

Carnegie Mellon University
Dietrich College
Information Systems

Cultural Aspects of Global Teams

September 4, 2019

Today's Agenda:

- Recap and introductions
- Cultural intelligence lecture
- ‘Trouble in Paradise’ discussion
- Next class

Summary of 10 Lessons of the Vasa

1. **Situational factors:** The Vasa was built primarily in reaction to socio-political issues and pressures from the outside.
2. **Excessive schedule pressure:** The Vasa was built under strong time constraints to meet a pressing need.
3. **Changing needs:** Many changes to operational characteristics occurred during construction of the ship.
4. **Lack of scientific methods:** There were no known methods for calculating center of gravity, stiffness, and the resulting stability relationships of the Vasa.
5. **Lack of technical specifications:** The (non-existent) specifications were not revised as the requirements changed.
6. **Excessive innovation:** No one in Sweden, including the shipwright, had ever built a ship having two gun decks.
7. **Secondary innovations:** Many secondary innovations were added during construction of the Vasa to accommodate the increased length, the additional gun deck, and other changes.
8. **Lack of a project plan:** During a year-long transition in leadership it was difficult for the assistant to manage the project. This resulted in poor supervision of the various groups working on the ship (i.e., the shipwright, the ship builder, and the numerous subcontractors). There is no evidence that the new project manager (the former assistant) prepared any plans after the original shipwright died.
9. **Requirements creep:** It seems that no one was aware of the degree to which the Vasa had evolved during the 2.5 years of construction.
10. **Ignoring the obvious:** The Vasa was launched after failing a stability test. And the results of the stability test were known to some but were not communicated.

What do project managers do?

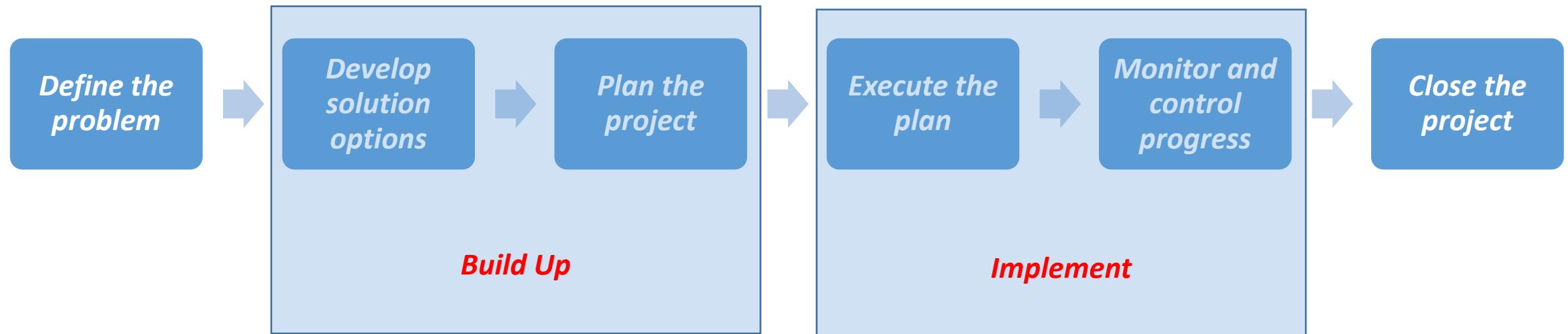
THE FOUR ROLES OF THE PROJECT MANAGER

Our research found that today's successful project managers assume four roles that help them cope with unexpected events.

ROLE	DRIVEN BY	TIMING	KEY ACTIVITIES
Develop collaboration	Intention	Initially	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Select the right people•Develop mutual interdependence and trust
Integrate planning and review with learning	Intention	Periodically	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Develop stable short-term plans and flexible long-term plans•Conduct learning-based project reviews
Prevent major disruptions	Events	Occasionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Anticipate and cope proactively with a few major problems
Maintain forward momentum	Events	Continuously	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Resolve problems by hands-on engagement•Update and connect through frequent face-to-face communication•Move about (walk the floor) frequently

From: "What Successful Project Managers Do" by Laufer et al. (2015)

Steps in Managing a Project



Global Teams That Work: A Framework for Bridging Social Distance

(Harvard Business Review) by Tsedal Neeley, 2015

Social distance: The degree of emotional connection among team members (it is lower in distributed teams – making it harder to communicate, understand, connect, align, trust, etc.)

SPLIT framework:

1. **Structure** (location of boss and team) – all about perception of power – need to keep focus on TEAM goals
2. **Process** (empathy is important) – allow time for social interaction (put it on meeting agendas) and for conflict to arise (process to voice concerns)
3. **Language** (fluency level matters) – dial down dominance and dial up engagement; team leaders should look for balance
4. **Identity** (avoid making assumptions about what behaviors mean) – everyone is a teacher and a learner
5. **Technology** (pick the right tools) – asynchronous versus synchronous? – synchronous is harder to schedule but might be better in the end

Introductions

Name (first and last)

What are you happy about today?

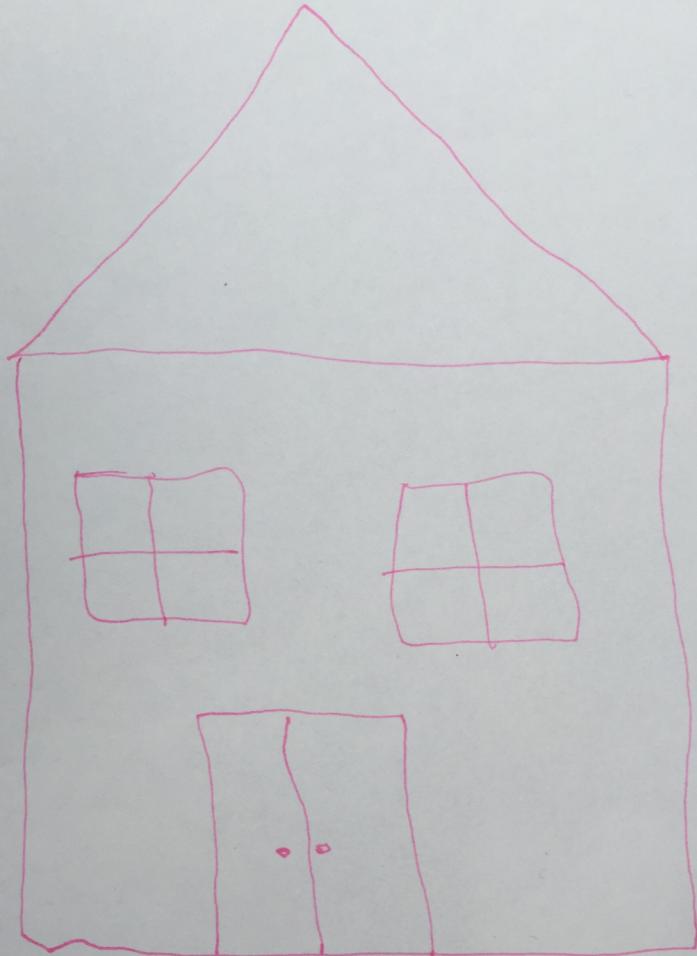
Cultural Intelligence

What would you do...?...?...?



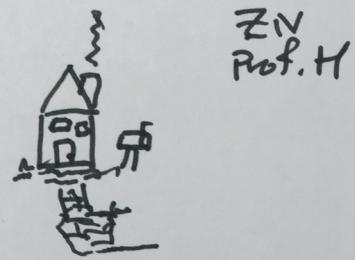


Can you collaborate
without
communicating?



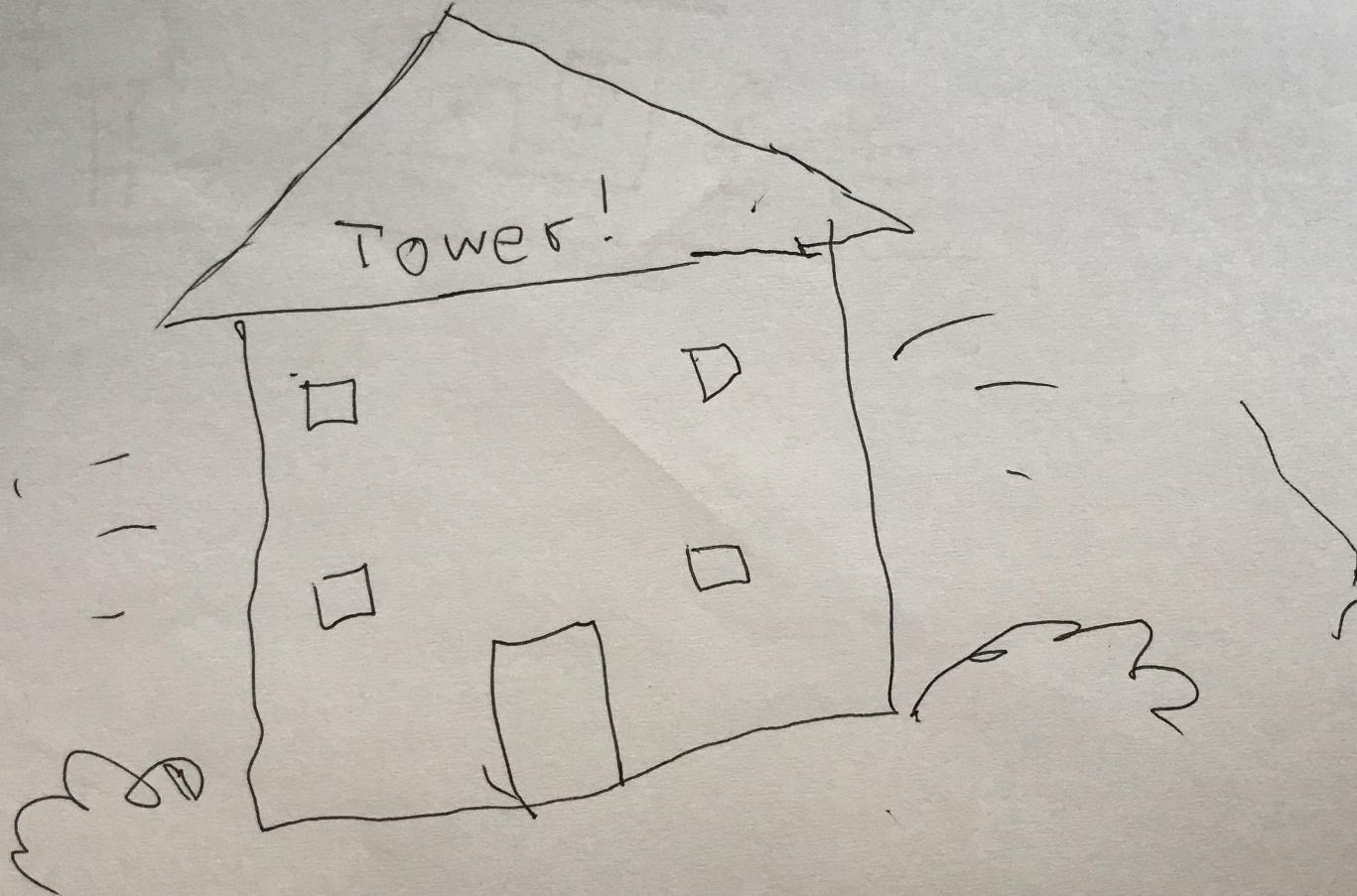
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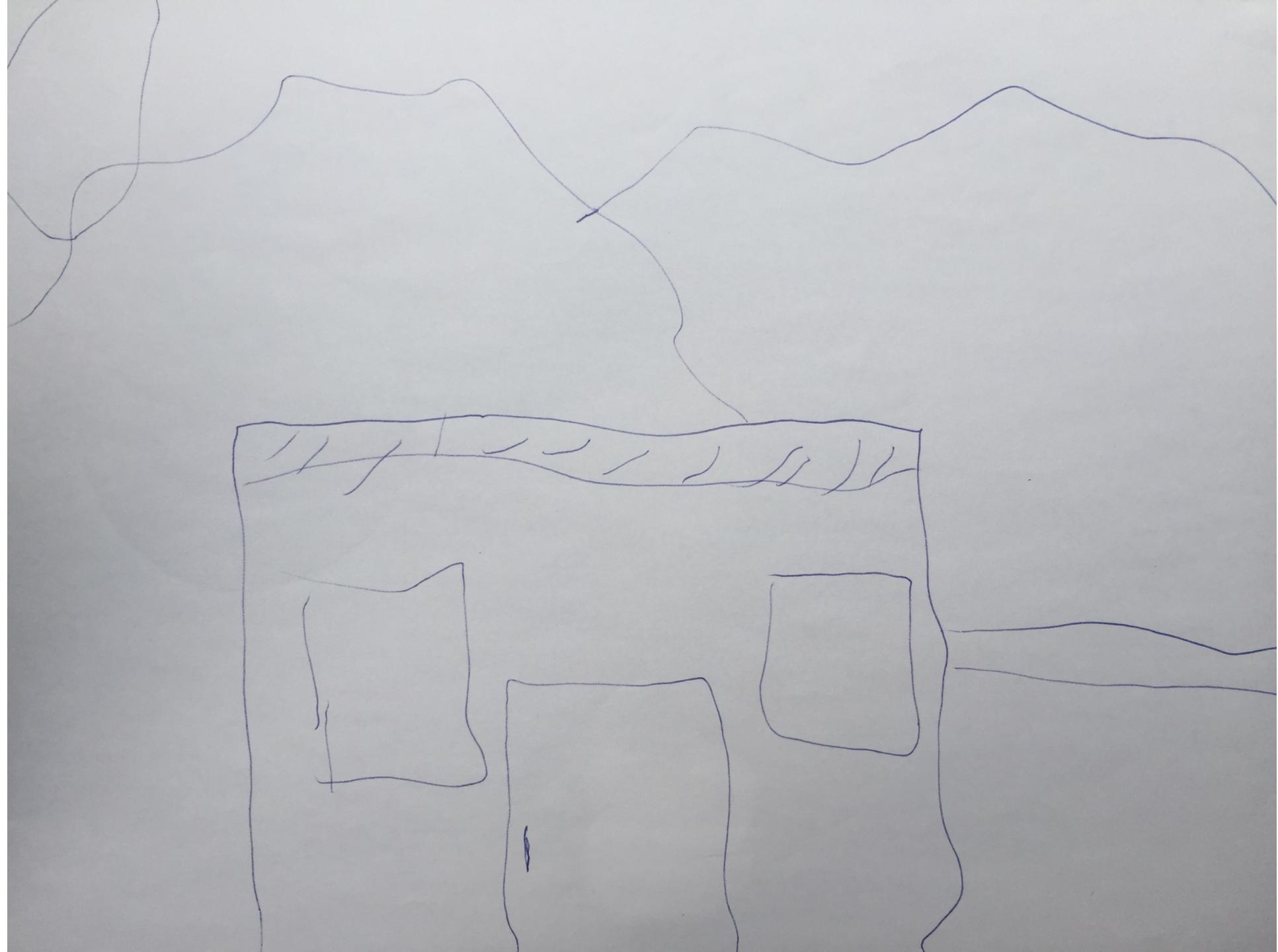


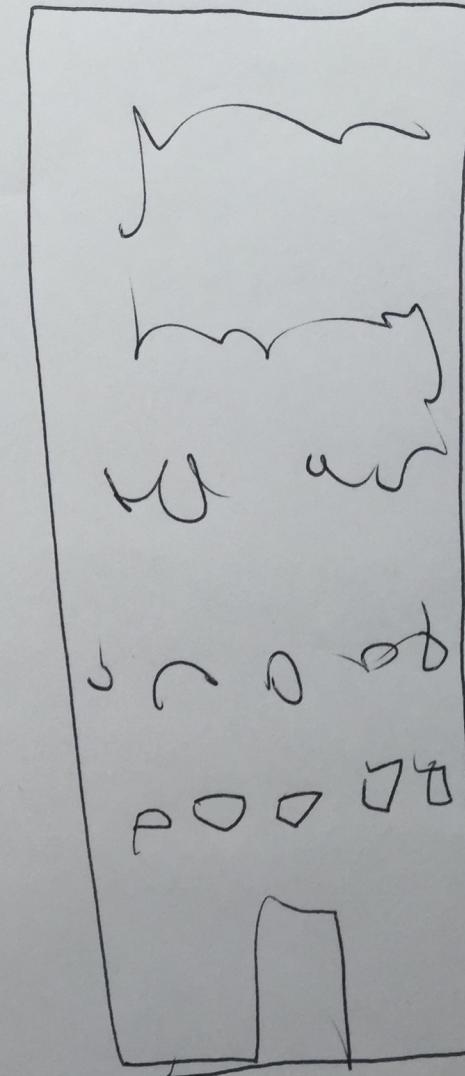
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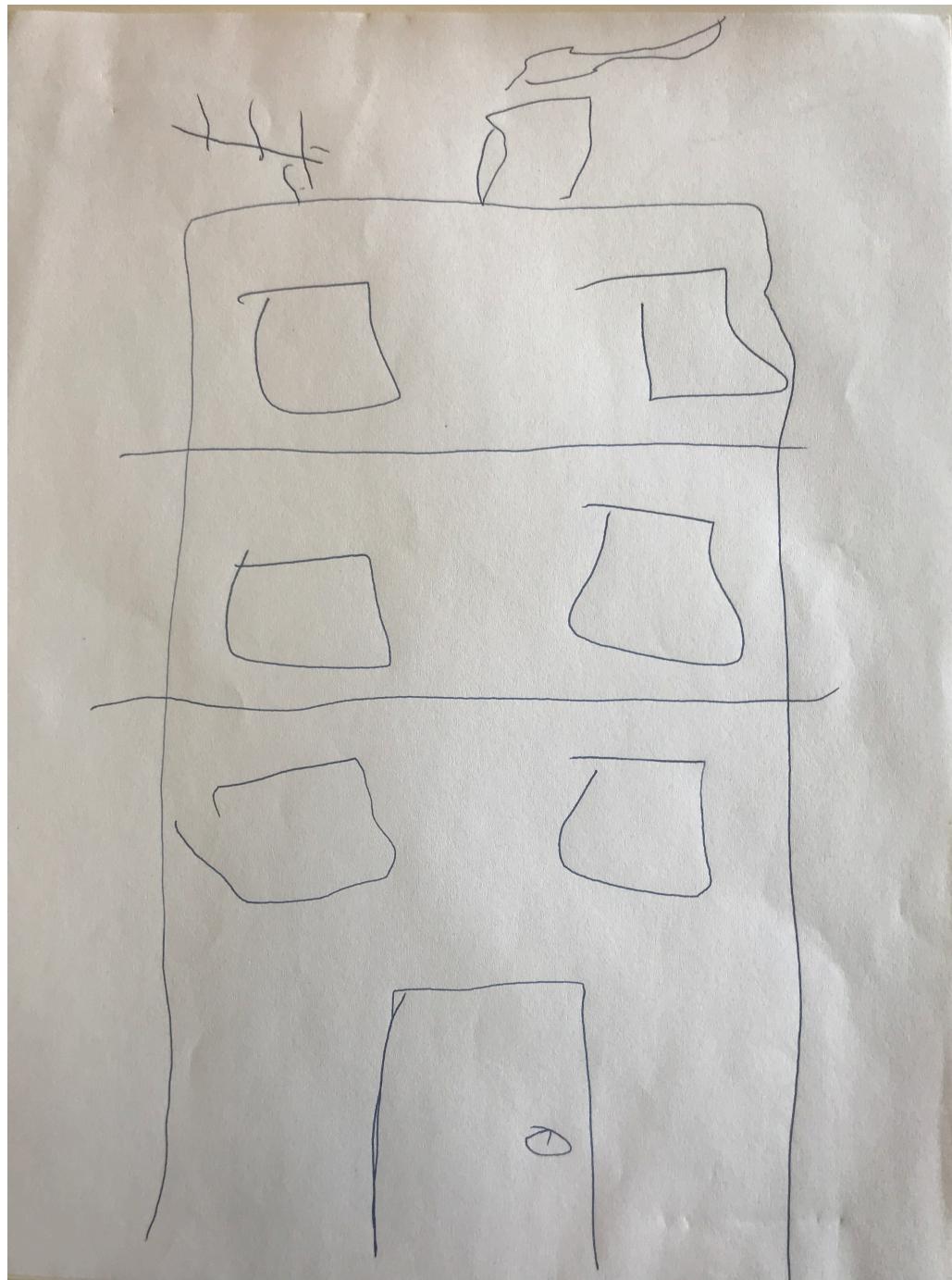












Dictionary

Search for a word



culture

/'kəlCHər/

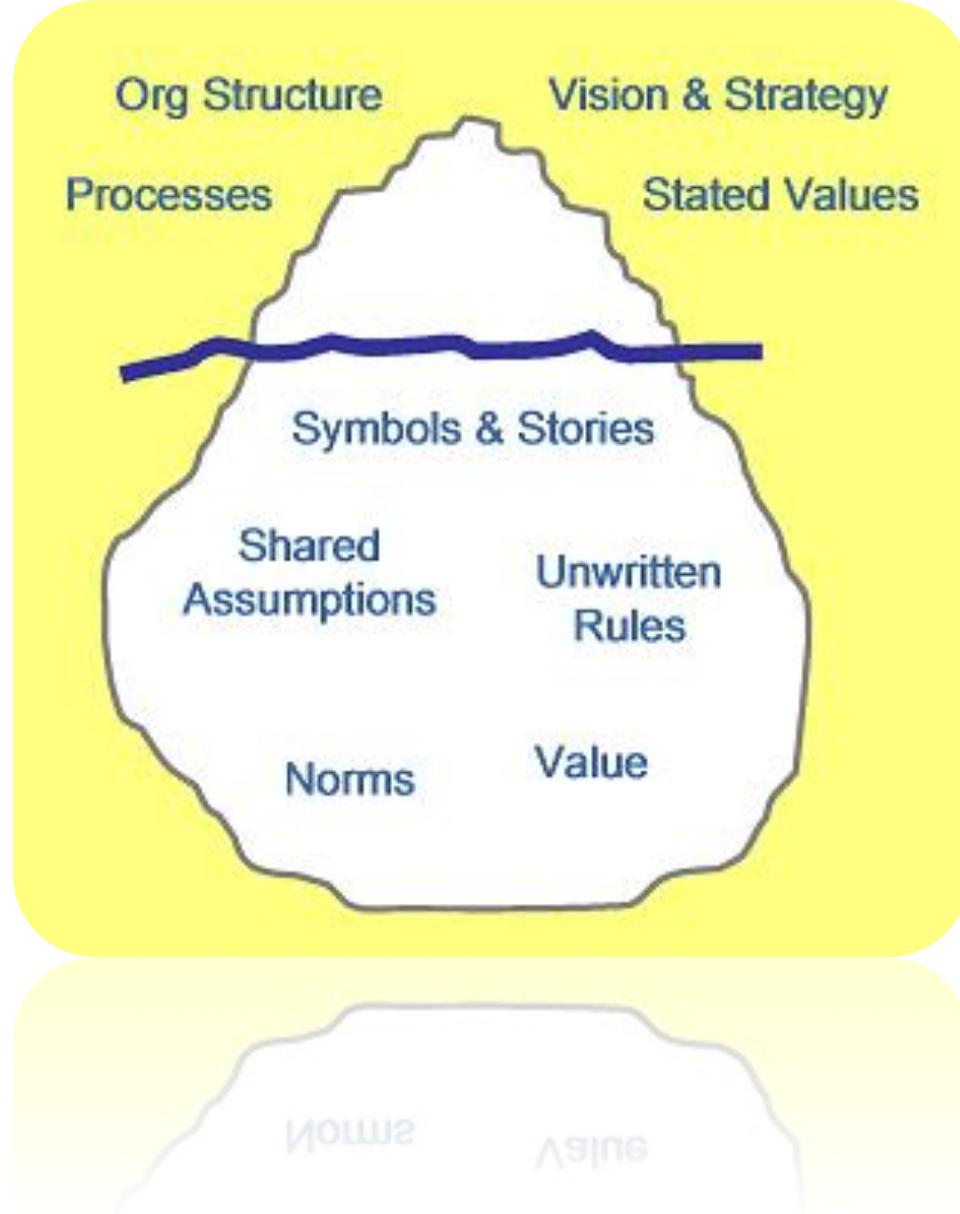
noun

1. the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively.
"20th century popular culture"
synonyms: the arts, the humanities; [More](#)
2. the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.
"Caribbean culture"
synonyms: civilization, society, way of life, lifestyle; [More](#)

verb

BIOLOGY

maintain (tissue cells, bacteria, etc.) in conditions suitable for growth.

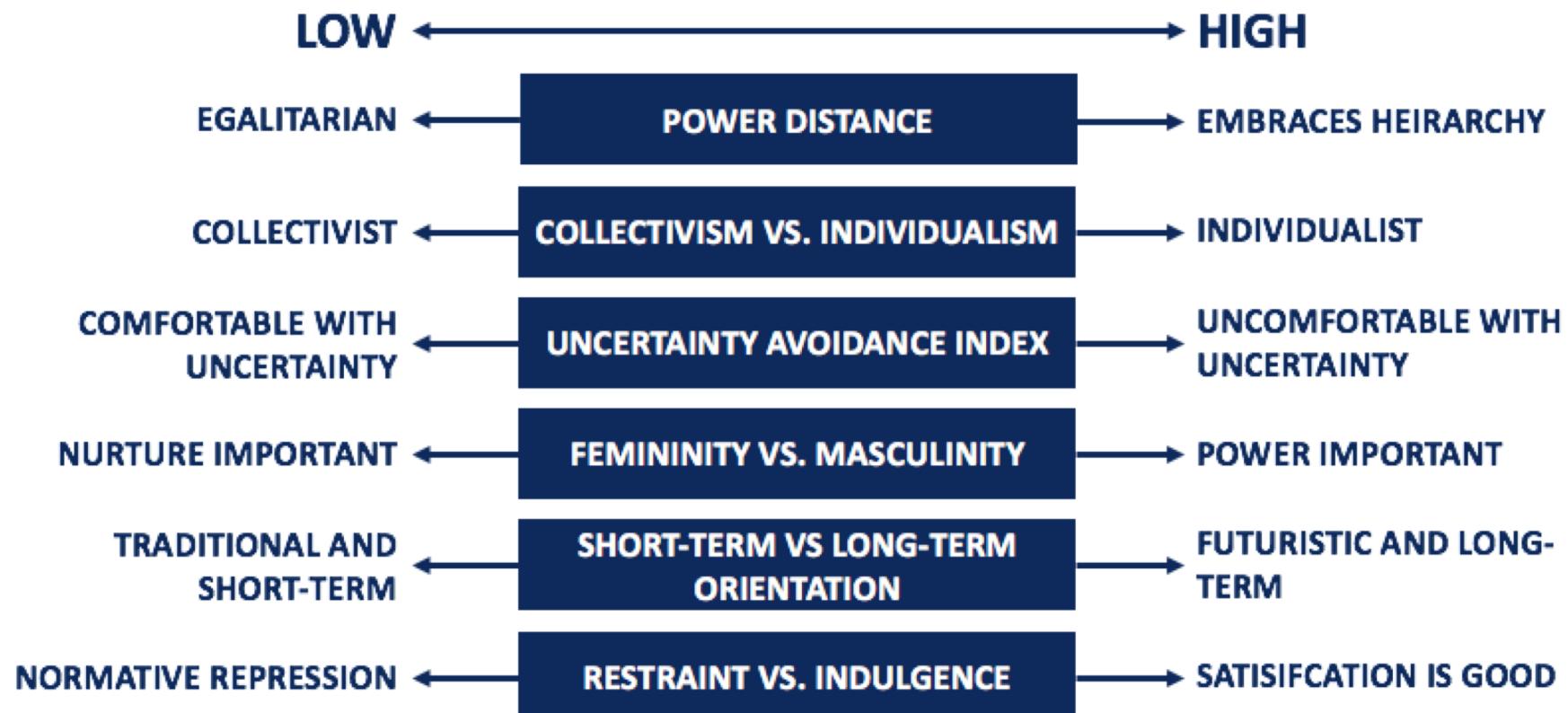


Culture as an Iceberg?

Culture is the “collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group... from another”

(Hofstede, 2003)

Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture



Country rankings at: <http://www.geert-hofstede.com/> and
<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries>



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[HOME](#) > [FREE](#) > [COMPARE COUNTRIES](#)

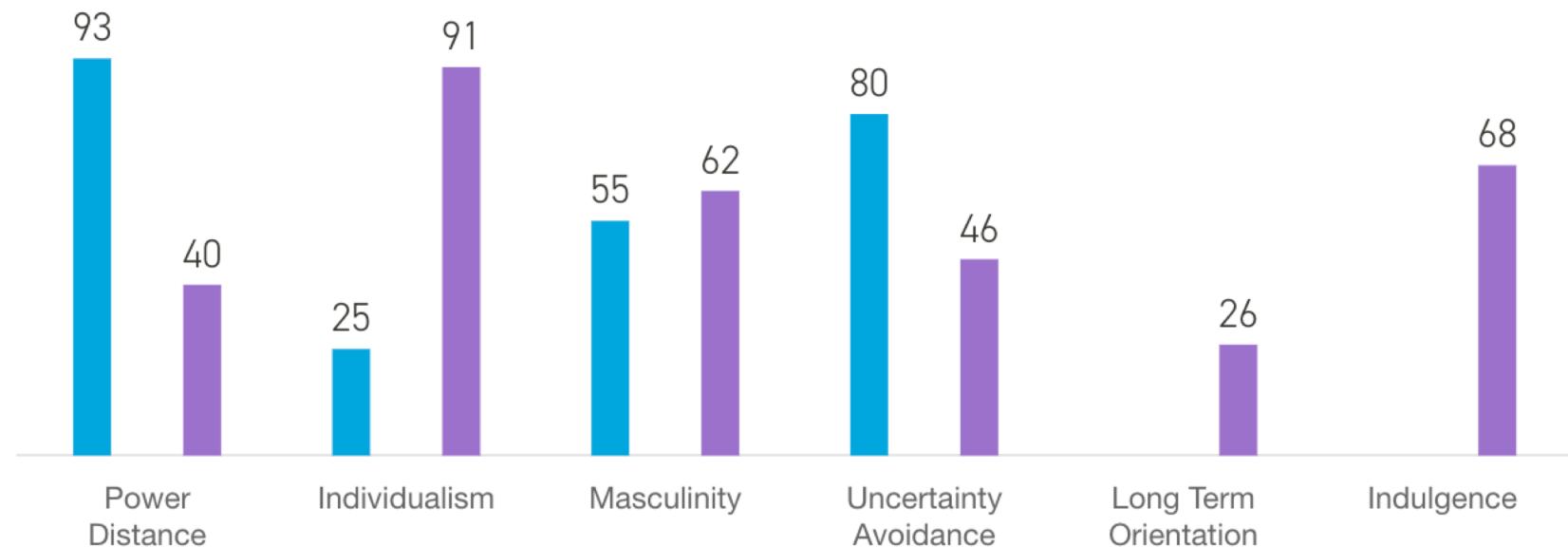
COMPARE COUNTRIES

Please select a country in the dropdown menu below to see the values for the 6 dimensions. After a first country has been selected, a second and even a third country can be chosen to be able to see a comparison of their scores.

To compare your personal preferences to the scores of a country of your choice, please purchase our cultural survey tool, the **Culture Compass™**.

<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/>

Qatar* × United States ×

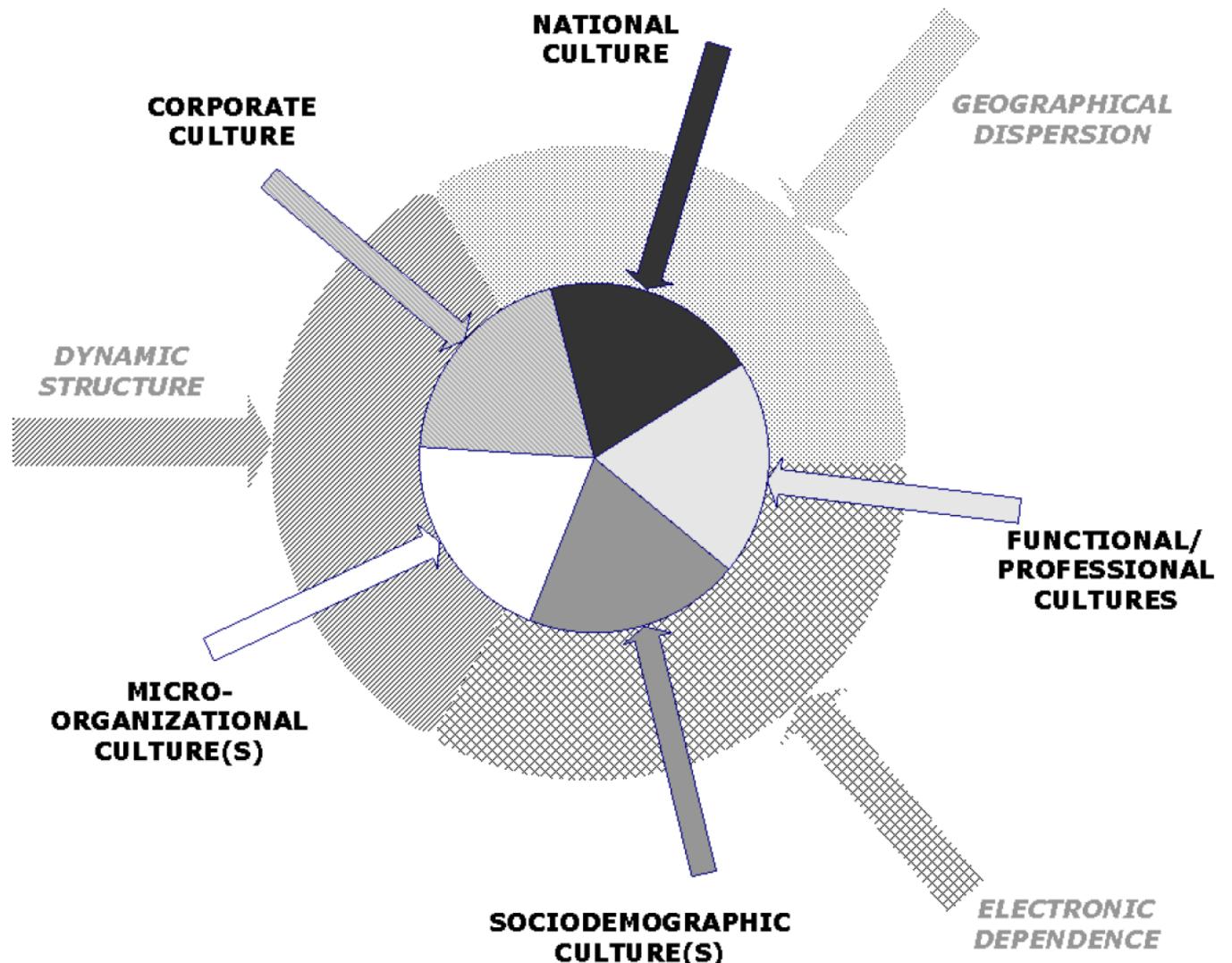


* estimated

Culture as a Kaleidoscope?

“Culture is not an isolated variable with predictable outcomes or something that can be managed but a root metaphor, something that is continually shaped and reshaped through the symbolic interactions, rituals, and narratives of all organizational members.”

(Gibbs, 2009)





The more you look at the world,
the more you recognise how
people value things differently.

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HSBC 
The world's local bank



The more you look at the world,
the more you recognise
that what one person values
may be different to the next.

www.hsbc.com

HSBC 
The world's local bank



The more you look at
the world, the more
you recognise people's
different values.

HSBC 
The world's local bank

Which of the following is it **acceptable** to do in a global (unknown) business setting?...

- Call a new colleague by his first name?
- Give the “thumbs up”?
- Bow?
- Slouch?
- Putt your hands in your pocket?
- Sit with your legs crossed?
- Show the soles of your feet?
- Shake hands?

What the English really mean...

“I hear what you say”

- American: He accepts my point of view
- British: I disagree and do not wish to discuss further

“Very interesting”

- American: They are impressed
- British: I don’t agree

“Please think about that some more”

- American: Good idea – keep developing it
- British: It is a bad idea – don’t do it

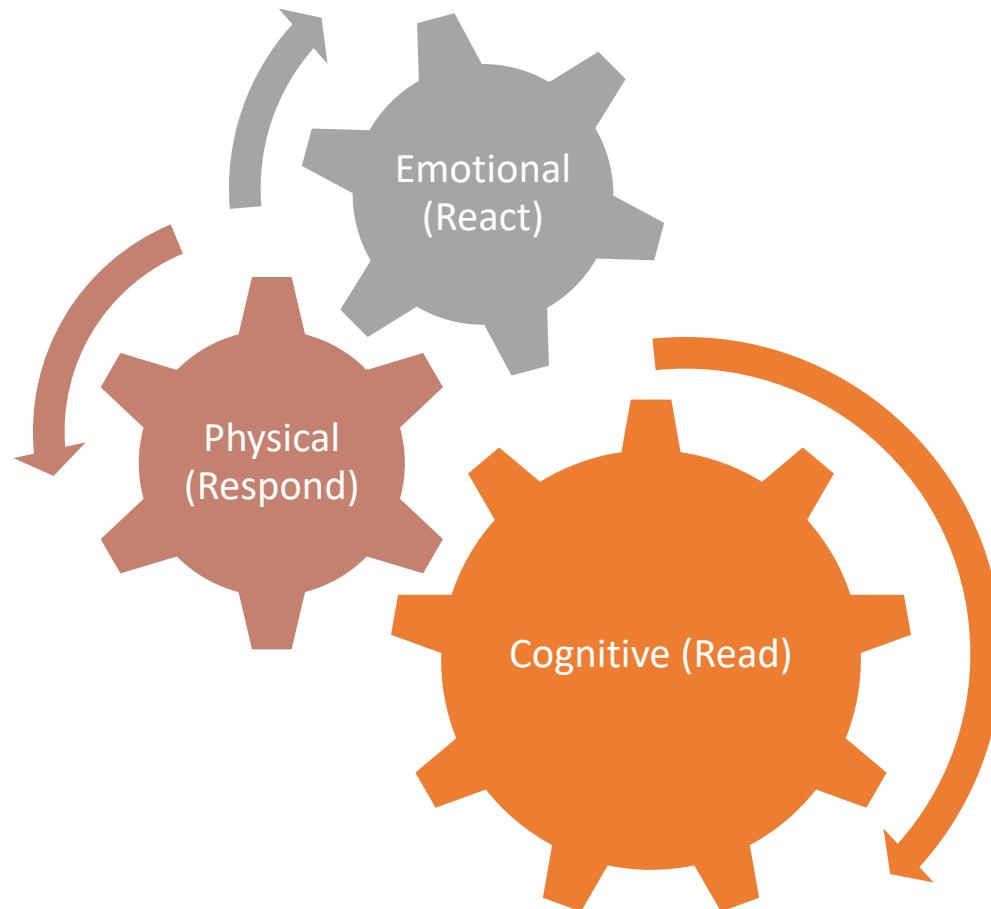
More language challenges



Cultural *what*?

Cultural intelligence (CQ) – an outsider's seemingly natural ability to interpret someone's unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that person's compatriots would.

Three components of CQ



Trouble in Paradise

Cultural considerations with global groups

Cultural differences and its impact on business

In small groups, discuss:

Problem identification:

- What are the main issues / problems identified in the case study?

Problem solutions:

- What are the possible solutions / options at hand?
- What are the trade-offs of each of these solutions?
- What would you do???

Priority 1: Develop a clear vision and strategy

What is the goal of Heartland Spindle and its partner in China (e.g., low cost production, increase production / quality, grow the share of the domestic market, relates to other regions...)

- Examine original contract
- Adjust expectations – is 20% ROI possible?
- Keep JV as-is (question of new acquisition)
- Alternative to the 50/50 JV
- Sell Heartland ownership to another partner
- Terminate JV in current form (sudden or phased exit)

Priority 2: Mobilize to further the JV strategy

- Relationships are crucial in China
- Need elected officials and executives (CEO at Michelin visits China 2-3 times a year)
- Identify shared performance measures
- Tie employee compensation to performance (especially senior managers) – may shift to market driven and not government driven
- Reduce number of expatriate managers?

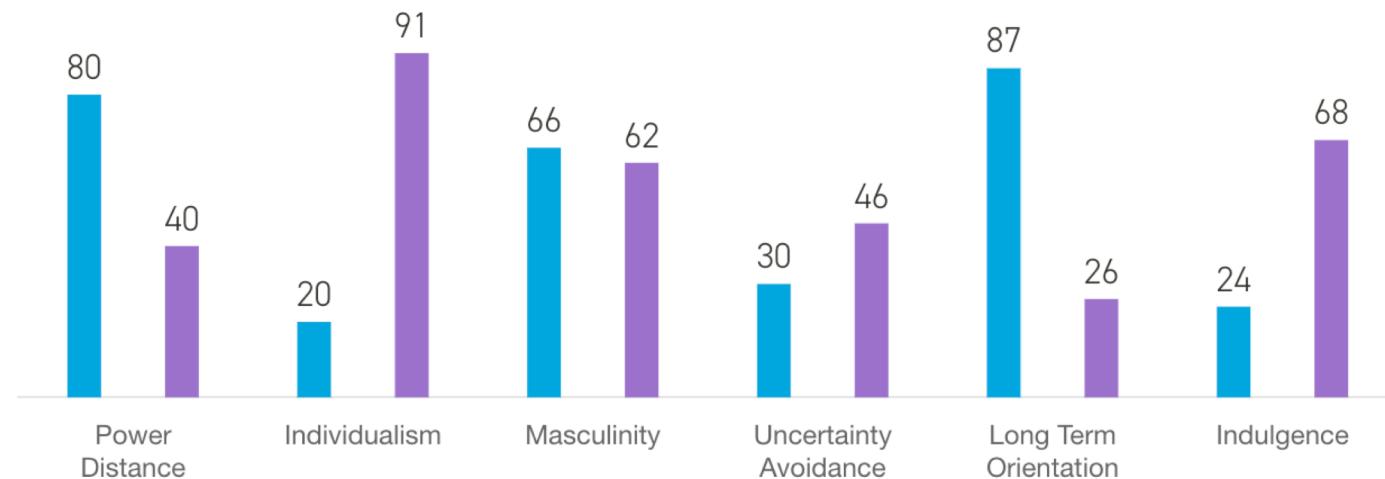
In small groups, discuss:

How does cultural intelligence relate?

- How would you assess Mike's cultural intelligence in terms of cognitive, physical and emotional?
- How does the case study link to what we will do in your global project?

China ×

United States ×



* estimated

[READ MORE ABOUT CHOSEN COUNTRIES](#)

Move out of cultural 'comfort zone'

United States

Rule-based

- Rationality
- Individualistic society

Approaches:

- Willing to confront directly, criticize, discuss controversial topics
- Press personal opinions about what they consider "the truth"
- Little concern with "face"

China

Relation-based

- Maintain harmony with family and associates
- Show deference to superiors

Approaches:

- Defer to superiors
- Guanxi (favors – not bribery)
- Loss of face

Is Mike a problem???

Managing Cross-Cultural Issues

(Krishna, Sahay and Walshaw)

Strategic choice of projects

- Embedded, middleware, neutral
- Organized as win-win

Manage the relationship

- Use systems to organize
- Understand values and differences in norms
- “Negotiated culture” and “working culture”

Staffing issues

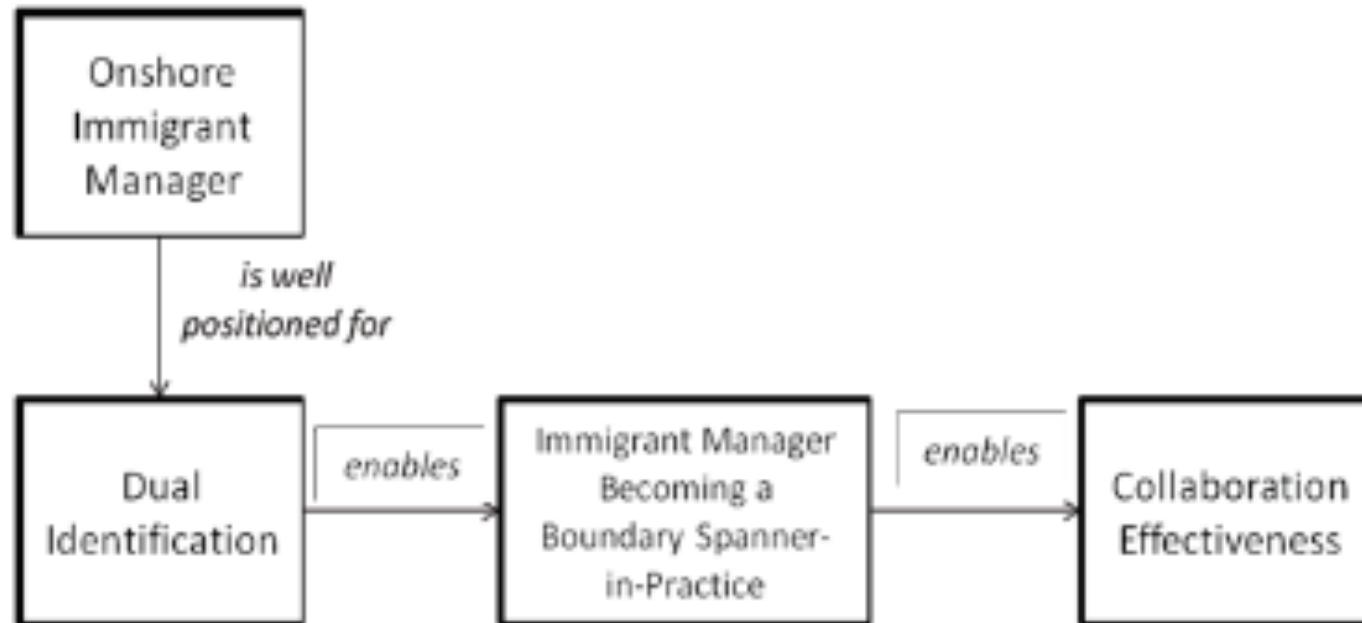
- Cross-cultural matches
- Use “cultural bridging” staff
- Use locally-relevant recruitment and retention strategies

Training

- Cultural training for vendor and client (two-way)
- On the job training

Bridgeheads in Outsourcing Projects

Figure 1: Onshore Immigrant Managers as Potential Boundary Spanners for Offshore Projects



Levina, N. and Kane, A.A. (2009). "Immigrant Managers as Boundary Spanners on Offshored Software Development Projects: Partners or Bosses? ACM International Workshop on Intercultural Collaboration (IWIC).

So in summary... Culture matters!

- Know yourself and your own culture - What are your own beliefs, values, biases? What are your hot buttons? How open are you to new ideas?
- Learn others' expectations - Have explicit conversations about goals and conflict resolution
- Check your assumptions - Don't assume your first interpretation is correct - seek clarification
- Goal alignment is critical!
- Projects need to be managed:
 - Upfront planning
 - Short-term and long-term management
 - Manage cultural considerations
- When in Rome... ask questions
- Consider the platinum rule

Next Class - Monday, September 9th

Project Planning and Estimation

AND

Global Project 1 Introduction

Read before class:

- Ten Unmyths of Project Estimation by Phillip Armour – **expect a quiz**
- Applied Software Project Management: Chapter 3 – Estimation by Andrew Stellman and Jennifer Greene – **optional reading**