, the practice counts more than principles. They feel comfortable with uncertainty, ambiguity and the fact that you don't know what the future brings.

**Long-term orientation vs Short-term orientation**

Long-term orientation - it is that you focus on the future. You value persistence, saving and being able to adapt.

Short-term orientation - it is that you focus on the past and the present. you value the tradition and current social hierarchy and fulfilling your social obligations.

**Indulgence vs resistant**

Indulgence- it stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic natural human drives related to having fun and enjoying life.

Resistant- it stands for a society where that suppresses gratification of needs, and regulates it by strict social norms.

Stereotypes + Danish culture

The text is about the concept of "hygge," a Danish word that refers to a feeling of coziness and comfort, often associated with being surrounded by close friends or family, candlelight, and good food. Hygge is a major part of Danish culture and is believed to contribute to the happiness and contentment of the Danish people. The text describes how Danes take pride in their hygge culture and how it can only be truly experienced in the company of others. The concept of hygge has recently gained international recognition, with several books being published about it. The text concludes with the observation that hygge is not easy to achieve, and that it requires effort and the presence of others.

**Stereotypes resume:**

* A stereotype is a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

* It is dangerous because it assumes that all members of a group are the same, ignoring their individual differences and identities.

* Stereotyping is often inaccurate and conveys negative messages. Examples of stereotypes are "all immigrants are criminals" and "all Americans are loud and boastful".:

Doing business abroad

Doing business abroad was about how you should and shouldn't act while doing business in other countries with different cultures. You have to respect each other's cultures, you should do research on the country you are going to so you know what their culture is like, so you know what not to do.  
  
  
You need to embrace cultural differences. In China you could often have misunderstanding the grader importance is placed respect and on good relationships. There is many different cultures and you need to respect others cultures.  
  
  
According to the cultural theory of 'High Context, Low Context', there is a difference between cultures that communicate with a lot of context versus those that communicate with less context. In this case, the American manager's praise of the Japanese manager was seen as too direct, uncomfortable, and lacking in context, which is why the other managers felt uncomfortable.  
  
key points:  
respect other cultures.  
understand how other countries are doing business before doing business with them  
- Embrace cultural differences and be prepared for socializing .  
  
The article is about the opportunities for British small businesses to enter the Chinese market, and provides advice on how to do so, including being flexible and localizing products, researching the market, building relationships, protecting intellectual property, and visiting China.

Corporate culture

Corporate culture is the company's shared values and beliefs that exist within a company. It is the environment in which its employees work.  
  
The four types of corporate culture are:  
Clan culture: That is the corporate culture where you and your co-workers have a family like relationship. The employees love the company’s vision.  
Adhocracy culture: You allow your employees to innovate and it’s very important that you can adapt quickly to the customers needs.  
Market culture: The biggest focus is on the customers. They want to be better than all of their competitors.  
Hierarchy culture: The boss is the biggest and the decisions are only made from the top guys.And there is a hierarchy in the An example could be the military.  
  
Company’s with a good corporate culture  
At ALIDA they have a four day work week and after a trial with the proposal they decided to make it permanent only based on employee feedback. ALIDA believes that their week-setup helps their company  strive for greatness. A four-day workweek helps because it can both help cut expenses for the company and it can help boost employees' happiness because they have more free time and that creates a better work-life balance.  
  
Next up is SAP Labs, they have no strict timing as to when their employees come and go. The employees themselves decide their work hours and can leave when their work is done. The logic is simple, it’s the productivity that matters not the timings. SAP also allows their employees to work from home once a week, and that certainly works. We believe that this creates incredible productivity from the employees and it motivates them to work  
  
What can you do to boost a company’s corporate culture?  
We can try to do a 4 day work week with 1 day working from home . We can try to meet a bit later because too early in the morning many people aren't ready to do their best at work. We can try to give fringe benefits, maybe for motivations in future work and also when they do some good work, they get rewarded for it. We can change a little bit in the rules at the working place, for a better working environment. Not delete some of the rules but take it a little easier on them.  
  
Advantages with corporate culture:  
There are some good things  with corporate culture. fx there will be an increased employee engagement and they will be more motivated to do their job.  It will also result in better commitment to company goals and values and it will also increase productivity and improve performance. While the decision making and problem solving abilities also will be improved because everyone will be able to do their best at work. And that will also result in a better working environment and everyone will be able to reach and retain top talent and that is because the communication and collaboration among team members will increase. So it will have many positive effects at jobs so people will enjoy it more and it will be better for the business because we will be able to work better.