

Doctoral Dissertation:

Cultural Dimensions of Managing an Indo-German IT Systems Development Project

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CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF MANAGING

AN INDO-GERMAN IT SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE

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DECLARATION

I, Ralf Borchardt, declare that I am the author of this dissertation and that any assistance I received in preparation is fully acknowledged and fully disclosed in this paper. I have also cited any resources (footnotes and endnotes) from which I used data, ideas, theories or words, whether quoted directly or paraphrased. I further acknowledge that this dissertation has been prepared by me specifically for the degree I seek from the International School of Management

Abstract

This dissertation aims at investigating questions, which are of high relevance in cross-cultural management and IT outsourcing, but have not been regarded as sufficiently significant to scientific research. The question is, are Hofstede's cultural dimensions adequate to comprehensively explore and explain cultural conflicts in Indian-German collaboration for systems development? The answer is "no". Hofstede leaves explanatory gaps. The investigation then continues by asking which cultural dimensions of other authors may add to a more comprehensive set of evaluation criteria to close these gaps. This inquiry took place by applying two acid tests for each candidate dimension: (a) a qualitative check for redundancy, and (b) an empirical check for validity. These two acid tests ensure that minimum standards of scientific inquiry are met because the cultural dimensions beyond Hofstede are partly overlapping and not free of redundancies – and their empirical evidence base is debatable or simply non-existent. In total, nine of 23 cultural dimensions did not survive the acid tests.

The consistent and valid set of 14 cultural dimensions was then applied to a comprehensive field study as evaluation criteria in order to explain observed behavior. Their materialization was evaluated by their frequency and their impact on collaboration. The resulting analysis delivered the reasoning for answering a third question: Which are the important cultural drivers in Indian-German collaboration? By finally assigning these results to particular stages of the IT systems development process, an attempt was undertaken to investigate which cultural drivers materialize in which stage of this process.

The study was conducted by structurally examining observations brought about among more than twenty managers and engineers over a two-year period in Delhi. The lack of numerical data and the questions raised suggested a qualitative approach, which finally led to the choice of a case-based research methodology.

To sum up its conclusions, the dissertation incorporates all the things which the author would have been happy to already understand when he made his first step on this safari in Delhi: a *comprehensive* list of *prioritized* evaluation criteria which highlights cultural conflicts from different angles, adapted to *particular* stages of the project.

Typically, qualitative research identifies recommendations for future research while one has to resist the temptation to try to 'boil the ocean'. Such potential research questions are marked in grey throughout the text and summarized in section: 7.2 Future Research Directions. In particular, the attempt to identify stage-specific patterns deserves more attention and a broader database for inquiry.

Dedications and Acknowledgments

This work is dedicated to Catalina who has seen her father bent over the PC for so much time. It is also dedicated to her mother Angelica who accepted the additional workload which her husband left her. I promise this will be my last dissertation.

My very special thank goes to Karel de Graaf whose wisdom has guided me for thirty years now. His unmatched ability to deliver complex matters in very short but consistent and wise messages has helped again in this venture. Very special thanks also go to Michael Henkel who inhaled that the 'soft facts are the hard facts'. Not that bad an insight for a physicist! I'm proud to report that we became friends over the course of this project. In terms of character Michael is a marathon runner and his long-term breath made this work possible.

My very special thanks also go to all the Indian and German colleagues who I had the privilege to work with in Delhi over a two-year period. It is almost impossible to name all of them: Nitin Arora, Puneet Batra, Larry Barnhill, Budhisagar Dubey, Devendra Giri, Harm Gnoyke, Matthias Hohn, Björn Kellermann, Tuba Khesraui, Stefan Kuhardt, Rainer Liebhart, Marcel Malitz, Chandan Mukherjee, Moritz Petersen, Manu Prasad, Danilo Don Ranasinghe, Hafiz Rehman, Jitender Singh, Jyotsna Singh, Mamta Talwar, Mantsi Tapar and Satyavivek Tyagi. Among them, especially Kai Wiechern and Sharad Bhalla contributed massively many insights during challenging and triangulating background discussions. Their sharp analytical mind, mixed with open-mindedness and humor enriched this work.

I could have never brought this dissertation into an acceptable format without the kind continued assistance of Clemens Breme (whose knowledge of Word circumvented so many obstacles) and Daphne Panopoulou who undertook the task of proofreading.

And finally, very special thanks go to Prof. Daphne Halkias who actively guided this work. Without her deep literacy in both cross-cultural management and qualitative research this thesis would have never come to a successful end.

Preface

> "Sorry for writing a long letter – I didn't have time to write a short one."
>
> (Interestingly, Americans attribute this quote to Mark Twain, French to Voltaire, and Germans to Goethe).

"This is selfish, ego-centric and arrogant!" the woman cried out loudly. What had happened? The lady had attended a presentation of Nancy Bravo, a consultant on cross-cultural issues, at the Instituto Cervantes in Hamburg. Nancy had shown a video clip wherein Germans reported about their work experiences in Mexico. The Germans had reported with some irony that they still found it difficult to figure out what "manana" actually meant. Did it actually mean "tomorrow" or something, somehow, somewhere, sometime in the future? Then they continued reporting that their subordinates usually feel sick after having been confronted with direct negative feedback, with a slight flavor of arrogance: "they couldn't come to work for days, so depressed they were…"

I apologize preemptively right from the beginning in case I'll hurt anyone's feelings later on. It's not my intention at all. But unfortunately, nobody can easily escape himself: Germans are not exactly known for being sensitive and diplomatic, not to speak about their lack of humor, but they highly value just saying the truth "as it is". And I tried to compensate for this unpleasant trait by adding some self-irony to the text.

The pragmatic reader might enjoy reading section 4 Field Study: The GLOBE Project first and scan though other sections depending on what is of interest — before reading section 6 Findings. The unfortunate scientific reader might be obliged to read sequentially through all the text.

Again, the novice student reader might look for interesting research questions. A case-driven methodology (as applied in this dissertation) is broader by nature than a traditional positivistic

approach would be, and leaves much space for more detailed inquiry. Once again, interesting future research questions are marked in grey as "potential research question" throughout the text and are summarized in section 7.2 Future Research Directions.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations for the 23 cultural dimensions under investigation:

PDI - Power Distance
IDV - Individualism vs. Collectivism
MAS - Masculinity vs. Feminity
UAI - Uncertainty Avoidance
LTO - Long-Term Orientation
IVR - Indulgence vs. Restraint
MVP - Monochronic vs. Polychronic
LHC - Low and High Context
UVP - Universalism vs. Particularism
IVC - Individualism vs. Communitarism
NVA - Neutral vs. Affective
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LEA - Leading: egalitarian vs. hierarchical
DEC - Deciding: consensual vs. top-down
TRU - Trusting: Task-based vs. Relationship-based
DIS - Disagreeing: confrontational vs. avoids Confrontation
SCH - Scheduling: linear Time vs. flexible Time

Remark: Above list is not in alphabetical order for a purpose. It follows the sequence invariably applied in this dissertation.

1 Introduction and Background

This thesis is about understanding and managing cross-cultural conflicts in outsourced IT systems development. It designs a consistent and comprehensive set of evaluation criteria, which is derived from the cultural dimensions of various researchers and applies them to a field study to investigate the following Research Questions: (1) Is Hofstede complete?, (2) which other dimensions should be utilized?, (3) which of them are more important than others?, and (4) what is the context to IT?

Literature review suggests that various dimensions co-exist, but have never been merged into a consistent set for conclusion drawing. In any case, there is no shortage of literature regarding cross-cultural management. Some even say this topic is over-researched. So, why does it make sense to add this dissertation to the presumably fully satisfied body of knowledge? The answer is that there still is much terra incognita to discover. Fazli and Bittner (2017) report that the number of papers on culture went down from 1,130 to only 20 when filtered for cooperation in software engineering teams – which indicates that comparatively little research has been conducted in this research area. Another observation is that Fazli and Bittner suggest research questions in a recent publication of 2017, which are very similar to those of this dissertation. All this underlines and affirms an obvious need for research in this area.

Cultural conflicts in international collaboration come at the expense of effectiveness, efficiency, and quality (e.g., Iqbal and Dad, 2013). This study explores the cultural dimensions of managing an Indo-German IT systems development project and the manifold ways in which such cultural conflicts materialize. It documents observations made over two years in an Indo-German multi-million IT-development project in Delhi, with approximately 100 experts involved from each side. Field observations are described in the field study as they materialized over the course of the project over two years.

Field observation forms a primary data collection method of ethnographic studies (Flick, 2018). It is subject to a subsequent, more profound analysis by assessing the impact of the cultural dimensions of the evaluation scheme by qualitative means. Finally, the researcher will attempt to quantify the study's results. Observation is used in research in two ways – structured and unstructured. The question, which method to choose depends on the research question but will be defined predominantly by the paradigm underlying each study. Positivistic research generally uses structured observation, and interpretive/naturalistic models use unstructured observation (Mulhall, 2003). The latter was applied when analyzing the field study, whereas a momentum of structure was provided by applying the cultural dimensions.

The field study represents the descriptive part of the dissertation; its format is narrative. For the analytical part (and for conclusion drawing) a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria is developed and applied to the field study to investigate the research questions. The four research questions emerged over the course of the project, as is commonly seen in exploratory qualitative studies (Merriam and Grenier, 2019).

1.1 Research Problem

Offshoring projects require by nature the collaboration of teams which derive from at least two different nations and their respective culture (e.g., Koh, Joseph and Ang, 2010). Again, as a starting point, one might assume that a certain fraction of the disappointments mentioned above is not exclusively influenced by technology or management, but by culture — or by an intertwined mix of several factors.

Information Technology (IT) development itself happens according to specific structured methodologies and paradigms. Espinosa, Slaughter, Kraut, and Herbsled (2007) state three types of coordination: technical coordination (managing technical dependencies among software parts), temporal coordination (managing time dependencies among software activities, such as meeting project schedules) and process coordination (managing dependencies in the

development process, such as priority conflicts) which are fulfilled by different methodologies. Examples are the traditional waterfall model and, more recently, agile development, stating two substantially different philosophies. The examination, which method to apply given the specific circumstances of a project would go far beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, it will concentrate on what these IT development methodologies have in common: they all have to perform specific tasks such as planning, analysis, design, coding, and testing. As soon as one accepts that these different phases in systems development require different personal skills — then one implicitly agrees with the human factor in IT systems development as well. For obvious reasons, this human factor is strongly influenced by the cross-cultural environment in which project stakeholders have been socialized.

It is well cited in the extant management literature that project management theory has not been tested through empirical investigations of large, complex engineering and construction projects (Prieto, 2015; Kozak-Holland and Proctor, 2020). "...The challenges faced by practitioners in the project management discipline and how it doesn't equip them well for transformational projects, (and the) gap between project management research and implementation. The project management discipline lacks a unified theory and established body of research that is widely accepted" (Kozak-Holland and Procter, 2020: p.13).

Much research has been conducted regarding the appropriate approach to IT systems development and, *separately*, about cross-cultural dimensions (Fazli and Bittner, 2017). This dissertation will concentrate on the interdisciplinary relationship between both distinct worlds. The basic approach will target at breaking down and analyzing how cultural nation-specific profiles impact the process of structured IT systems development.

- **Statement of the Problem: The problem is cross-national IT system development initiatives invariably face cross-cultural management problems, particularly in**

remotely managing budget, time, and quality requirements (Kidd, 2020; Koh, Joseph and Ang, 2010).

Idiosyncratic but intangible culture-driven inefficiencies in communication and cooperation obstruct project success beyond tangible technology and management shortcomings. Rai, Maruping and Venkatesh, 2009, as well as Fazli and Bittner, 2017, provide sound reasoning regarding the influence of cultural factors on IT systems development by own analysis and literature review. This context might, therefore, be taken for granted. However, both researchers and practitioners are left alone when searching for a *structured, comprehensive, consistent, and integrated framework* to evaluate and investigate cultural inefficiencies, which also (a) takes *effectiveness considerations* into account and (b) *links to the process of IT systems development*. This dissertation intends to contribute to filling these gaps by postulating appropriate research questions and unfolding an accurate iterative research design.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

- **The purpose of this qualitative extensive case study is to explore how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative.**

The comprehensive case study research approach (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016) has its foundation embedded within the ideals of factual, quantitative, and positivist research to extend theory. Extension studies, such as this multiple case study, provide not only replication evidence but also support extending prior research results with offering new and critical theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012). Based on a set of evaluation criteria, (a) an attempt will be undertaken to investigate the effectiveness ranking of cultural dimensions and (b) learn about the existence of stage-specific patterns along the IT development process. Consistently, the study is expected to contribute to improvements regarding quality, cost, and timelines of international projects,

in particular for those who face the problem of setting up an appropriate project organization, or for those who wish to research the effectiveness of cultural drivers.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

Again, there is no shortage of literature on cross-cultural management. However, it gets scarce when scanning for cross-cultural management in IT, or when looking for qualitative studies, or both. Most studies focus on numerical empirical investigation, challenging or affirming Hofstede's findings. This phenomenon might be explained by the abundance of data willingly provided by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010). Therefore, it appears to be very seductive to use these data for traditional positivistic research designs.

At the same time, no foundation for merging the various approaches into one comprehensive and consistent evaluation base could be detected. Instead, every researcher on cross-cultural dimensions feels the ambition to add their set to the body of knowledge, summing up to a set of 23 different 'candidate' dimensions. The confusion is amplified by the observation that some cultural dimensions appear redundant, while some prove to deliver explanations for observed behavior and others don’t. In brief, just adding Hofstede's six, Hampden-Turner's seven, Meyer's eight, and Hall's two cultural dimensions to form a set of 23 would be misleading and confusing. Instead, some housekeeping work has to be performed beforehand. This procedure is explained in detail in section 3.2.2 Ensuring the Consistency of the Evaluation Scheme.

Another observation is remarkable as well: none of the authors provides deeper considerations regarding the effectiveness of their dimensions. This realization is somewhat surprising as both researchers and practitioners should be interested in the efficacy of cultural aspects. It can only be assumed that the reasoning for refraining from such attempts lays in the difficulty to make such statements *generally*: the effectiveness of a particular dimension might vary from country

to country. But as this dissertation is about two *specific* cultures, such an attempt appeared feasible — and value-adding.

And finally, no attempt to investigate specific patterns of cultural dimensions in specific stages of the IT development process could be detected when analyzing the literature. All these observations finally resulted in the formulation of the four research questions.

1.4 Research Questions

The right questions need to be asked to obtain the appropriate answers (Browne and Keeley, 2014). As such, it becomes essential to identify suitable questions for the research. As a result, and in line with the purpose of this study, one central research question (CRQ) and four sub-questions were developed:

- **Central research question (CRQ): How can managers unfold actions towards the resolution of cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative?**

The following research questions will be investigated:

- Research Question 1: To which extent do the cultural dimensions offered by Hofstede provide a sufficient framework to comprehensively describe observations in large-scale international projects?
- Research Question 2: Which cultural dimensions of other researchers may be added to the set of cultural dimensions to create a consistent and more comprehensive evaluation framework?
- Research Question 3: Which conclusions regarding a ranking of effectiveness of cultural dimensions may be drawn when applied to the field study?

- Research Question 4: Which insights may be drawn from the application of the comprehensive evaluation framework for particular stages of large-scale IT offshoring projects?

1.5 Nature of the Study

The nature of this study is qualitative. In this way, the method aligns with the purpose of the research and provides data for the research questions. Given that the study purpose is aimed at exploring how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative, an *extensive case study approach* was developed to meet the research objectives of the study (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016). The goal of qualitative research itself is to explore life experiences and interactions of people within a specific social context and this method is associated with the constructivist paradigm (Cooper and White, 2012).

Social constructionism is concerned with how knowledge is constructed and understood, and that reflection on human practices be a central focus in qualitative inquiry (Gergen, 1985). Social constructivists promote the connection between the individual and the body of knowledge being discovered; thus, the practitioner is encouraged to recognize his or her vital role tapping into the vast collection of knowledge that may be found in self and others through observation and reflection (Burr, 2015). Qualitative research methodologies used within the constructivists' paradigm edify various oppressed cultural and social groups by offering a platform for those who are marginalized to share their experiences (Cooper and White, 2012). The dialogue developed between researcher and participants with the in-depth interview method used in qualitative research for purposes of data collection approaches can provide new perspectives and meanings from within a given social context.

It was initially intended to pursue the *fourth generation evaluation* approach of Guba and Lincoln (1989). However, this research methodology was finally omitted in favor of the *case approach* for several reasons: (a) literature review uncovered none or only a few arguments that support the distinctiveness of the fourth generation evaluation approach which instead may be understood as a compatible subtype of the case methodology, (b) it is hardly used in business research anymore, and (c) the case methodology made significant progress regarding inner consistency over the last decades. Needless to say that traditional positivistic research was not appropriate for this dissertation as it would provide only narrow snapshot insights in a highly complex, intertwined, and dynamic socio-economic environment.

In brief, this dissertation targets at achieving the insights relevant for managers in cross-national IT system development initiatives based on the following cornerstones: a *comprehensive* and *unified* list of *prioritized* evaluation criteria which high-lightens and investigates cultural conflicts from different angles, adapted to *particular* stages of the project. This includes a need for structure, comprehensiveness and the identification of underlying drivers which address the following issues (and the limits of arbitrary anecdotes and cultural guidebooks).

- Challenging the *completeness of Hofstede's dimensions*: while Hofstede and his disciples proclaim their dimensions be complete (and they actually explain the majority of observations), some concerns and blind spots arise: (a) in some cases Hofstede offers only far-fetching explanations, or (b) even fails to do so or (c) provides predictions which are contradictory to observations of the field study while (d) other researchers on cultural management offer more plausible and immediate explanations.
- *Consistency* of the evaluation scheme: simply adding the cultural dimensions of other researchers to complete the evaluation scheme is not that simple as it appears at first sight. Some of them are in part or completely redundant, and some are overlapping with others. These facts require substantial qualitative analysis work to eliminate

redundancies to come to a unified set of evaluation criteria. *Acid test 1* for each dimension to qualify for the evaluation scheme is to pass the qualitative check for redundancy and consistency.

- *Validity* of the evaluation scheme: once above housekeeping work is done, another challenge remains. Only Hofstede provides *consistent and accurate* numerical data to support the effectiveness of his conclusions while other researchers report from their experience. Consistently, it has to be checked whether their cultural dimensions actually come into effect in the field study. This is *acid test 2:* check for validity.

- *Ranking of effectiveness* of cultural dimensions: now that a comprehensive and consistent set of dimensions is available (containing those which survived both acid tests), another issue remains: which of the consistent and valid cultural dimensions are more effective than others in an Indo-German environment? This will be measured by the *frequency* and *impact* with which they come into effect in the field study. This investigation will lead to insights regarding a ranking of the effectiveness of cultural dimensions.

- *Linkage to the process of IT systems development*: the development process has to pass through inevitable stages, such as planning, analysis, design, coding, testing. It is of particular value for project managers to understand where, along this chain, cultural conflicts potentially materialize. They finally have to set up a project plan, an appropriate project organization — and countermeasures to address cultural conflicts. Two more remarks should be made regarding the above: (a) one does not have to be an IT engineer to understand the basic process of IT systems development, and (b) the linking-in of both cultural conflicts and development stages comes substantially as a side-effect or bycatch of the recent investigation. All that still needs to be done is to

assign the observed cultural conflicts and their roots to particular stages of development and analyze their frequency and impact for conclusion drawing.

To summarize, this dissertation will propose *not* to follow a traditional positivistic research approach. It will *not* decompose the research area into researchable parts. Instead, it will apply a case-methodology-compatible system analysis and evaluation approach for investigation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing to comprehensively address the dynamics in complex IT projects when two hundred individuals of different cultures interact. It will describe, analyze, and evaluate an undecomposed system as a whole. It will develop a set of consistent, unified, and valid evaluation criteria and apply it to the field study to conclude the system in its entirety. Such a system analysis approach could not be detected during literature research and is therefore expected to develop genuine insights.

Just to perform some expectation management: only a few practical hints on how to address cultural conflicts will be provided. They will go far beyond the scope of this dissertation and will not add much to the body of knowledge for two reasons: (a) all authors and researchers already provide many pragmatic hints on how to deal with cultural conflicts, and (b) once cultural conflicts surface and can clearly be described, the counter strategy becomes obvious for an extensive part.

The study addresses issues in a highly complex and dynamic environment. Attempts to apply a traditional positivistic design were undertaken but finally rejected (e.g., refer to the discussion in section 2.4.9 Rai, Maruping and Venkatesh (2009) because they turned out to be inappropriate to investigate the subject area in its entirety. Instead, a broader, case-oriented systemic methodology had to be chosen. In the absence of appropriate or established design patterns, an individual research approach had to be unfolded from scratch, strictly pursuing the research questions. Its cornerstones are a comprehensive field study, the formulation of a set of consistent evaluation criteria, the analysis of observations of the field study and conclusion

drawing, and the systematic gathering of data to identify sound responses to the research questions. This approach identified where: (a) Hofstede leaves explanatory gaps, (b) which other cultural dimensions beyond Hofstede are of relevance (by proving they are both redundancy-free and valid), (c) enabled a ranking of effectiveness by measuring the frequency and impact of materializations of cultural dimensions, and (d) laid the grounds for investigating whether stage-specific patterns of cultural dimensions could be detected.

Details of the research approach are rendered in section 3.2 Research Strategy. Due to this highly individual research process and the absence of an established experience-based appropriate methodology, particular attention was dedicated to quality assurance (section 1.8 Quality Assurance and Evaluation Criteria), and supporting methods and tools (section 1.9 Methods, Techniques and Tools applied for Quality Assurance).

1.6 Research Philosophy

Kosnik and Bonoma (1986) provide a condensed interpretation of the controversy between conventional positivistic inquiry and naturalism (section 2.6.1 Kosnik and Bonoma (1986)). This discussion is helpful to characterize the underlying philosophy and deriving research design of this dissertation – which is naturalistic. This is because (a) it does not seek to decompose reality to find researchable parts (i.e., hypothesizes), but sees multiple holistic facts from different angles, (b) it considers knower and known as interactive and inseparable, (c) it assumes that truth is context-bound, (d) it is somewhat skeptical regarding simple and mono-causal reasoning in dynamic and complex environments, and (e) it implies that information can hardly be value-free in such a socio-economic context.

The dissertation uses all three generic approaches to the research problem: inductive thinking (whenever it starts with observations); deductive reasoning (whenever it challenges existing theories); abductive thinking (whenever it applies current methods to observed phenomena).

1.7 Research Methodology and Scientific Research Approach

The research design of this dissertation follows the *case study methodology*. More specifically, this study utilizes Eriksson and Kovalainen's (2016) extensive case study research approach, which relies more on the ideals of factual, quantitative, and positivist research to extend theory. The extensive case study research approach focuses on common mapping patterns, mechanisms, and properties in a chosen context to develop, elaborate, or testing theory. To meet the purpose of the study, the researcher investigated a complex and highly intertwined dynamic system: the Indo-German project with 200 people from both cultures involved. This requires unfolding and applying a comprehensive set of analysis and evaluation criteria to gain new insights beyond the current body of knowledge. The complexity of the research subject and the four research questions require a flexible and objective-oriented methodology. These factors, therefore, suggest using the case methodology in conjunction with a compatible system analysis approach aiming at *evaluating* and *interpreting* observations and conclusion drawing. The following quote supports this research strategy. According to Walliman (2011):

> Research can have several legitimate objectives, either singly or in combination. The main, overriding objective must be that of gaining useful or interesting knowledge. To be useful, the methods of evaluation must be relevant to the context and intentions of the research. The different kinds of questions which instigate research to require approaches to research that are distinguished by their theoretical background and methodologies. (p.7-8)

Albeit there is much latitude given by the case methodology, the intended research will navigate within the significant characteristics of the case methodology as provided by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) p. 132 ff.:

- "Aiming at generating holistic and contextual in-depth knowledge through the use of multiple sources of data… room for diversity and complexity avoids overly simplistic research designs."

  Comment: The dissertation provides such interdisciplinary and in-depth knowledge through the comprehensive field study and its analysis from various angles. The research design does not neglect the complexity of the research area.

- "Ability to present hard-to-grasp business problems in a practical, accessible, vivid, and down-to-earth format… to construct a narrative 'a good story worth hearing'".

  Comment: The dissertation provides pragmatic and contextual advice for both researchers and business managers who navigate in complex cross-cultural environments. The field study records events in a narrative style. It provides "a rich and illuminating body of empirical data."

- "Emphasis on interpretation… the business researcher is an interpreter who both constructs the case and analyzes it."

  Comment: the field study is subject to immediate interpretation and analysis. The results of such are used to collect data regarding the intended effectiveness ranking and assignment to project stages.

- "Relating theoretical concepts with empirical investigation" (abductive approach).

  Comment: The dissertation investigates whether established and partly theoretical concepts apply and identifies blind spots.

- Richness of case study data to improve accuracy and diversity

  Comment: Various sources of information gathering were applied during recording the field study: direct participant observation, interviews, cross-checking and review interviews, coaching sessions, workshops re: theory, and praxis-reviews.

To summarize, the dissertation leaves the research area (the project) undecomposed but unfolds a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria to analyze and interpret observations and lay the grounds for further inquiry, namely the effectiveness ranking and the linkage to the process of IT systems development.

1.8 Quality Assurance and Evaluation Criteria

Since the case methodology does not provide a detailed framework (in the sense of a "cook book"), the researcher needs to take appropriate action to ensure the quality and consistency of the research strategy. It is, therefore, important to continuously check whether the criteria according to which the quality of the research will be evaluated are effectively pursued. These quality criteria are invariably applied in the dissertation, namely, according to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) p. 303 ff. (by referring to the trustworthiness concept of Lincoln and Guba (1985)):

- Dependability: the research process has to be logical, traceable, and documented (please refer to section 3.2 Research Strategy).
- Transferability: the dissertation inherently incorporates the discussion of research of highly respected researchers, including their weaknesses and strengths regarding applicability to the research problem.
- Credibility (and authenticity): the researcher participated in this project (the research area) over two years; his explicit obligation was to focus on cultural liaison management. The dissertation is written in a transparent style so that anyone literate in cultural matters might come to similar interpretations and conclusions. Its findings were cross-checked by various means (please refer to the section on quality methods).
- Conformability: the field study records events and observations which actually happened in this context. The interpretation and analysis criteria are made transparent.

- Coherence and consistency, transparency, plausibility, usefulness: much effort was invested in avoiding inconsistencies (by establishing an appropriate research strategy) and redundancies (by eliminating overlapping, i.e., redundant, cultural dimensions). Separate (but immediate) sections provide transparency and plausibility on the ethnographic field observations and their interpretation. With usefulness, the dissertation offers value to anyone facing cultural conflicts in an Indo-German environment (and, widely, beyond that).

1.9 Methods, Techniques and Tools applied for Quality Assurance

The following methods, techniques, and tools were invariably used during research design, ethnographic field observation, analysis, and conclusion drawing:

- Triangulation (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016, p.306) of
  - Methodologies: both qualitative and quantitative materials were applied.
  - Methods: the different methods of other researchers were examined, used and challenged.
  - Data: multiple empirical sources were cross-checked with field study observations.
  - Theories: as for methods.
  - Researchers: none present, but permanent review checks with experienced team members on Indo-German collaboration were conducted.
- Member checks / respondent validation (Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) p.307).

  Member checks were continuously applied during field study analysis and partly afterward during post mortem analysis. During the field study, numerous structured workshops and personal feedback loops were conducted. These workshops targeted at enlightening specific areas of interest: how do we better understand the other side? What can we learn about them – and what can we learn about us? And, particularly interesting: how does the other side see

us? How and when can we deal better with cultural misunderstandings? Review and analysis of conflicts – and what are the lessons learned?

- Reflexivity (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016, p.330)

  "…refers to the researcher's continuous and systematic attention to the process and context of knowledge construction."

  The attitude towards the area of investigation was continuously self-critical. Some personal uncertainty was fostered (by then) due to the absence of methodological guidance. The research design evolved repetitively over the course of the project by continuously asking, "how can we best address observed cultural conflicts — and how can this be achieved in structured ways?" This question is mirrored in the research design. The research – and the herewith consistent attitude of the author, in particular towards cultural encounters — "relies on a relativist ontology (suggesting that there are multiple realities), and subjectivist epistemology (emphasizing that the researcher and the participant jointly create understandings)." (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016, p.307)

  It came to the benefit of this venture that executive management provided more than sufficient space, time, and budget to conduct this field study – which is a rare privilege.

- Deviant case analysis (Presentation Dr. Kritika Samsi, King's College London)

  > "The Process of exploring experiences of those participants who appear to be 'deviant' from responses of the norm. Encourages the researcher to examine, question, develop, and refine the emergent theory further."

  "Outliers" were *not* ignored in the field study, but were an interesting phenomenon. Behavioral patterns that were hardly explainable were investigated further – and led to additional insights. Particular attention was paid to observations that were deviant from the predictions of other researchers – which resulted in the warning of mono-causal reasoning.

1.10 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, extensive case study is to explore how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative. Offshoring IT ventures has become an established practice and a huge business over the last decades. In general, organizations outsource for several reasons: for the promise of cost advantages, for quality purposes, for time and for capacity reasons, and for strategic goals such as re-focusing on the core business. Without a doubt, it is a fundamental decision to give away parts of the own business because it by nature comes with giving away direct control over the process.

Some companies focused on achieving cost advantages and therefore outsourced costly operations to those countries (offshoring) with a beneficial cost structure. After some years of experience, the initial enthusiasm about the vast benefits vanished, and insiders increasingly reported about the challenges associated with such initiatives, because the results were partly disappointing and initial promises could not be kept. Efficiency problems eroded the cost advantages, ventures took longer than expected, and quality problems surfaced. The reasons may be found in a wide array of underlying factors, such as technology challenges, unclear requirements and expectations, poor contracts, shortcomings in management, and many other drivers. As a starting point for this dissertation, it is assumed that the negligence of cross-cultural conflicts contributes a substantial share to these disappointments. Consistently, it systematically concentrates on examining sources for cross-cultural conflicts, their nature, their consequences, and their impact. These outcomes lay the basis for further prescriptive attempts and enlarge the knowledge in this area of research.

To summarize, this study intends to examine the consequences of cultural conflicts in international cooperation with a particular focus on IT systems development and to develop and apply a structured, consistent, prioritized, and comprehensive framework for analysis,

evaluation, and conclusion drawing. Therefore this dissertation aims at "solving real-world problems" (Walliman, 2011).

1.11 Key Operational Definitions

The cultural dimensions, including their scores and relative positioning, as defined by their respective authors, form a central part of the evaluation in the dissertation. Definitions and interpretations are provided in the separate sections in section 5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions. Important operational outcome variables will be the frequency and impact with which the cultural dimensions materialize.

1.12 Summary of Chapter

This qualitative dissertation aims at investigating areas in cross-cultural management that remain unexplored. It navigates in a highly complex and dynamic environment and therefore pursues a case-oriented scientific approach by refraining from decomposing the subject area into hypotheses according to positivistic standards. Instead, it describes the subject area in a comprehensive field study but leaves it undecomposed in its entirety. For the purpose of analysis, it develops a set of consistent and valid evaluation criteria and draws respective conclusions. These conclusions are partly more qualitative in nature, and partly they are quantifiable. The former applies to Research Questions 1 and 2 (is Hofstede complete – and if he is not, which cultural dimensions should be added to complete the evaluation scheme?). The latter applies to Research Questions 3 and 4 (how would a ranking of effectiveness look like – and is it possible to identify stage-specific patterns with which cultural dimensions materialize along the IT development cycle?).

The methodology of this dissertation is designed in such a way to meet the requirements of the research questions while attaining the goal of this qualitative, extensive case study. Therefore consistently, there are no former experience-based processes ready for use off-the-shelve.

Particular attention is given on quality-assuring tools and methods to ensure consistency and validity. In sum, the study targets at sparing researchers and practitioners from losses of effectiveness and efficiency by providing a *comprehensive* list of *prioritized* evaluation criteria which high-lightens cultural conflicts from different angles, adapted to *particular* stages of IT systems development projects.

As the literature on cross-cultural management in IT projects is scarce, and as no similar research design could be detected in the literature, the dissertation aims at delivering genuinely new insights and at adding to the body of knowledge.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review Method and Search Strategy

This section follows the integrative literature review method of Torraco (2016), which is used to summarize knowledge in structured ways and to bring both theoretical and empirical findings together to archive advanced perspectives and insights regarding the research subject. His approach targets at both (a) focused and detailed inquiry and (b) the condensation of future research questions. The approach of Torraco (2016) is, therefore, broader and more comprehensive than pure quantitative meta-analysis or other qualitative reviews (Snyder, 2019). It grants latitude to the researcher to apply both qualitative and quantitative methods for the merger of well-reasoned findings. However, the integrative literature review method aims at balancing out the shortcomings of both: qualitative synthesis approaches inherently face the danger of bias, (Hopia, Latvata and Limatainen, 2016) and quantitative synthesis approaches require a strict decomposition down to the level of researchable but isolated hypothesizes (Harkiolakis, 2017), which complicates any synthesis and limits its breadth (Snyder, 2019).

Cooper (1982; 1998) proposes a five-stage approach for application in integrated reviews:

1. Problem formulation including defining the subject, the focus of research, and its scope.
2. Data collection with particular attention to ensuring standards of academic rigor to provide objectivity and address subjective perceptions.
3. Evaluation of data, including critical review for appropriateness and applicability.
4. Data analysis and interpretation, including the condensation to relevant data.
5. Presentation of results targeting at presenting comprehensive but relevant conclusions (also see Russell, 2005).

In sum, the integrated literature methodology incorporates and critically reviews conceptual and theoretical elements as well as positivistic research results.

Researchers invariably face the problem of new and changing input from various sources over the entire inquiry process. All this impetus from literature requires constant observation and evaluation and might potentially re-direct the course of the venture (Souza, Silva and Carvalho, 2010) at any time. By observing and analyzing literature, speeches, seminars and workshops, discussions with peers, and ethnographic field observation, researchers gain an understanding of which topics are stable — and which are subject to change. Consistent, constant and accurate literature reviews are a valuable source for identifying driving factors and its dynamic components, in brief, the evolution of the research issue (Webster and Watson, 2002). This future orientation increases the value of the research for both business pragmatists and researchers. An integrative literature review, therefore, has the ambition to focus on future implications, practices, and policies (Toracco, 2016).

Regarding this dissertation, the literature review did not happen in an isolated, well-defined phase with a defined start and end. Instead, it was rather a continual and iterative process over the entire life-cycle of this venture. It included an in-depth study of the primary literature of the authors in scope as well as scientific articles regarding both the research topic itself as well as the appropriate research methodology. The reference sections in articles and books provided further impetus. Google Scholar delivered valuable input by setting keywords such as *"cross-cultural management"*, *"multi-cultural management" "cultural conflicts", "cultural frictions", "outsourcing", "offshoring"*.

Although Google Scholar is often under debate regarding its accuracy and sheer mass of hits (e.g. Bauer and Bakkalbasi, 2005; Beall, 2014; Serenko, 2015), very valuable references could be provided. The sheer mass might be incriminating and requires discipline, but the relevance of the hit articles could be evaluated very adequately and did not cause much effort. Another

benefit was that very valuable articles were identified without being published in highly respected magazines. Also, value-adding conference papers were reported (e.g. Fazli and Bittner, 2017). However, Google Scholar might be subject to criticism but became a significant source in academia (Gusenbauer, 2019). Google Scholar became a "reliable indicator of the real impact of a publication, and users have access to most library databases including EBSCO" (Leung, Xie, Geng and Pun, 2019) — and they use it for cross-referencing.

2.2 Literature Review Summary and Synthesis

The number of publications on cultural management is quite extensive. However, when put into context with IT system development, the number of valuable and usable articles and books shrinks substantially. Fazli and Bittner (2017) report that the number of papers on culture went down from 1,130 to only 20 (!) when filtered for cooperation in software engineering teams — which indicates that comparatively little research has been conducted in this context. This might be partly explained by the reluctance of researchers to apply interdisciplinary approaches beyond their core area of expertise — which is either culture *or* information technology. While most articles generally use traditional positivistic research methods, none was detected, which applies an integrated case and system analysis approach. It is therefore justified to assume that such a research approach creates new insights and adds to the body of knowledge.

The literature review is split into three sections: one reviews the literature on cultural issues, a second addresses international project management, the third focusses on qualitative research methods. The reasoning for the latter is that much effort had to be invested in unfolding an appropriate research design. Regarding the choice of an adequate scientific research methodology, it was initially considered to follow a traditional positivistic research design. This attempt was omitted for various reasons: the complexity of the research area, its inherent dynamics, as well as the limited relevance of the results of such an approach, increasingly raised concerns. The extensive analysis of (section 2.4.9) Rai, Maruping and Venkatesh (2009)

illustrates this struggle. Applying Guba and Lincoln's (1986) evaluation methodology turned out to be inappropriate since it is hardly used in business research anymore. Besides, their methods may be seen as a subset of the case methodology (which was far from having ripened to maturity in 1986). What remains from Guba and Lincoln is their set of quality criteria, which is invariably applied throughout the dissertation. This set of quality criteria is still regularly referenced by many authors on scientific methodologies, e.g., by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016).

After having analyzed the more recent and encouraging literature on qualitative research designs from a consistency perspective, in particular, the choice was made to apply the case methodology. Since there is no mature case framework or 'cooking book,' much emphasis will be set on identifying prescribing quality criteria in the dissertation.

2.3 Literature Review Quality Criteria

The section on the literature review will invariably target at fulfilling the following quality assurance prescriptions:

1. Striking a *balance* that simultaneously displays criticality with regard to the assumptions, theories, and methods used while at the same time acknowledging the insights and strengths of the studies.

2. Doing so in a clear manner that progressively builds *towards* the research topic. This includes identifying *gaps* in the extant literature, or interacting conversations in which an author would like to take part.

3. The review remains an *ongoing process*, which requires refinements and modifications as the study progresses. Mark *adjustments* as the learning curve emerges.

4. Application of *control questions* / *critical reflections*:

- What do we already know about the topic?
- What do you have to say critically about what is already known?

- Has anyone else ever done anything the same as what is proposed?
- Has anyone else done anything that is related?
- Where does your work fit in, with what has been researched before?
- Why is your research worth doing in the light of what has already been done?
- Was the research assessed with a critical mindset?
- What are the *weaknesses* of previous studies?
    - Have they missed any important aspects?
    - Are there any research gaps?
    - Are they using the right methodology?
- What are the main arguments, contributions, and methods?
- Did it change the aims of the dissertation?
- Did it change the research design?
- Does the summary distill the main points?

Above quality, criteria shall apply throughout the literature review (reference Prof. Joachim Bauer).

To meet the requirements of Levy and Ellis (2006), "…the literature review should include the following characteristics:

- methodologically analyze and synthesize quality literature,
- provide a firm foundation to a research topic,
- provide a firm foundation to the selection of research methodology, and
- demonstrate that the proposed research contributes something new to the overall body of knowledge or advances in the research field's knowledge base."

Remark: The detailed analysis and qualitative check for redundancy (referred to as "acid test 1") of each cultural dimension beyond Hofstede form a central element of the dissertation.

Consistently, significant components of a literature review will be found in the respective section (5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions).

2.4 Literature on Cultural Dimensions

2.4.1 Fazli and Bittner (2017)

This article presents a *"systematic literature review* that analyzes previous research on cross-cultural software engineering, to identify potential impacts of national cultural factors on collaborative approaches and behavior in software engineering teams." (Fazli and Bittner, 2017). This paper derives from "Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences" which is an IS conference that takes the second place in the ranking list of high-quality events, according to Hardgrave and Walstorm (1997) after all.

One valuable achievement of this article is to provide an overview on the current state of knowledge in research. It liberates researchers to a substantial extent from repeatedly summarizing the state of research by making transparent what can be considered as being an accepted part of the body of knowledge. An example is, among many others, is that it reports that "as it has already been noted in various studies, a major reason why many process-related projects failed and still fail is the *insensitivity concerning cultural values* guiding the attitude and behavior of the employees involved." Of course, such citations are accurately referenced in the article. Consistently, further reasoning that cultural issues impact the process of systems development becomes obsolete, at least in context of this dissertation. Simply speaking, this article widely spares the researcher to check for scientific insights, which can be regarded as a matter of course regarding the justification of their intended research. Obvious general insights, such as a presumed influence of cultural dimensions on the process of systems development, can be taken for granted and make any further need for a justification for research obsolete. Similar observations apply to Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009*)*.

Another valuable observation is that the future research questions proposed in the paper of Fazli and Bittner direct to similar issues as suggested in this dissertation. When it comes to discussing whether these questions are fully answered by the authors, or not, it must again be kept in mind that the major intention of this article is to provide a systematic overview on research papers, and not on research in itself. Their proposed research questions are:

1. "Do previous studies indicate influences of national culture on SE teams? How do these influences manifest?" Comment: both questions will be investigated in the dissertation without explicitly forming detailed hypothesis.

2. "How does national cultural background of team members affect the collaborative work in SE teams?" Comment: as above.

3. "Which SE activities are influenced by the cultural background of the team members?" Comment: Research Question 4 will investigate cultural attitudes along the process chain of structured systems development.

The observation that similar research questions are raised by Fazli and Bittner in a publication as late as 2017, which targets at presenting the current state of knowledge and research, and by the author of this dissertation, underlines and affirms an obvious need for research in this area.

- Evaluation: This article strongly impacts the research approach and methodology for various reasons. First, it comes to the conclusion that only a very small fraction (1.8 percent, or 20 of 1,130) of scientific publications investigate cultural issues in IT systems development at all. Obviously, none of them applies an approach similar the one of this dissertation. Second, it provides sound reasoning why cultural issues are important in IT systems development at all. Third, it suggests research questions similar to those, which emerged independently over the course of this dissertation.

2.4.2 Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010)

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) herein renew research insights on the cultural dimensions propagated by Geert Hofstede as early as in the 1980's (Hofstede, 1984). The initially four cultural dimensions are extended to six. This publication forms a fundamental pillar of the dissertation as Hofstede's work appears to be academically rigorous, peer-reviewed and challenged by innumerable articles. In contrast to other authors, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) argue strictly evidence-based and present genuine inductive numerical empirical research. Their findings represent a widely accepted state of research and knowledge albeit challenged by various researchers.

The effects of academic criticism left their footprints in this book: partly explicitly, but often between the lines throughout the book, many statements seem to be defensive in nature. Without doubt, Hofstede is *the* pioneer in the area of cross-cultural research. He created it as a scientific research area, laid the grounds for further research, and also created an entire industry. His merits are undebatable. But again, it attracts attention that Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) spent much time and effort, maybe more than expected on such a book, on defense. Typically, academic criticism happens in articles, and is replied to in the same. For sure, debate is an inherent part of academia. But the replies to criticism in Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) partly show a blocking, almost dogmatic nature (which is in stark contrast to the open-minded attitude one can experience when being in direct contact with Geert Jan Hofstede, as the author has the privilege to report). Attacks are neglected by pointing at their invalidity or at the superior consistency and originality of their own research. And they claim their dimensions be complete, leaving no space for other dimensions but theirs. The reader might even find statements adequate to discredit Trompenaars personally, which forms just one example among others. One will hardly find examples where outside critical statements were acknowledged and

approved to find their way into the research of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) constructively.

What is remarkable in contrast to former publications is that Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) not only describe cultural dimensions, but also provide pragmatic hints for operational use. This might be seen as a tribute to both the academic world as well as to practitioners who not only want to learn about problems but also about solutions. In this context, it should also be kept in mind that an entirely new industry for consultancy services has emerged since 1980. However, all writers, not only Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) provide such sound pragmatic advice. Investigating the relevance of these many advices would go far beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it is remarkable that the author of this dissertation came to very similar recommendations when conducting workshops with both Indians and Germans. The reader who is interested in how to solve cultural conflicts is kindly redirected to the respective chapters of all the writers.

Without a doubt, the research of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) merits acknowledgment. However, some of their prescriptions seem to be incomplete, or cumbersome, or even fail when applied to the field study — while the dimensions of other writers offer more immediate explanations. The claim to be complete but purely inductive raises the question of whether there might be some research gaps: what hasn't been measured simply doesn't exist. This leads to the question of whether the measurements were complete – and whether a momentum of deductive research would have been appropriate to fill the gaps if any. Maybe, some relevant questions have not been asked (a question which parallels with the late discovery of their LTO dimension)?

Consistently, one of the challenges of the dissertation is to examine and balance Hofstede's dimensions with those of other writers. This requires the design of a more complete and comprehensive evaluation scheme to find answers to the research questions. In brief, Hofstede,

Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) deliver a high offset point in terms of knowledge, but there seems to be something beyond that. No attempt to completely harmonize the set of cultural dimensions of various writers to one consistent set could be detected during literature research. In some rare cases, whenever dimensions of several writers are mentioned (e.g., Malm, Bjorkman and Johansen, 2011), no attempt to merge them into one consistent evaluation set could be detected. Hofstede's research leaves some challenges for further study: neither Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) nor other writers dedicate much effort to measure the strength of their cultural dimension in a specific context – and none of them concentrates their research on information technology.

It is also fair to state that the strict inductive approach of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) seduces the authors to make debatable far-going statements. For example, by excluding other considerations and purely trying to exploring the world based on inductive findings, the authors declare that those nations which bear high scores on both MAS and UAI are vulnerable to fall for fascism and authoritarian regimes. Austria, Germany, Italy, and Japan would find themselves in this sector of the respective quadrant for a reason. Now, such a statement is without valuable and worth a discussion. However, one can only come to such considerations by limiting the perspective to pure inductive thinking based on available data. This is debatable for several reasons: first, other research findings are excluded (in the example of Germany the Contract of Versailles, the lack of democratic tradition, the severe economic crisis). Second, other states such as Belgium (Fr), Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, and Switzerland (Fr) also find themselves in this sector. Without a doubt, these countries did not show a strong inclination to authoritarian regimes or even fascism.

- Evaluation: The cultural dimensions of Hofstede form a central pillar of the evaluation scheme, which is applied throughout this dissertation. The validity of these cultural dimensions may be taken for granted and do not require deeper investigation. This is in

contrast to the dimensions of other writers who still have to pass two acid tests for consistency and validity before being added to the evaluation scheme. Hofstede's dimensions, therefore, have a strong impact on both the research design and methodology of the dissertation. Albeit the undebated validity of his dimensions, their completeness will be subject to further inquiry. Additionally, the dissertation continues where Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) stop: it targets at concluding the strength of the impact of each cultural dimension in the particular context between two cultures, and at drawing conclusions in an IT systems development environment.

2.4.3 Waisfisz, Hofstede, and Minkov (2015)

This book uses insights from Hofstede's former research (the leading author actually derives from that school of thought and is closely related to Hofstede and his disciples) in order to design better organizations by creating better or suitable business cultures. It picks up concepts that were unfolded by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010).

- Evaluation: While without a doubt being precious material for the reader who is interested in cultural matters and designing fitting organizations, the concept of actively creating organizational cultures is not in the scope of this dissertation. Consistently, insights from this book will find no application.

2.4.4 Minkov and Hofstede (2013)

Not surprisingly, the philosophy of this book is strictly inductive and positivist, "emphasizing prediction" (p.3.), without neglecting that social science can't be objectively described. It provides an excellent review and overview of more than 20 important cross-cultural studies – to support the notion that there are exactly six cultural dimensions, namely those of Hofstede. All other studies suggesting otherwise are appreciated and critically reviewed but do not survive at the end. Needless to say, this book underlines the research formerly conducted by Hofstede.

It is of particular interest that Minkov and Hofstede dedicate some attention to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) by stating that their cultural dimensions are:

> (a) "directly borrowed or inspired" from others, (b) "theoretical constructs without an empirical demonstration of their robustness" and, among other shortcomings, (c) "not concerned with academic rigor…" (p.239 and p.245)

The disrespect towards Trompenaars detectable in Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) continues to materialize in this book. In the end, it gives a valuable overview of the history of cultural research, but it confirms Hofstede again and again.

- Evaluation: The value of this book for this dissertation is, in particular, that it spares the researcher from scanning all the more than 20 important cross-cultural studies of various authors for new or different cultural dimensions. Although an interesting read, in particular from a historical perspective, no new impetus for this dissertation could be extracted because it basically is designed to confirm Hofstede's findings.

2.4.5 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012)

The interesting red line of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) is invariably the question of how different nations deal with cultural dilemmas by unfolding and applying seven cultural dimensions. The problems might be the same, but processes and reconciliation happen differently depending on the culture. Professionals in consultancy name Trompenaars often in the same line as Hofstede. Whether this is justified in terms of reputation and rigor – or not – will not be investigated further. But without doubt, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) have set de facto standards in cross-cultural management, and their seven dimensions, therefore, merit a closer examination.

Trompenaars invariably refers to his comprehensive database that has evolved over many years of his research and provides results of his findings. His approach appears more pragmatic than

that of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) and targets at giving practical advice under given circumstances.

Remarkably, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) make unusual comments on Trompenaars research, hardly hiding their irony and animosity:

> An author *sometimes* cited *as having researched* dimensions of national culture is the Dutch *management consultant* Fons Trompenaars. He distinguishes seven dimensions. However, these are not based on empirical research but rather are *borrowed* from conceptual distinctions made by American sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s, *not specifically for describing countries*... Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) p.43-44.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) then continue that Trompenaars findings can be found in former research as well and that, "*unfortunately*," Trompenaars

> "…has no peer-reviewed academic publications, and he nowhere specifies what exactly his database contains."

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) close by referring to a study, which examined Trompenaars data and concluded that only two independent dimensions could be found and these both correlated with their IDV and PDI indexes, remarking that

> "Trompenaars's questionnaire did not cover other aspects of national cultures."

Unfortunately, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) miss mentioning which of Trompenaars dimensions correlate with IDV and PDI – and which aspects are missing.

There might be sound reasoning to state that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner fail to meet the strict standards of rigor, which Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) invariably apply. This reasoning might be rooted in Trompenaars's assumed "weltanschauung" that cultures are complex and intertwined entities and cannot be described by inductive and purely empirical means exclusively. Instead, many insights can also be achieved by qualitative means such as

observation, experience, cases and field studies, supported by surveys whenever possible and appropriate.

Regardless of the question of whether the seven cultural dimensions of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner stand the attacks of scientific rigor, the acid tests in this dissertation will be whether they are redundant (by qualitative analysis) and whether the detailed analysis of the field-study confirms their validity and relevance.

An interesting question regarding research gaps within the approach of Hofstede arises. Provided that some of Trompenaar's and Hampden-Turner's dimensions survive both acid tests for redundancy and validity, why would they offer additional insights to Hofstede's dimensions during field study analysis – who claims to be complete? Having above Hofstede's criticism in mind, wouldn't it be more appropriate to argue strictly facts-oriented instead of challenging Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's database and for lack of scientific rigor?

- Evaluation: Although Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's academic rigor might raise concerns, their cultural dimensions have proven (a) to enrich the evaluation scheme, and (b) to offer plausible explanations when analyzing the field study. To ensure minimum academic inquiry standards and to mitigate Hofstede's reproaches, each of their dimensions is subject to further analysis in the dissertation: (a) are they redundant to other dimensions, in particular to those of Hofstede (acid test 1: Check for consistency)? And (b) can their validity be confirmed from their application to the field study (acid test 2)? Since some of their dimensions pass through both acid tests, it might be said that they enrich the evaluation scheme by adding different perspectives. Ironically, they provide insights in some cases where Hofstede's dimensions fail to do so (ART, SVD). It therefore fills gaps left by Hofstede. Consistently, these dimensions fundamentally added to the progress of the dissertation and changed its design.

2.4.6 E.T. Hall (1989)

Without explicitly using the term "cultural dimension" the American researcher on anthropology E.T. Hall started describing the two phenomena, monochronic versus polychronic (MVP) and low-context versus high-context cultures (LHC) as early as 1959. In contrast to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), Hall reports cultural observations purely based on his own experience and observation. No numerical empirical evidence is provided. Consistently, his research and publications are rather qualitative than quantitative by nature. However, Hall describes the differences between cultures by giving examples and characteristic attributes. These attributes are to be described in detail in the respective section of the dissertation, including the discussion of whether (or not) they should be added to the set of evaluation criteria.

A particular challenge arises from the fact that Hall's dimensions are more genuine than the others, but Hofstede's research follows the strict prescriptions of academic rigor. In the respective sections, the analysis of whether Hofstede's dimensions are appropriate to explain the culturally different attitudes towards *time* is expected to be of particular relevance.

- Evaluation: The merits for pointing early at the existence of cultural dimensions go to Hall. All writers appreciate his achievements and reference to his ground-laying work. His two cultural dimensions are still valid today and became an inherent part of other cultural dimensions: His LHC dimension is widely covered by Hofstede's IDV dimension, but also incorporates a wide array of elements of others (PDI, UVP, LEA, EVA, COM, and DIS). Hall's MVP dimension found its way to Trompenaar's ART dimension. Both of Hall's dimensions could have been added to the evaluation scheme. However, because other writers offer more refined, more recent or more fundamental dimensions, this appeared to be not appropriate.

2.4.7 Erin Meyer (2014)

In her book, Erin Meyer offers an alternate set of eight cultural dimensions. These dimensions partly refer to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), and partially they overlap with those provided therein. However, Erin Meyer also states and proposes new dimensions and sets at least unique nuances and perspectives. It remains to be seen whether these dimensions survive both acid tests for redundancy and validity.

Erin Meyer's approach differs from that of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010). First, its focus is actually on providing pragmatic advice right from the beginning. In contrast, Hofstede sometimes leaves the reader alone when it comes to applying his insights and research results directly. Second, it is mostly deductive, whereas Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) are strictly inductive. Third, it does not claim to meet strict scientific standards of rigor (it is written for practitioners) — whereas it is remarkable how much time and effort Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) dedicate to defending the precision of their work. For example, Erin Meyer provides relative scales regarding each of her dimensions but does not provide any empirical evidence at all. This general lack of scientific rigor brings up the question again, whether it is appropriate to use it in a Ph.D. dissertation at all. The preliminary answer to that is "yes," provided that the qualitative redundancy check (acid test 1) and the detailed analyses of the field-study confirm the validity (acid test 2) and relevance of Erin Meyer's dimensions – which remains to be seen.

- Evaluation: Much which has been said regarding Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) applies to this book as well: it offers a set of cultural dimensions, but when evaluated from the perspective of academic rigor, some questions arise. As before, this problem is mitigated by applying the acid tests. As some of her dimensions survive both trials, it is fair to say that these add valuable perspectives to the evaluation scheme and fill some gaps in previous research.

2.4.8 Malm, Bjorkman and Johansen (2011)

This paper deserves a closer look because it comes very close to the research area of the dissertation. To say it right from the beginning, the writing of Malm, Bjorkman, and Johansen (2011) is excellent, engaging, and enriching within its focus and limitations – although the detailed criticism in the remainder of this section might partly suggest otherwise from a broader perspective. There are two areas of concern that would indicate an improvement: (a) a more comprehensive presentation of cultural dimensions beyond those of the two researchers mentioned in the text (which are Hofstede and Lewis), and (b) the question of sustainability of trainings (only training is presented as a means to improve international collaboration, which ignores other means).

The purpose of the study is quite obviously to underline the need for cultural training: whether it should be conducted regularly as an integrated part of standard processes – and in which format this should happen. It becomes transparent that recommendations in this regard should be given to an international Swedish aeronautics company that experienced cultural conflicts in the past. Again, the paper, unfortunately, does not discuss cultural dimensions beyond those of Hofstede and Lewis, nor does it mention such in its literature section. It misses incorporating findings of other researchers such as Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, Meyer, and Hall. Consequently, their insights are disregarded in the text. However, they would have had the potential to substantially add to the completion of the picture and the analysis provided in the article. Another observation is that no attempt is undertaken to merge both Hofstede and Lewis into a common evaluation scheme — which is a central cornerstone of this dissertation. Instead, Hofstede and Lewis somehow coexist in parallel.

The paper claims to follow the case approach. This is of particular interest because a question arose concerning the underlying methodology of the dissertation: whether the case methodology is appropriate for this research area at all. In this context, it is valuable to

investigate whether this study meets the quality criteria in particular of Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) but also of other researchers on methodologies. The remainder of this section will concentrate on this question.

The sayings of the text are in itself consistent and appear to be based on empirical evidence. An inductive approach was applied, which is consistent with the case methodology. Since the paper addresses complex issues in a dynamic environment with a wide variety of impacting factors, the decision to apply the case methodology seems appropriate. The study does not spend much effort on presenting the applied method in great detail but clarifies used methods and tools: "combining interviews, observations and documents, and text analysis... as well as "lessons learned" from outsourcing projects and a set of standard questions which were asked to all interviewees." Therefore, the minimum requirements for data collection and analysis methods are met. The design is, therefore, suitable for the research question as well as it appears to be justified. The context of the study is adequately stated. It immediately raises the interest of both managers, who are interested in learning about the pitfalls of international cooperation, and researchers interested in exploring the grounds of cultural conflicts. Sample size and strategy are stated as being extensive interviewing of eight experienced colleagues with sound experience with the respective countries.

The findings appear to deliver a consistent and homogeneous picture. In other words, the results are thoroughly described. This systematic sample strategy, as well as data collection, appear to be suitable and of relevance, because the objective is to deliver a specific recommendation for this business and the involved cultures. Concerning reliability, it seems fair to assume that repeating the data gaining procedures would provide similar results. Regarding the objectives of the research, the findings are of high relevance – and also interesting for outsiders, regardless of whether they stem from business or academia. The implications and findings are clearly stated: they suggest making cultural training integrated part of the business processes.

Ethical considerations are not explicitly undertaken, but the authors do not claim to provide an *objective* overview of cultural conflicts. Instead, they freely admit that their viewpoint is Swedish. No arrogance or ignorance could be detected.

- Evaluation: To summarize the above, regarding the applied qualitative methodology, the "goodness" criteria of dependability, transferability, credibility, and conformability are fulfilled. Besides, the study presents coherent, consistent, plausible, relevant, and valuable reasoning. On the downside, the limitations of the study (a) and (b) could have been more carefully discussed and challenged. Therefore, some gaps remain; in particular, the need for harmonizing cultural dimensions was not recognized. Additionally, no attempt is undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of particular cultural dimensions. This again leaves a gap to be filled by the dissertation. In total, this article proves that applying qualitative or case research is an appropriate means to add value to the body of knowledge and re-confirms the approach of this dissertation, although it leaves some gaps.

The remainder of this section focuses on quality assurance aspects. This exercise is valuable for the dissertation because of its immediate effects on research design. The purpose is to draw lessons from unfolding and applying a complete set of quality criteria that will then be applied to the dissertation.

- **Methods, Techniques, and Tools applied for Quality Assurance**
    - Triangulation

Unfortunately, no apparent attempts to apply triangulation techniques were applied. No discussion or deeper considerations were detectable concerning the question of whether contrasting findings would have come up by applying Hofstede *or* Lewis — which were both referenced in the study. More substantially, no triangulation happened regarding *other* researchers. Although very valuable, the set of cultural dimensions applied in the study somewhat remains incomplete. In other words: which findings would have surfaced if the

cultural dimensions of, for example, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) would have been applied? Would they have challenged or affirmed the findings? Note: this emphasizes the need for completeness of cultural dimensions at which the dissertation targets.

- Member checks / respondent validation

Quite obviously, the study was conducted in an open and consensus-oriented environment. It is appropriate to assume that results were discussed and cross-checked with interviewees. Note: this technique was continuously applied during the field study.

- Reflexivity

The text lacks a little self-critical consideration (or does not mention it at least). This applies not only to the fact that the set of cultural dimensions is far from being complete (the literature research might have been more extensive). But it also applies to the question of whether cultural training is the only means for addressing cultural conflicts (and whether such training is sustainable) or is in danger of lighting just a straw fire. Note: this technique was continuously applied during the field study.

- Deviant case analysis

No "outliers" were reported in the study. Instead, there seems to be a common perception of cultural conflicts among the interviewed experts. The picture appears to be homogeneous. Note: deviant case analysis provided valuable insights when analyzing the field study. Its application creates the more value the lesser observations can be immediately and transparently explained by cultural dimensions.

- **Further Case Methodology-specific Evaluation Criteria**
  - Narrative format and audience

The study is presented according to a rather traditional structure. However, while being far from appearing as a novel, it is interesting to read and suspensive for the reader who is concerned

about cross-cultural issues. Its structure is linear-analytic, according to Yin (2016). However, it is written by university researchers to deliver insights to business decision-makers. If the targeted audience had been academics, one would have appreciated more details regarding the research design and process. At the same time, the presented logic appears compelling. Note: a narrative format is widely and consciously applied to the dissertation, in particular in the field study.

- Contextualization

As already mentioned before, the discussion of neighbored theories and their impact could have been more comprehensive. However, the description of the case environment and the challenges is focused, sufficient, and informative. The conclusions appear to be evident while an academic reader would have expected more details. Concerning future research questions, the considerations point in the right direction but run short of adequately addressing the suggestions (a) and (b).

- Significance

There is no doubt left that the study is helpful and provides insights for, in particular, business decision-makers. It underlines the need for action and adds to the body of knowledge.

- Evaluation: the study leaves some gaps regarding quality assurance. This emphasizes the need to dedicate a separate section on quality criteria in the dissertation — and its continued implementation. In total, the lessons learned from analyzing this article have an enriching effect on the dissertation.

2.4.9 Rai, Maruping and Venkatesh (2009)

- **General Remarks**

This excellent article follows the traditional positivistic design and consistently does not claim to suit a qualitative research design at all. It is peer-reviewed, of brilliant quality according to

traditional positivistic standards, and was published in MIS Quarterly, a journal ranked as being number one according to ISWorld after all. Much insight can be drawn from its analysis, in particular: which observations can be made if one tries to apply a positivistic research design to investigate a complex and dynamic problem that is most probably better suited for qualitative research?

Additionally, analyzing this article is helpful in order to better understand what qualitative research *is not* and where and how the constraints of traditional quantitative inquiry surface. It almost desperately makes an attempt to break down complex, holistic and dynamical cultural issues into isolated hypothesizes in order to make them researchable at all according to positivistic standards.

This article is of particular relevance for additional reasons. First, it comes very close to the research area of the dissertation. Second, it convinces by its accuracy of approach and traditional academic rigor. Third, it provides a comprehensive justification for this research area in its excellent and comprehensive section on literature. Fourth, it in itself provides evidence for the influence of cultural factors on systems development. Fifth, it concentrates on offshoring projects in India. Sixth, its focus is on cultural differences and resulting challenges. Seventh, it represents one of the very rare scientific publications which link cultural challenges with information technology (please refer to Fazli and Bittner, 2017).

In sum, many of the above remarks liberate from further justification for this kind of research to a full extent because the insight that cultural factors influence IT systems development appears to have become part of the body of knowledge.

But again, at the same time, it exhibits the constraints of traditional positivistic research. It decomposes the area of research until isolated researchable components, i.e., hypotheses, have been identified to verify (or reject) them by statistical means. Consistently, it provides insights regarding very concise, detailed questions, but it remains problematic to draw conclusions

regarding offshore projects as a whole. In addition, the decomposition happens purely based on Hofstede's cultural dimension. The valuable impetus, which might have materialized by involving other researchers, is ignored.

For example, a hypothesis states that,

"H5: Project leader cultural values will influence offshore IS project success." (p.624).

This means that in contrast to the intention of the dissertation, (Rai, Maruping and Venkatesh, 2009) limit their analysis to the role of an individual (and later admit so), namely the project leader, following the assumption that the project leader's values influence others. This rationale includes and assumes that the cultural values of the project leader also translate into behavior on the individual and operational level, i.e., affecting the team. However, decomposing down to isolated hypothesizes necessarily comes with some simplifications, narrowly designed research questions, and the assumption that anything else is somewhat constant (ceteris paribus). It ignores the complex dynamics and interdependencies within individual and group interaction on the micro-level across all organizational layers by limiting the focus to one, albeit influential, manager. In contrast to this, the dissertation will be focusing on explaining system responses quality-wise, including the dynamics in complex environments. It appears appropriate to assume that cultural encounters are influenced by various occurrences of different causing factors *dynamically* and *at the same time in parallel* — and not isolated from each other. These underlying drivers might amplify or neutralize each other — a consideration that is totally ignored in this necessarily static article. More or less, ignoring such a dynamic and complex context seems to be an inherent shortcoming of the positivistic methodology.

Again, the above limitation to the project leader is probably necessary for hypothesis formulation but, unfortunately, comes with the danger of over-simplification in this context. Project leader values might transfer to the team for obvious reasons. But at the same time, a single person cannot manage all personal relationships when a hundred of team members of

both sides work together, as it is the case in the field study of the dissertation. The sheer sum of all personal interactions creates problems on a daily operational basis in dynamic ways, which are difficult to assess by traditional research means.

Another example: Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) construe the following hypothesis for the investigation of the importance of joint problem solving, represented by client participation:

> "H1: Client participation — that is, having a client member on the offshore project team —will positively influence offshore IS project success." (p. 620)

Regardless of the sound reasoning that leads to stating such a hypothesis (including its valuable verification or rejection), it is remarkable that such a complex matter is limited to only 'one' client member on the offshore team. It assumes that one and only one individual can influence the quality of collaboration. This might be justified and an interesting hypothesis, and there is sound reasoning to conclude that client participation plays a substantial role in international offshoring. But it is a reckless over-simplification of reality (usually, dozens of team members from both sides interact, be it in person or by other means). During the Delhi project (section 4 Field Study: The GLOBE Project), intense personal exchange of information practiced joint problem solving, and frequent mutual visits were the norm rather than the exception. Consequently, the dissertation concentrates on the cultural conflicts that potentially derive from such intense encounters across all team levels, from senior management to operational work. Consistently, the results of testing hypothesis H1 are highly attractive, but of limited value for the scope of the dissertation — and real-world problems.

For information exchange, represented by site visits by the client and vendor, the following hypothesis is construed:

> "H2: Information exchange activities between the client and vendor (that is, having client site visits to the vendor and vendor site visits to the client) will positively influence offshore IS project success." (p. 621)

In offshore projects, and in particular, in the field study of the dissertation, the individuals who are defining requirements usually derive from another cultural environment than those individuals assigned to the role of transforming such requirements into systems. As the field study analysis of the dissertation uncovers, this transformation process is hindered by many appearances of cultural conflict, which can be analyzed and brought to the surface by applying the toolset of cultural dimensions. The approach provided therein does not only focus on the necessity and dynamics of information transfer but also its bi-directional challenges. In brief, it is not about just visiting each other (additionally, site visits are only one of many factors that influence information exchange). Instead, one should investigate the underlying driving factors. For example, high power distance scores create information exchange barriers by inhibiting the process of reviewing and challenging specifications and requirements. Such an often stated concern of practitioners is appropriate to explain phenomena like the "works as designed" syndrome. Again, just counting the number of visits is of limited value and relevance — but it is seductive for positivists to work with such easy-to-measure figures. As the field study shows, cultural conflicts materialized across all management levels during frequent mutual visits. Consistently, it is the quality of communication that matters — not its frequency.

The former hypothesizes of Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) are stated here only for completeness reasons:

> "H3: Trust of the client in the vendor will positively influence offshore IS project success." (p. 622)

> "H4: Differences in norms – that is, having differences in work practices between the client and vendor organizations – will negatively influence offshore IS project success." (p. 623)
>
> "H6: Differences in values – that is, having cultural dissimilarity between the client representative and the project team leader – will negatively influence offshore IS project success." (p.624)

To briefly summarize the results of hypothesis testing, H1, H2, and H3 contributed to project success, H4 and H5 (project leader cultural values) were only partially supported. H6, which stands for cultural differences and therefore is of most relevance for this dissertation, was strongly supported.

Not without some irony, I dare to state the following based upon the above hypotheses: if you want to be successful in systems outsourcing with India, you should obey the following insights:

- send someone onsite
- communicate exhaustively and visit each other
- build up trust
- synchronize your procedures
- assign a project leader with adequate cultural values (whatever this means)
- bridge the gap in cultural values

A panel of experienced outsourcing experts would quickly have come to similar recommendations in a half-day workshop. But now, after having read this study, we know it with mathematical precision up to the decimal. But still, we do not know anything about the interrelatedness of underlying drivers and dynamics (the field study analysis shows that things change over time).

In sum, Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) hardly deliver new insights, but affirm what is already known. And they do so with mathematical precision – whereas this precision is immediately devalued by ignoring influencing factors. Unfortunately, there is no appropriate expression in English, so the researcher uses the German term "Scheingenauigkeit" for this.

The promise of qualitative research might be to avoid the reproach of "answering questions of increasing irrelevance with increasing precision" (John Gardner). In brief, the article of Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) illustrates both the positive and negative aspects of traditional research: positivistic rigor versus relevance.

To summarize, Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) provide a brilliant piece of work that fulfills the quality criteria and review processes of positivistic research. Regarding the question of whether a positivistic or qualitative research approach is more suitable for the research area of the dissertation, it is valuable to examine which insights might be drawn from applying qualitative evaluation criteria to this article. This occurs in the remainder of this section.

- **Applying Evaluation Criteria from Qualitative Methodologies**

The section above concentrates on the *inherent* shortcomings of the positivistic methodology. This section now investigates which insights may be gained from applying some evaluation criteria of qualitative research to such a positivistic article. Such considerations are valuable because they influence the research design of the dissertation, which was initially intended to follow the traditional positivistic design. Such a design raised concerns over the process of the inquiry.

The purposes of the study, as well as its research questions, are very clearly stated. The literature review is exceptionally comprehensive and enriching; it provides excellent reasoning for the need for such research. Also, the evidence is current. Concerning the question of whether the design is suitable and justified for the research questions, comments were provided in the

previous section. However, the authors spent much effort accurately stating the context and sampling strategy. The sampling strategy is absolutely suitable for the research questions, given that one desires to pursue a positivistic approach. The same applies to the systematic data collection, analysis, and methods. There are no hints regarding ethical issues. The findings are thoroughly described in great detail, and the transparency of the research process suggests that they are reliable. Implications and limitations are clearly stated but remain within the narrow universe of positivism.

The fundamental critical question is: are the findings relevant? Some doubts are allowed because the results are not new and only affirmative in nature (refer to former section). Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) raise six hypotheses (each of them being interesting), based on Hofstede's research, but refrain from investigating the relationships and interdependencies among them. Instead, they keep them isolated and static. The analysis of the field study of the dissertation shows that cultural dimensions hardly materialize alone, but mostly in close relationship with others. In contrast, they sometimes amplify or neutralize each other. Even Hofstede (2010) claims that his cultural dimensions should not be regarded as separate independent entities and that there are partly strong ties and correlations between them: (a) for example, between the power distance and the individualism dimension, and (b) the field study analysis shows that the influence of cultural dimensions changes over time. Therefore, static hypotheses can only provide a snapshot. The assumption that only six hypotheses (albeit important) can draw a comprehensive picture of cultural encounters is misleading. The cultural dimensions of other authors are disregarded.

To be fair, Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) do not claim such comprehensiveness. But with the findings of this article, both researchers and business practitioners are left alone with very narrow slices of reality. If one desires to evaluate cultural encounters in complex environments, the analysis toolset has to be much broader.

The underlying assumption of positivist philosophy seems to be that all these slices of reality put together *form* reality. This is insufficient because interrelationships would be disregarded. Let's have a look at the number of cultural dimensions and their relationships amongst each other and do the maths: the review of cultural dimensions in the dissertation has uncovered 23 separate ones so far. To examine all the relationships among them would lead to an equation of 23 x 22 = 506 relationships. For obvious reasons, this would lead to an inflation of hypotheses — and would lead nowhere.

Here an overview of cultural dimensions, just for illustrating the complexity:

		PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MVP	LHC	UVP	IVC	NVA	SVD	AVA	ART	ARE	COM	EVA	PER	LEA	DEC	TRU	DIS	SCH
Hoftstede	PDI								W	M	W		M	W			W	M		S	M		M	
Hoftstede	IDV	S							S	M	S	M	S	M			S	S			M	S	S	
Hoftstede	MAS																							
Hoftstede	UAI									S		W			S		M	W						
Hoftstede	LTO	M	W	W	M			W		M	W		W		S				W	M				
Hoftstede	IVR	W	W			M																		
Hall	MVP	S	W	W	S				S	W	W		S		S		M							S
Hall	LHC	W	S		M			M		M							S	W		W	W	W	M	
Trompenaar	UVP	S	S		S	M		M			M													
Trompenaar	IVC		S			M																		
Trompenaar	NVA	S	S		W				S														W	
Trompenaar	SVD	S	S		M		W		S	M	M	S			M		M					S	S	
Trompenaar	AVA	S	M	M					M		M									M				
Trompenaar	ART	C	W	W	S	M		S		W			W	S										
Trompenaar	ARE		W	W					W															
Meyer	COM	W	S	W	S				S	W	W	W	W	W				S						
Meyer	EVA	C	S	W	M				S	W	M	M	W	W			S							
Meyer	PER	C	W		S					M	W		M		S		M	M				W	W	
Meyer	LEA	S		W									M						M	C				
Meyer	DEC	S	S		S					W	S		W						S	S				
Meyer	TRU		S	M	M	W			M	W			S		W		M						W	
Meyer	DIS	W	S	M	M				S	M	W	M	S	S			S	S	S	W				
Meyer	SCH		S		S			S		M			M		S				M					

***Figure 1*: Complexity of interrelated Cultural Dimensions.**

To sum up, Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) fail to meet the criteria of relevance. Simply speaking, their findings would hardly pass the "so what?" criteria (presentation Dr. Kritika Samsi). Additionally, there is little new contribution to existing knowledge. And finally, their article is far from offering a "vivid narrative" according to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016). Instead, it requires careful and time-consuming reading to learn of its little relevance at the end.

- Evaluation: This section appreciates Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) research approach as well as it challenges it. Some skepticism materializes around various major concerns, (a) whether traditional positivistic research is appropriate at all for this kind of inquiry, and (b) whether the limitation to Hofstede's cultural dimensions is appropriate at all. This potentially comes with the danger of leaving research gaps and not examining the complete universe of cultural dimensions. It should be kept in mind that one of the research

questions of this dissertation challenges the notion that Hofstede's dimensions are complete. The more the dissertation advances, the more debatable such a concept becomes. The main concern surfaces around the relevance of results; their conclusions meet standards of scientific rigor and might be accurate to the decimal, but provide only isolated and static snapshots of reality. Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) affirm knowledge rather than producing new insights of relevance.

It is of particular value that Rai et al. confirm the influence of culture on IT systems development. This happens through their research as well by their vast analysis of literature. The added value of the dissertation will be to show the insights which might be gained when applying a systemic case-oriented research design. Such an approach could not be detected in the Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) article or its referenced literature. The analysis of this article changed both the aims of the dissertation as well as its research design, as it confirmed the suspicion that this kind of research problem favors the case methodology.

Finally, Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) provide a sound and excellent introduction by referencing relevant literature. These references form a sufficient and comprehensive body of reasoning from which this dissertation benefits. By accessing, analyzing, and referencing the literature stated in the article, extensive parts of separate reasoning become redundant and obsolete. It is not required anymore to examine and reason whether cultural factors actually have an impact on project success at all. Such a relationship may, therefore, be seen as given and part of the general body of knowledge and science.

2.4.10 Krishna, Sahay and Walsham (2004)

The authors try to develop a framework for approaches to cultural influences. They start as such by pointing at the right choice of projects:

> "For software that is to be embedded in operating systems or consumer products can often be specified in a relatively *culturally neutral way*." (p. 64)

They state so but miss to define in the remainder what a "culturally neutral way" exactly is. Consistently, there is no attempt to identify and evaluate the relevant cultural dimensions at all in the rest. Ground-laying work, such as that of Hofstede, is not even mentioned or referred to in the text.

The style of making remarks unsupported by empirical means continues throughout the text. Repeatedly, statements are made, such as "a good cultural match" (p.64) without defining what this means and how to measure it.

Another approach then is:

> "A second strategic approach to the choice of appropriate projects concerns the value in *learning* that can be gained through the particular projects." (p.64)

This does not support the intention of the article, which is about "managing cross-cultural issues." It's just about *buying* knowledge. Again, no reference is made to cultural dimensions.
In total, the authors finally conclude that three areas are critical for project success:

1. Managing the relationship
2. Staffing issues: hiring the right people
3. Provide appropriate training

- Evaluation: To summarize, everyone faced with cultural matters in project work would quickly come to such conclusions. The article does not at all provide any hints as to how and where cultural dimensions influence cross-cultural projects. In total, it lacks the detail to add impetus to this dissertation and will be disregarded in the further. It seems a little surprising that this article passed the review process of Communications of the ACM, a magazine ranked in the third place by ISWorld.

2.5 Literature on Cultural Dimensions in international Project Management

2.5.1 Kiznyte, Ciutiene and Dechange (2015)

The purpose of the study is to lay the grounds for Cultural Intelligence (CQ), "an ability to proceed effectively and efficiently in culturally diverse situations when the main focus is differences in cross-cultural behaviors." The approach is invariably to discuss cross-cultural matters strictly from a project management perspective, less from a cross-cultural one. For this purpose, the article unfolds a methodology to introduce and implement CQ consisting of four phases: Drive, Knowledge, Strategy, and Action. It is not neglecting the high levels of complexity and uncertainty. Instead, it provides value by emphasizing the need to address cross-cultural conflicts for success in international project management by vastly summarizing literature. The main intention of this article is the claim that Cultural Intelligence is incorporated into global project management as a critical success factor.

The proposed four-stage methodology is, without doubt, valuable to give structure to such ventures. However, it is formal and provides orientation (including the need for cross-cultural management), but lacks action items that can be operationalized. Instead, it repeatedly falls back to a limited set of tools, such as training and workshops. These tools are important but insufficient and come with the danger of limited sustainability (see also 2.4.8 Malm, Bjorkman and Johansen (2011)). The vital question for the drivers of cultural conflict remains unaddressed. Consistently, the reader is left alone with the question of how to compel such initiatives; important cultural drivers (i.e., the cultural dimensions, such as power distance) are not even mentioned in the text. Hall and Hofstede are referenced, but the latter not with his most recent work. Other writers on cultural dimensions (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Meyer, 2014) are not even mentioned.

Although the article emphasizes that "cultural differences influence communication and people's behavior," which deserves more attention, nothing is said how this influence

materializes. And again, although the text uses keywords such as “trust”, “relationship building”, “individualism”, “collectivism”, and “confrontation avoidance”, it does not elaborate deeper in this regard and refrains from further considerations. Consistently, it delivers little information on how to build up trust and relationships. Another example is using the term “culturally appropriate” whereas it remains unclear what this actually is. The reader is left alone when it comes to the underlying drivers and the question, how to do it. The authors even deliberately refrain from delivering specifics by stating the general nature of their approach "instead of getting to know some *specific* cultures in detail." This neglects the validity of cultural dimensions, i.e., drivers, which are *generally* applicable. To be concise, what is "specific (to) cultures" are the score values on the cultural scale, not the cultural dimensions.

A valuable contribution lies in the presentation of the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), which provides insights regarding the question "how capable a person is to interact in culturally diverse environments." This tool might potentially offer much insight for individuals, but less for large groups. In brief, it seems to be a powerful tool to identify individual shortcomings by scoring attitudes and behavior: "the higher CQ-Behavioral — the higher the performance." But again, the authors provide sound reasoning and themselves remark, "…there is a need to discuss actions how it could be incorporated." Unfortunately, this is where this thought ends.

- Evaluation: Without a doubt, this article is persuasive in awareness building, convincing stakeholders, and motivating people by pointing at the need for cross-cultural management. It represents requirements very much from a project management perspective and considers cross-cultural management as an essential component. In this attempt, it is more focusing on the need for CQ and less for detailed operational insights and action. The four-factor model is very valuable from a bird's perspective and provides a methodological structure. It represents a powerful first step to make such initiatives compelling but unfortunately ends there — and this is point where the dissertation sets off, namely in identifying, discussing,

and applying the relevant drivers. In brief, the article provides a formal framework but tells little how to achieve results. In sum, this article is more about guiding and establishing the process of building up cultural awareness and facilitating it. It refrains from providing a set of operational evaluation criteria, which is the primary intention of the dissertation. Consistently, there is little impact of this article (albeit of quality, but going into another direction) on the dissertation. However, it does not meet the high standards in breadth and detail set by the article of Koh, Joseph, and Ang (2010), which ironically was published earlier.

2.5.2 Koh, Joseph and Ang (2010)

This article follows a very similar intention as that of Kiznyte, Ciutiene, and Dechange (2015): promoting cultural intelligence (CQ) as a conceptual framework and a prerequisite to enhance effectiveness in international cooperation with particular focus on IT systems development by emphasizing potential cultural conflicts. It provides sound reasoning for the need to address cultural issues and goes far beyond just stating the need for traditional cross-cultural training.

Some debatable statements have found their way into this article (such as "good cultural compatibility (of India) with English-speaking countries." and "Software development is highly unstructured…"), and only a few shortcomings could be detected. Examples are: (a) not referencing to the newest publications of Hofstede (e.g. 2010) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), (b) not providing a complete overview on cultural dimensions, even that of Hofstede, (c) ignoring some writers such as Meyer (2014) and Hall (1989), (d) not attempting to discuss the relationship between the various cultural dimensions of the authors and the need for a comprehensive and consistent set of evaluation criteria. However, Koh, Joseph, and Ang (2010), undertake a very elaborate attempt to go beyond just stating a formal framework. For this purpose and the operationalization of insights, they recognize the importance of cultural dimensions and incorporate them partly into their findings. They repeatedly illustrate the impact

of cultural dimensions on collaboration. This approach comes very close to that of this dissertation.

In contrast to Kiznyte, Ciutiene, and Dechange (2015), Koh, Joseph, and Ang (2010), provide at least a snapshot overview of researchers who contributed to the development of the concept of cultural dimensions, albeit not complete and mature. For example, the work of Schwartz (1994) is mentioned. However, the conclusions of Minkov and Hofstede (2013) regarding his cultural dimensions are ignored: Minkov and Hofstede (2013) argued with the respectful result that Schwartz's elaborations are valid, valuable, and contributing, but do not represent additional cultural dimensions as separate entities.

A particular value of this article lay in the fact that Koh, Joseph, and Ang (2010) do not limit themselves to cultural dimensions. They interpret them as "subjective" components. They offer a broadened concept by embedding them with "objective" elements such as "institutional differences governing labor can affect labor relations and individuals' attitudes toward work" as well as "legislation" and many more. This broader approach enrichens the perspective beyond cultural dimensions and potentially completes the picture beyond the scope of this dissertation. It has to be acknowledged that Koh, Joseph, and Ang (2010) incorporate other factors beyond cultural dimensions, such as that of individual social axioms (Fu et al., 2004). In contrast, this dissertation concentrates on cultural dimensions exclusively.

Even more valuable impetus from Koh, Joseph, and Ang (2010), might potentially be drawn from their approach to analyzing cultural friction from the perspective of team performance. They approach this idea by referring to Stevens and Campion (1994), who identified five team competencies which are critical for performance: (a) conflict resolution, (b) collaborative problem solving, (c) communication, (d) goal setting and performance management, and (e) planning and task coordination. This is potentially a compelling analysis approach, which would be alternate to that of the dissertation wherein it would have been an option to investigate

how cultural drivers impact these five-team competencies. But this would require a substantially different research approach. However, it points to a valuable potential research question to investigate this approach in more detail.

Koh, Joseph, and Ang (2010), consistently continue following this path. For each of the above five team competencies, they examine the importance of cultural dimensions, mostly by referring to other researchers. Again, in one aspect, this is a very similar approach to that of the dissertation: it applies cultural dimensions, but now linked to team performance. At the same time, the approach of this dissertation is more comprehensive and fine-grained, as the following interesting overview shows.

Team competency	**Researcher**	**Cultural Dimension**
Conflict Resolution	Earley (1997)	PDI, IDV
Collaborative Problem Solving	Levina and Vaast (2008) Sagie and Aycan (2003) Olson and Olson (2004) Chow et al. (2000)	PDI PDI PDI IDV
Communication	Shachaf (2008) Rao et al. (2007) Den Hartog and Verburg (1997)	TRU COM, EVA, LHC NVA
Goal Setting and Performance Management	Sue-Chan and Ong (2002) Kirkman and Shapiro (2000) Chen et al. (1998) Chen et al. (1997) Sama and Papamarcos (2000) Choudhury and Sabherwal (2003) Kirsch (2004) Barkhi et al. (2006) Edwards and Sridhar (2005)	PDI IDV, UAI IDV IDV IDV MAS, IDV MAS, IDV COM, EVA, IDV COM, EVA, IDV

Planning and Task Coordination	Saunders et al. (2004) Treinen and Miller-Frost (2006)	UAI, MVP, ART IDV, MAS

***Figure 2*: Team Competency and Cultural Dimensions.**

Two observations in this overview are remarkable: (a) a few cultural dimensions dominate the inquiry of researchers (in particular PDI and IDV). In contrast, many other relevant dimensions are widely ignored. These different dimensions total up to 23 candidate dimensions, whereas 14 pass the acid tests for consistency and validity. This observation underlines the need for a comprehensive evaluation scheme, which is a major cornerstone of this dissertation. When concentrating on the effects of mostly one dimension, the danger of mono-causal and over-simplifying reasoning arises. As a consequence, context and interdependencies are widely ignored, which might be a result of traditional positivistic research philosophies. All referenced articles present separate and isolated slices of the relevant context.

- Evaluation: This is a high-quality article that emphasizes the need for establishing cultural intelligence (CQ) as a conceptual framework. It goes beyond Kiznyte, Ciutiene, and Dechange (2015) by offering options to operationalize the framework. This happens by incorporating the same cultural dimensions which are the research subject of this dissertation. The discussion of cultural dimensions is organized around five team competencies, which is a valuable approach alternate to that in this dissertation. However, the observed oversimplifications and mono-causal reasoning encourage pursuing the research approach of the dissertation: to unfold a set of evaluation criteria, which is both more fine-grained and comprehensive. None of the referenced studies investigates more than two or three cultural dimensions, widely ignoring complexity and interdependency. These observations underline the need for the concept and research philosophy of this dissertation: being holistic, systemic, comprehensive, without any positivistic

decomposition into isolated ‘researchable’ parts, and emphasizing context, dynamics and interdependencies in complex environments. As none of the discussed articles follows this ambition, this dissertation might potentially add to the body of knowledge.

2.6 Literature on Qualitative Research Methods

If there is one lesson to be drawn from literature review on qualitative research methods it is that all authors agree that there is no single one-fits-it-all framework for qualitative research. Consistently, the authors of *articles* refrain from any attempt to provide such (partly with the exception of some *book* authors). Instead, efforts are undertaken to present generalized evaluation criteria and principles. It is therefore left to the researcher to condense an appropriate research process out of these criteria. In this context, all authors agree that the research process strictly has to be designed to pursue the research objectives. A consequence is that there is much latitude regarding research design given to the researcher and that consistently the researcher remains responsible to ensure quality in terms of consistency and validity, or those other criteria specially designed for qualitative research. Most authors give an overview on the underlying philosophical schools of thought. While the presentation of these grounds is widely homogenous, the methodologies vary in detail — whereas no author claims to present a comprehensive overview. None of the authors misses the remark that the research design and process has to be strictly consistent with the underlying philosophy.

2.6.1 Kosnik and Bonoma (1986)

In this review, Kosnik and Bonoma (1986) heavily attack the provisions made in the book *Naturalistic inquiry* of Lincoln and Guba (1985). Kosnik and Bonoma (1986) do not attack the evaluation method or naturalistic enquiry as such. On the contrary, they acknowledge that "there are times when these and other of the authors' principles are useful to researchers of all stripes" (p.191). Furthermore, their critic focuses on the excluding and dogmatic approach

of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who "propose not augmentation, but the demolition of the old to make way for the new." (p.190)

As an interesting and valuable side effect, Kosnik and Bonoma (1986) offer a summarizing interpretation of the controversy started by Lincoln and Guba (p.190):

> “Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that conventional positivistic inquiry and naturalism are opposed on five axioms: (a) the positivists seek a decomposable reality whereas the naturalist sees multiple holistic realities, (b) the positivist sees knower and known as separable whereas the naturalist sees them as interactive and inseparable, (c) the positivist seeks context-free truth whereas the naturalist is context-bound, (d) the positivist searches for cause and effect whereas the naturalist does not, and (e) the positivist searches for value-free information whereas the naturalist accepts that all inquiry is value-bound.”

The value of this summary lies in its orientation-giving and prescribing hints for approaching the dissertation. However, the idea of using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation method or naturalistic inquiry method was finally dropped to the benefit of the case methodology for various reasons; one of them is the observation that the evaluation method is not used in business research anymore.

However, the condensed interpretation of the controversy between conventional positivistic inquiry and naturalism is helpful to characterize the underlying philosophy and consistently deriving research design of this dissertation, which is basically naturalistic, because (a) it does not seek to decompose reality to find researchable parts (i.e. hypothesizes), but sees multiple holistic realities from different angles, (b) it considers knower and known as interactive and inseparable, (c) it assumes that truth is context-bound, (d) it is somewhat skeptical regarding simple and mono-causal reasoning in dynamic environments, and (e) it assumes that information can hardly be value-free in such a socio-economic context.

- Evaluation: This article is of particular value when deciding whether to pursue "conventional positivistic" or "naturalistic inquiry" as a research paradigm. Consistently, it substantially influenced the research design of the dissertation and the final choice for the case methodology.

2.6.2 Lincoln and Guba (1986)

This article includes a discussion of the question of whether evaluation and policy analysis are forms of disciplined inquiry on an equal footing with traditional research. It concludes that *research*, *evaluation*, and policy analysis can be characterized as three separate and distinct forms of disciplined inquiry. In contrast, the emergent inquiry paradigms have as much utility as conventional models.

The article was analyzed for several reasons: first, to examine one of the sources of the explanations provided by Walliman (2011, p. 16-18). The second reason was to gain confidence regarding the appropriateness of the evaluation paradigm for the dissertation. A third reason was to identify pragmatic advice and orientation regarding its application by offering a structured methodology framework. Unfortunately, the article does not adequately support this latter intention, albeit insights might be gained by careful interpretation of indirect statements. However, some check questions when following the evaluation approach are provided by Lincoln and Guba (1986) p.547-548:

> "Are the raw materials clearly displayed? Do I understand the logic by which the data were reorganized into the argument? Does the argument exhibit logic and coherence?"

Regarding the positioning of the evaluation approach, Lincoln and Guba (1986) p.550 continue:

> "Evaluation is a type of *disciplined inquiry* undertaken to determine the value (merit and/or worth) of some entity – the evaluand – such as a treatment, program, facility, performance, and the like – in order to improve or refine the evaluand (formative

> evaluation) or to assess its impact (summative evaluation)… This definition asserts that evaluation, like research, is a type of disciplined inquiry, and should therefore exhibit the properties prescribed for such inquiries."

Consistently, the evaluation approach might potentially be applied to the research problem of this dissertation: it will examine an evaluand (the project) in order to improve and refine it or to assess its impact.

For further, more detailed statements regarding the applicability of the evaluation approach please refer to the discussion of the explanations of Walliman (2011) in the next section.

- Evaluation: The attempt of using the evaluation method was ceased because it is hardly used in business research anymore and can be interpreted as a subtype of the case methodology.

2.6.3 Walliman (2011)

Walliman's paper is designed for young researchers. It offers several methods to approach research in undogmatic ways. In particular those researchers who suffer from their first impression that traditional positivistic research somehow is inappropriate for their investigation, eliminating inspiration for their research design. Walliman (2011) provides an overview on different kinds of research, depending on its intention. His paper offers not only an entry point to research, but provides valuable initial navigational aids.

According to Walliman (2011):

> "Research can have several legitimate objectives, either singly or in combination. The main, *overriding objective* must be that of gaining useful or interesting knowledge." (p.7)

It is remarkable that Walliman (2011) liberates the young researcher from strictly following the path of traditional positivistic research and encourages the reader to strictly design her approach according to the objective of the inquiry.

- Evaluation: A great undogmatic entry point — which encourages thinking of various research designs. On the downside an inaccuracy turns out to be irritating when investigating deeper: Walliman presents Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation method in form of a system-analysis approach. This looks promising, but unfortunately, this reference leads to nowhere when analyzing referenced literature. However, this cul-de-sac did not disturb the research design as Lincoln and Guba (1985) are not applied in business science anymore and their methodology was finally mostly disregarded in the research design.

2.6.4 Gibbert, Ruigrok and Wicki (2008)

This article discusses case studies as an alternate approach to conduct methodologically rigorous research. It is of particular relevance since many researchers will have to balance off the conflict between rigor (which often is attributed to traditional research) and relevance (which traditional research is in danger of missing). The central finding of the article is "that case studies emphasized external validity at the expense of the two more fundamental quality measures, internal and construct validity." In sum, the case approach might provide the latitude required to address the complexity of the intended study, but ironically provides too much of it.

- Evaluation: Gibbert, Ruigrok and Wicki (2008) give the impression of evaluating the case approach from a positivist's perspective while disregarding its intention, philosophy, and strengths. In addition, attempts to define quality criteria for qualitative research are ignored.

2.6.5 Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018)

Although addressing the review and publication process (as opposed to scientific research itself) in highly respected scientific journals, this paper offers insights in at least two ways. First, it refers to differences in scientific philosophies and processes. Second, it brings to awareness that

publishing results is an integral part of the scientific process itself — research results which are not published adequately will hardly add to the body of knowledge.

The pre-dominant hypothetico-deductive research approach in the publication process is supposed to be an inhibitor for certain research designs. Now the question arises: why is it important to contrast the properties and consequences of inductive and deductive research? Consistently, Woiceshyn and Daellenbach first high-lighten the relationship between qualitative design and inductive research by referring to Eriksson and Kovalinen (2016), concluding that "in different areas of management studies, such as organizational behavior, organization theory, and strategy, inductive research often requires qualitative research methods." What follows then is an illustrating summary of the history of different philosophical approaches: deductive ("… entails moving from the general to the particular".) in contrast to inductive ("…involves moving from the particular to the general…") and the final division of both, whereas the former appears to dominate the latter in current research and publication. Behind this stands the philosophical discussion what comes first: the idea (cogito ergo sum) or the observation (the apple falling downwards).

Although the authors advocate for a stronger recognition of inductive research in the publication process their explanations remain undogmatic and emotionless. For them, the decision to follow one philosophy (or the other) strictly depends on the objectives of the research. If one pursues to refine or reject existing theories, the prevalent deductive approach appears to be appropriate. But "if one considers describing and explaining of phenomena the primary tasks of research — and once these have been accomplished, developing theory that predicts events and their consequences, inductive research would be the preferred approach." However, they do not resist the temptation to state that, "inductive research is needed in order to advance knowledge" and "and to develop new theories" while "…deduction (is) likely to generate *only incremental contributions*."

The above thought process pertains to research *philosophy*. Regarding qualitative research *processes,* the authors mention that researchers following inductive methods have to "demonstrate the soundness of the methods employed." In other words: those following the frame of deductive research enjoy an established and widely accepted methodology while those following the inductive path have to set more focus on ensuring (and defending) both consistency and validity of their (new) design.

As far as the proposed dissertation is concerned, a strictly deductive approach appears not to be appropriate for various reasons: a field study and the observations made therein reside at the core of the dissertation. The starting point is about a set of observed phenomena of interest and the collection of evidence about it. It then attempts to draw conclusions from these observations without having the ambition to decompose the research area into testable hypothesizes according to the hypothetico-deductive method. This would be in danger of being accurate but irrelevant (as did Rai, Maruping and Venkatesh, 2009*),* who almost desperately tried to apply a positivistic approach to affirm their hypothesizes. Instead, the dissertation is supposed to investigate a complex and undecomposed system in its entirety and, as such, wherein "deductive reasoning does not adequately capture how people actually think" (and behave in groups). Consistently, the dissertation starts with observations and examines whether existing theories can explain these observations — or whether there is more to uncover.

- Evaluation: Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018) present an emotionless analysis of inductive and deductive approaches, which encourages pursuing new approaches in form of inductive setups to advance knowledge. The essence of the article encourages and affirms the choice of the case methodology for the research design pursued in the dissertation.

2.6.6 Symon, Cassell and Johnson (2018)

This article points at the same direction as that of Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018), in contrast to the latter which focuses in particular at the publication process. Generally speaking,

both articles concentrate on the conflict between positivist normative philosophy and the determining prescriptions deriving thereof versus qualitative research which favors philosophical diversity as being legitimate, encouraging epistemologically diverse criteria for the evaluation of research.

Symon, Cassell and Johnson (2018) admit right from the beginning that their approach is non-positivist, but from the "position that knowledge is socially constructed" — which complies perfectly with one of their basic suggestions, namely that there are "different philosophical stances on knowledge production that lie at the heart of the difficulties of providing quality criteria for qualitative research." Consequently, Symon, Cassell and Johnson (2018) note that without doubt, criteria are required to ensure quality of research, but there is tension between advocates of standardizing criteria (i.e. the conviction that one set of criteria is applicable to all kinds of research) and those whose conviction is that different kinds of research require different kinds of evaluation criteria.

Since the paradigms of Lincoln and Guba (1985) play an important role for the design of the dissertation, it is of particular interest that Symon, Cassell and Johnson (2018) refer to them as an example for authors who provided "a comprehensive list of alternative criteria for assessing qualitative research… need for qualitative researchers to provide self-critical audit trails… They also suggested the replacement of conventional criteria by four general principles (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability)." The conclusions which may be drawn from Lincoln and Guba are at least: (a) general qualitative evaluation criteria exist, but need to be adapted to the very specific objectives of the research, (b) the responsibility for this adaptation is handed over to the researcher (and not to the reviewer), and (c) the process of research can be quality-assured by separate means, namely self-critical audit trails.

In total, this means that the researcher is liberated from the highly standardizing straightjacket of positivistic research – but loaded with the responsibility for their design, as well as for its

inner consistency, thoroughness and transparency. It is important to note that such an approach claims for another understanding of "academic rigor" beyond traditional positivistic philosophy: if a research design does not meet the prescriptions of traditional research, this does not mean that it is not meeting the criteria of academic rigor.

After having noted various recent developments regarding the methodology discussion, they summarize that "…there is a growing consensus in the methodology community that any assessment criteria need to allow for the various philosophical commitments inevitably underlying any research design." This is a refreshingly undogmatic quote, which cumulates in: "…that what constitutes appropriate criteria varies according to context and culture." This is in stark contrast to positivistic philosophy, which assumes that there is one – and only one – measurable truth.

- Evaluation: Symon, Cassell and Johnson (2018) provide a strong argument towards qualitative research. By referring to the qualitative evaluation criteria unfolded by Lincoln and Guba (1985) (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) they conclude that it is the responsibility of the researcher to adapt and ensure appropriate quality criteria. This is both encouraging and challenging for the researcher. Although Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation *methodology* will not be applied to the dissertation, the article of Symon et al. suggests that the researcher invariably apply the four general assessment *criteria* of Lincoln and Guba throughout the research design.

2.6.7 Aguinis, Ramani and Alabduljader (2018)

As mentioned in the review of Symon, Cassell, and Johnson (2018), in qualitative research, much of the responsibility for the quality of the research process is moved from a pre-given and prescribing formal format to the researcher. This article steps in at precisely this point by focusing on the need to enhance methodological *transparency*. Besides, this article claims to focus more specifically on the single *process* steps in research (theory, design, measurement,

analysis, and reporting), while the papers of Symon, Cassell, and Johnson (2018) and Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018) limit themselves to setting objectives. However, Aguinis, Ramani and Alabduljader (2018) do not keep the promise to discuss how to increase the transparency of the supposed *entire* research process. Instead, they limit themselves to publication processes. There is no sound discussion concerning the philosophy and processes of qualitative vs. quantitative research detectable.

- Evaluation: Consistently, the review stops here. A single search for "qualitative" confirms this decision.

2.6.8 Bansal, Smith, and Vaara (2018)

Although this paper comes from the editors and therefore concentrates on the publication process, it provides valuable hints for the research process. It encourages providing qualitative research and even provides a non-comprehensive overview of examples, each of them with the underlying assumption they may follow separate research designs, processes, and philosophies. In contrast to a rather conservative attitude of journals towards papers which do not follow positivistic design, this is not only encouraging, but the editors provide impetus for qualitative approaches. Finally, they suggest some principles to be followed (once more with a focus on consistency, as formerly stated). The interesting point in this is that these principles may directly add value not only to the publication process, but to the research process itself.

- Evaluation: Bansal, Smith, and Vaara (2018) support the notion that qualitative research has the potential to uncover new insights, but needs to be strictly in line with the individual research goals. However, this is consistent with Symon, Cassell and Johnson (2018) and Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018) and therefore adds no additional impetus to the research design of the dissertation.

2.6.9 Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016)

The book of Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) is valuable for several reasons. In essence, it provides an easy-to-read, undogmatic, and highly practical introduction to qualitative research, but goes into more detail wherever appropriate. Not only does it briefly discuss the importance of underlying philosophies (from positivism/post-positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, and constructionism to postmodernism and post-structuralism), but also it repeatedly links the author's chosen methodology with their school of philosophy. And in doing so, both aspects have to be consistent.

It is remarkable that Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) refer to Lincoln and Guba (1985) repeatedly throughout the book but do not dedicate a section to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluation or system analysis approach (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016, dedicate different sections to ten research approaches or methodologies after all). One explanation for this observation might be that, after careful analysis of the section on case study research, the evaluation or system analysis methodology of Lincoln and Guba (1985) may potentially be understood as a *subtype* of the case approach. The former embraces the description of the latter, but becomes more detailed; it provides guidance and inherently suggests a process (please refer to the section on research design 3.2 Research Strategy).

However, as with other authors, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) refrain from providing process-like frameworks or "cooking books." Instead, they point at the fact that the research process is highly *iterative* and should strictly follow the research objectives, whereas merging in components of various methodologies and methods is encouraged. As a consequence of this highly specific design, it is left to the researcher to establish appropriate mechanisms for quality assurance (such as reflexivity, member checks, and triangulation being examples).

Since qualitative research approaches are numerous, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) do not provide research processes but summarize evaluation criteria according to which the researcher

may design her process. However, even these evaluation criteria cannot be unified for all methodologies. As a common denominator, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) propose "goodness" or "trustworthiness" as criteria by referring again to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) terminology of dependability, transferability, credibility, and conformability, as well as coherence, consistency, and plausibility. These criteria shall apply to the proposed dissertation, supported by continuous reflexivity. Furthermore, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) encourage an attractive narrative writing style that should gain the attention of the reader. This fits with the novel-like style in which the field study of the dissertation is provided. There is no reason to separate humor and suspense from research.

The dissertation will follow Eriksson and Kovalainen's (2016) extensive case-study research approach, which utilizes the ideals of factual, quantitative, and positivist research within a study that is primarily qualitative in nature. It focuses on mapping common patterns, mechanisms, and properties in a chosen context to develop, elaborate, or testing theory. With this approach, cases become instruments of exploring specific business-related phenomena, and for developing theoretical propositions that could be tested and generalized to other business contexts or theory.

- Evaluation: In total, the main message throughout Eriksson and Kovalainen's (2016) book seems to be that in qualitative research the researcher is released from the straightjacket of traditional positivistic research – but one is not released from the obligation to ensure and provide quality and consistency and to add to the body of knowledge, regardless of the means. Consistently, their book massively influenced the research design of the dissertation and encouraged its separate section on quality criteria.

2.6.10 Yin (2016)

Yin's (2016) book offers a different structure than that of Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016). His book is organized around a very general but pragmatic approach towards qualitative research

along the entire life-cycle of the research process. Therefore it falls short of providing insights regarding the discussion of particular methodologies (or, as he names them, "specialized types"). The reader who seeks to learn more about such is directed to separate, more specific literature. Instead, Yin offers "five distinctive features" of qualitative research ("e.g., studying the meaning of people's lives, representing participants' perspectives, contextual conditions, explaining social behavior and thinking, and using multiple sources of evidence"). It is widely up to the researcher "to convert these into actual research procedures." The message behind this is similar to that of other authors (e.g., Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016)). In essence, there is no one single framework, the researcher enjoys latitude in designing their research, but, of course, still must ensure meaningfulness (e.g., by providing reflexivity throughout the entire process). Another perspective offered by Yin (2016) is similar to that of Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016) and Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018). In essence, qualitative design is suited to produce new insights – and lays the grounds for further (also quantitative) research.

Another observation is that his five distinctive features show much proximity to the constructivist view of Lincoln and Guba (1985): "multiple realities, value-bound research, limit to time- and context-specific findings, and irrelevance of cause-effect investigations" in stark contrast to the positivistic perspective.

- Evaluation: Yin's book is precious regarding adding additional highly pragmatic views to the research process. However, in direct comparison to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016), it offers less structural advice and therefore influenced the research design of the dissertation to a lesser extent than the former.

2.6.11 Flick, Kardorff and Steinke (2004)

This book hosts contributions of more than fifty researchers on qualitative research and is therefore heterogeneous by nature. It is furthermore challenging to evaluate it in its entirety. Nevertheless, it goes into specific detail concerning particular research areas and authors. Not

only does it contain a section authored by Yvonna S. Lincoln (on Norman K. Denzin, p. 53), but it also dedicates a separate chapter to the Qualitative *Evaluation* Research (by Ernst von Kardorff, p.137ff) – in contrast to the other books discussed so far. The author of this section refers to Guba and Lincoln (1989) as being "among the most prominent exponents of qualitative evaluation research" throughout the text. Further, it mirrors the essential elements of Guba and Lincoln's Fourth Generation Evaluation (1989) as a "constructivist paradigm, a naturalistic research methodology, and a consistent practice of negotiating goals." As with other authors, von Kardorff refrains from providing more details of the *process* but delivers basic features and "normative and conceptual principles" for this kind of research, including some methods and tools. Again, developing specific research itself, according to the objectives of the study, is widely left to the researcher. This potentially requires having a more in-depth look at Guba and Lincoln (1989).

- Evaluation: It is fair to assume that von Kardorff does not originally stem from *business* research. The text contains several debatable statements, such as "research determined by goals… is both under pressure to achieve results and pressure of time." First, not only evaluation research should be streamlined by its objectives — it instead seems to be a standard general property of qualitative research. Consistently, it is not an individual property attributable to the valuation approach. Second, regardless of who is funding research, be it sourced by businesses, governments, universities, NGOs, or not-for-profit organizations, results will be expected sooner or later. Finally, Flick, Kardorff and Steinke's (2004) book was published as early as 2004; the literature on qualitative research methodologies has advanced since then.

2.6.12 Levy and Ellis (2006)

This article focuses on literature review as a process-wise venture repetitively going over the *entire* research process with particular focus on IT. The authors present a decomposition of

a general 3-step process into detailed subtasks, filled with pragmatic advice for each of the single process steps. It is of particular value that practical guidance is provided throughout the text, e.g., by when the literature review approaches sufficient maturity. In sum, it represents an excellent orientation-giving framework for novices. Another suggestion of particular value is the reminder that literature review is more than just a collection of citations, but has to follow a plot strictly forwarding towards the goals of the research. A final observation is that Levy and Ellis (2006) refer to "constructs," which might form subject areas for research. They list more than one hundred of such. The interesting point in this is that none of these constructs refer to 'culture,' which supports the observation that very little research has been done regarding cross-cultural issues in IT.

- Evaluation: The underlying message of the entire article is the insight that the literature review has to have a consistent structure instead of just storytelling. It also reminds us that the "garbage-in/garbage-out pitfall" is prevalent, leading to the conclusion that a skeptical attitude is required.

2.7 Summary

The search for relevant, high-quality information faces the problem of a confusing number of various sources: databases, scientific journals, Google Scholar, direct communication with researchers, analyzing the reference sections of publications, triangulation with peers, post mortem analysis, formal and informal maneuver reviews with practitioners, to state just some important ones. The value and potential contribution of each source is determined by two, often, conflicting poles: ease of access and compliance with the research objectives. According to Russell (2005), the search process must align with the purposes of the integrative literature review, which must align with the overall research objectives. In this context, there was little support from literature regarding the appropriate strategy. Subjective and arbitrary elements and bias in the field study had to be addressed and eliminated to a maximum extent. This had

to occur to ensure relevance, reproducibility, reliability, and representability. It happened majorly by triangulation, maneuver reviews, and post mortem analysis even many years after the project assignment had been ceased.

Besides, the decision which literature to analyze and to consider (or not) was made based on clear criteria; whether it adds clarity to achieving the research objectives or not. In this context, it has to be admitted that the vast impetus from literature always included the danger of "scope creeping", i.e., losing focus and going beyond the scope of the dissertation. To meet the standards of an integrative literature review, every single piece of information has to strictly contribute towards answering the guiding research questions (Souza, Silva and Carvalho, 2010).

The cultural dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), Meyer (2014) and Hall (1989) will be analyzed and checked in much greater detail in the respective analysis section of the dissertation (section 5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions) where they have to pass the qualitative acid test for redundancy. The need for such an acid test derives from the following observation: the review of the above four publications proposes the need for housekeeping work before incorporating them into the dissertation. In total, these authors state 23 cultural dimensions. In sum, the novice researcher easily is confused not only by their sheer number but also by the observation that some dimensions are redundant while some are contradictory. No synthesized overview of cultural dimensions which incorporates all aspects of all researchers in a consistent, i.e., redundancy-free manner exists in the literature. Instead, the novice researcher is left alone with questions such as "how do the dimensions of Hofstede and Trompenaars relate to each other?", for example.

In other words: just listing these 23 dimensions to form an evaluation base is misleading and ineffective at best. Instead, overlaps and redundancies have to be identified and erased. This

situation results in a condensed set of consolidated and consistent dimensions that might be applied to evaluate the observations of the field study.

The vast literature referenced by Fazli and Bittner (2017), as well as that of Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009), deliver sufficient reasoning that cultural dimensions impact the process of systems development. This insight became part of the body of knowledge and did not require any further investigation. To put the research of Fazli and Bittner (2017) into context, it does not target at conducting research, but at giving an overview of the *current state* of research. However, there are different scientific approaches. While Rai, Maruping, and Venkatesh (2009) apply a strict traditional positivistic research methodology with all its pros and cons, Malm, Bjorkman and Johansen (2011) choose a case approach, providing other kinds of insights in terms of context end embedment.

The research topic evolved over time. The research questions were continuously honed by the impetus from and criticism of reviewed publications. It started with the observation that Hofstede's dimensions appeared to leave gaps when applied to the field study for analysis purposes. It continued with the insight that just adding the dimensions of other writers forms an inconsistent evaluation base. It cumulated in the observation that all researchers refrain from the detailed inquiry of the effectiveness of their dimensions. Instead, only general provisions are made in this regard. And finally, while a few authors explicitly address IT environments, none systematically links cultural conflicts to the particular stages of the IT systems development process. These four research topics were finally modeled into the four research questions after many iteration steps.

3 Research Method

To repeat the problem statement, the problem addressed in this study is that cross-national IT system development initiatives invariably face cross-cultural management problems, particularly in remotely managing budget, time and quality requirements (Kidd, 2020; Koh, 2010). Idiosyncratic but intangible culture-driven inefficiencies in communication and cooperation obstruct project success beyond tangible technology and management shortcomings. This dissertation intends to contribute to filling these gaps and extend theory by postulating appropriate research questions and unfolding a suitable iterative research design. The purpose of this qualitative extensive case study is to explore how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts in cross-national IT system development initiatives.

To repeat, the extensive case study research approach (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016) has its foundation embedded within the ideals of factual, quantitative, and positivist research to extend theory. Extension studies, such as this multiple case study, provide not only replication evidence but also support extending prior research results with offering new and essential theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012). Based on this set of evaluation criteria, (a) an attempt will be undertaken to investigate the effectiveness ranking of cultural dimensions and (b) learn about the existence of stage-specific patterns along the IT development process. Consistently, the study is expected to contribute to improvements regarding quality, cost, and timelines of international projects, in particular for those who face the problem of setting up an appropriate project organization, or for those who wish to research the effectiveness of cultural drivers.

To obtain the appropriate answers, the right questions need to be asked (Browne and Keeley, 2014). As such, it becomes essential to identify suitable questions for the research. As a result, and in line with the purpose of this study, one central research question (CRQ) and four sub-questions were developed:

- **Central research question (CRQ): How can managers unfold actions towards the resolution of cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative?**

The following research questions are investigated:

- **Research Question 1:** To which extent do the cultural dimensions offered by Hofstede provide a sufficient framework in order to comprehensively describe observations in large-scale international projects?
- **Research Question 2:** Which cultural dimensions of other researchers may be added to the set of cultural dimensions in order to create a consistent and more comprehensive evaluation framework?
- **Research Question 3:** Which conclusions regarding a ranking of effectiveness of cultural dimensions may be drawn when applied to the field study?
- **Research Question 4:** Which insights may be drawn from the application of the comprehensive evaluation framework to particular stages of large-scale IT offshoring projects?

3.1 Research Question Details

Again, it is a misconception that international projects run into crisis purely caused by management shortcomings, technology issues or poor technical execution of tasks, or for other objective and tangible reasons. Furthermore, such concrete challenges intertwine with intangible cultural issues in manifold and complex ways. While the former comes with the advantage of being addressable by rationally arguing engineers and managers, the latter comes to effect by hidden and indirect, often unconscious ways. Under such circumstances, both the business practitioner and the researcher face the challenge of navigating a complex and unknown territory in the absence of an adequate and comprehensive toolset. An evident and

frequently used approach to gain desired orientation is to apply Hofstede's cultural dimensions to uncover, structure, and analyze conflicts. In this context, observations of the field study led to the above research questions which are now explained in more detail:

1. **Re: Research Question 1**: Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) claim their cultural dimensions are complete. The preliminary and spontaneous result of the investigation during field study is that Hofstede might appropriately explain approximately 60-70% of observations. However, in some cases, the Hofstede dimensions offer cumbersome or far-fetching explanations — or even fail. Instead, the dimensions of other authors suggest more suitable explanations in some cases. This is in stark contrast to Hofstede's almost dogmatic claim of being complete and comprehensive. It is, therefore, valuable to identify and analyze those situations wherein Hofstede's dimensions show weaknesses in providing consistent reasoning.

2. **Re: Research Question 2**: Provided that Hofstede's dimensions are incomplete or show weaknesses in comprehensively and adequately explaining some observations, it is suggested to examine whether cultural dimensions offered by other researchers can contribute to enriching and completing the analysis and evaluation framework. However, just adding additional dimensions to the set of evaluation criteria causes redundancies and inconsistencies. This point requires some explanation:

   Regarding the dimensions of other researchers, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) claim to be the only researchers who work according to academic standards of rigor. There seems to be *some* truth in this claim. Their research is strictly inductive and supported by empirical numerical evidence, while others fail to do so, or even do not make any such attempt; they report from their expertise. Consistently, the question arises how and to which extent it is appropriate to bring "scientific" (i.e., based on numerical evidence) and "experience-based'' (or "observation-based'') dimensions together to design a

comprehensive set of evaluation criteria. For this purpose, appropriate checks have to be developed and applied. Again, as the remainder will make transparent, just adding additional dimensions to the set of evaluation criteria causes redundancies and inconsistencies. The dissertation, therefore, applies two acid tests (qualitative check for redundancy and prove of validity by observation) to each of the "candidate" dimensions, i.e. both acid tests are designed to meet minimum standards of academic rigor.

However, some more additional interesting questions arise in this context (potential research questions):

- If Hofstede claims to be complete, why does he fail to explain specific observations of the field study?
- Why are the dimensions of other authors useful at all when applied to the field study?
- Why do the dimensions of other authors suggest more direct, immediate, transparent, or more fundamental explanations at the same time (Occam's razor) for observations *actually* made?

3. **Re: Research Question 3**: All authors, including Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), refrain from *systematically* providing deeper elaborations regarding the effectiveness of their cultural dimensions. Instead, only anecdotes are occasionally and arbitrarily provided, at best. This is a remarkable observation insofar as any researcher as well as any practitioner should be interested in a ranking of importance of cultural dimensions in order to increase the relevance and effectiveness of research and conclusion-drawing. It appears reasonable to assume that the relevance of each cultural dimension depends on the very specific situation when two cultures interact – and universally applicable generalizations are therefore problematic to draw. Consistently, the dissertation attempts to gain insights within its scope, i.e. shared IT systems development in India and Germany. Limited to this scope, it will evaluate the *impact* by qualitative analysis and the *frequency* with which a particular

cultural dimension comes to effect. This approach is of particular relevance for the dimensions beyond Hofstede because their validity may be not accurately evidenced empirically.

4. **Re: Research Question 4:** The effectiveness and efficiency of communication and cooperation impact IT systems development project success. To analyze the relationship between systems development and cultural dimensions more concisely, one would propose to decompose the *process* of systems development into its logical parts. This process includes planning, analysis, design, coding and development, testing, quality assurance, implementation, training, maintenance and support, and change management. As soon as one accepts that these different phases in systems development require different personal skills, then one implicitly agrees with the human factor in IT systems development as well. For obvious reasons, this human factor is strongly influenced by the cross-cultural environment in which project stakeholders were socialized.

   The decomposition into process stages will increase the accuracy regarding the question where, when, and by which effects cultural conflicts accurately materialize along the IT systems development process. Such an attempt cannot claim to be complete; it will uncover cultural conflicts only to the extent to which they surfaced during the field study.

   When faced with the above decomposition of the development process into isolated stages, IT experts will immediately claim that this looks like the traditional waterfall model. And that nowadays, more state-of-the-art development methodologies, such as agile approaches and others, would be available. These concerns are justified, but one should consider the fact that all these new methodologies still have to ‘somehow’ plan, analyze, design, and develop code etc. It is precisely within these stages that the insights from this research are assumed to gain traction and validity.

On the other hand, it would be a valuable research approach to investigate whether new methodologies *in their entirety* require different cultures, respectively, which cultural conflicts would materialize when established as a development paradigm. Many fascinating questions would arise, such as: "does Indian culture better fit with agile approaches than German culture?'' However, this would go far beyond the scope of this dissertation (potential research question) and affirm the concern a savvy advisor mentioned regarding this dissertation, namely that it "already tries to boil the ocean." However, qualitative scientific approaches tend by nature to be broad and less focused.

To summarize, the above research questions lead to the ambition to design an enlarged unified and comprehensive scheme for the analysis and evaluation of cultural conflicts and interdependencies among such evaluation criteria. It lays the grounds for investigating rankings of effectiveness in large-scale IT development projects. The evaluation scheme is a structured attempt to provide navigational aids and context to both researchers and practitioners.

Except for Hofstede's dimensions, each cultural dimension has to pass both a consistency check and a validity check. The procedure is explained in more detail in section 3.2 Research Strategy.

3.2 Research Strategy

According to Hillebrand et al. (2001), one goal of extensive case studies, as this dissertation represents, is testing or extending prior theory. According to Eisenhardt (1989), Eriksson and Kovalainen (2016), and Woodside and Wilson (2003), it might even be appropriate to pursue the objective of extending theories based on inductive inquiry. From this perspective, the core focus of extensive case investigation does not lay in the case itself, or any attempt of solution finding, but in analyzing, inquiring, and explaining described phenomena for the purpose of generalization. This sets the grounds for the researcher to modify existing concepts and theories in reasonable ways, or to unfold new methods. Eisenhardt (1989) goes even beyond that by

declaring that theory forming would be the main goal for case study research. She recommends a multi-case and comparative research approach for this purpose, including the development of theoretical constructs that might be subject to further testing.

All these considerations support the decision to apply the extensive case study methodology in this dissertation. By examining the comprehensive field study, it aims at challenging established notions (i.e., Hofstede's claim to be complete). It also aims at adding new perspectives through filling identified gaps by reasonable arguing (i.e., the "candidate'' dimensions passing two acid tests). Finally, it aims at inquiring into the actual effectiveness of cultural dimensions, by investigating the impact of cultural dimensions on the process of IT systems development, including conclusion drawing.

The provision of "a priori" statements may impede the investigation of cases as well as the unfolding of new propositions, according to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007). However, they might support the development of temporary constructs, which are helpful for further investigation. What it requires is an iterative process, which links both the emerging theory and the supporting data for verification. This approach requires continued and repeated evidence from each case to ensure consistency, reliability, and reproducibility. With the analysis of the field study of this dissertation, it is, therefore, important to invariably ensure the consistent continuity of findings and conclusions across all sections. Raising the confidence level was facilitated by applying techniques such as reviews with peers, deviant case analysis, and triangulation. In essence, the findings regarding each part of the field study analysis had to be compliant with those of all other elements in order to come to reliable, homogeneous and well-reasoned conclusions. In sum, the propositions were emotionlessly tested against themselves and against suggestions deriving from literature analysis, regardless of them being supportive or contrary (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016).

3.2.1 Overview on the Research Approach

The systematic analysis approach as applied in the dissertation is best illustrated by the following diagram. The logical order is marked by red dots; the research questions are marked by green dots.

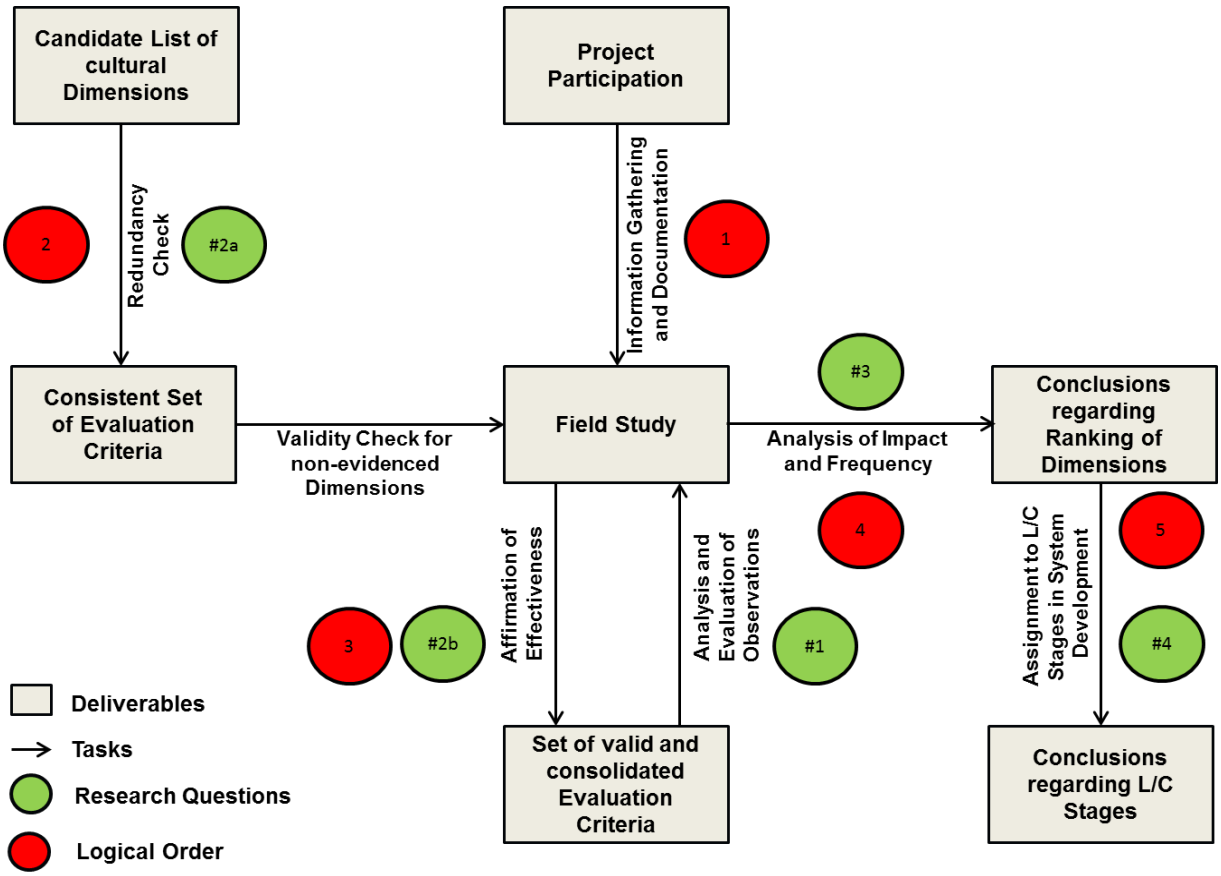


***Figure 3*: Overview on the Research Approach.**

- Project Participation: the observer participated in this project with two hundred people from India and Germany over a two-year period of time.
- Field Study: documents the observations made over the course of the project.
- Candidate list of cultural Dimensions: this is the still unqualified collection of cultural dimensions as offered by various researchers.

- *Consistent* Set of Evaluation Criteria: is achieved by qualitative means, i.e., by the elimination of redundancies among the cultural dimensions of various researchers.
- Set of *valid* and consolidated Evaluation Criteria: derives from affirmation of effectiveness for each cultural dimension of the Consistent Set of Evaluation Criteria.
- Conclusions regarding Ranking of Dimensions: documents the impact and frequency of occurrences of each cultural dimension to gain insights regarding the ranking of effectiveness.
- Conclusions regarding L/C Stages: documents where along the life-cycle stages of systems development cultural dimensions materialize.

Simply speaking, the observations made in the field study are explained and interpreted by a unified list of *redundancy-free* and *valid* analysis criteria, which stem from various researchers. The frequency of the surfacing of these dimensions and the impact caused by them is then used to draw conclusions regarding their effectiveness. Finally, almost as a side effect or bycatch, former insights will be used to draw conclusions regarding the question of where along the IT development process chain cultural dimensions come to effect.

Below simplified figure renders the inquiry approach from a results perspective:

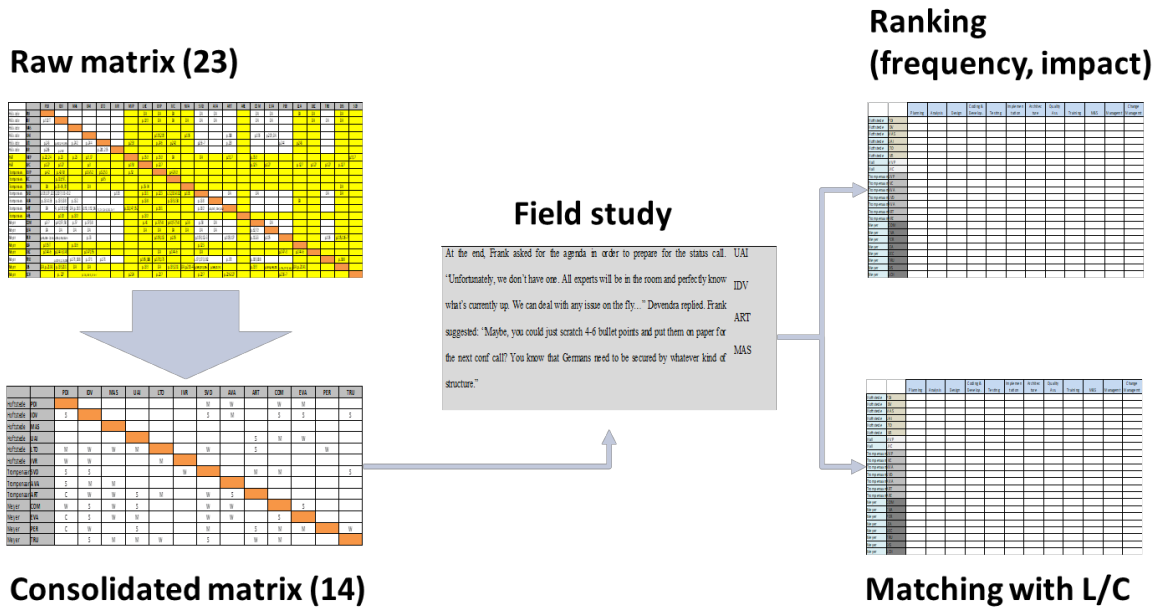


***Figure 4*: Research Approach from Results Perspective.**

3.2.2 Ensuring the Consistency of the Evaluation Scheme

For obvious reasons, any extended interpretation and evaluation requires the provisioning of a scheme which consists of a comprehensive set of *valid* and *consistent* criteria against which the evaluation might happen. While Hofstede's dimensions might be used for the purpose of gaining insights regarding Research Question 1, the attempt to move research forward towards Research Question 2 requires careful and extensive preparation. This attempt comes with particular challenges and requires a structured methodology: a first review of literature identified 23 cultural dimensions in total (Hofstede, Hall, Trompenaars, and Meyer). From a qualitative perspective, simply adding these dimensions to the evaluation scheme without further review would provide an inconsistent and partly redundant set of criteria, which would create more confusion than insight. There are various overlaps in the meanings and definitions of certain dimensions, potentially causing their redundancy in part or in total.

Those candidate dimensions, which potentially do not add new knowledge or useful considerations, can be, after careful analysis, deleted from the evaluation criteria list without any further loss of value (acid test 1). Obviously, the complex interrelatedness among the cultural dimensions and obvious redundancies require substantial efforts, but form a critical part of the dissertation.

3.2.3 Ensuring the Validity of Dimensions beyond Hofstede

From an empirical perspective, additional concerns arise regarding *validity*: only Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) openly provide an empirical and evidence-based set of repeatedly peer-reviewed data (albeit challenged by many articles); Trompenaars claims to have built up a vast database over the recent decades, but is accused by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) of being reluctant to freely open it up for peer-review (and consistently is under attack for not meeting scientific standards); Hall (1989) and Meyer (2014) do not provide empirical data at all, but draw their conclusions from decades of observation, experience and analysis, and provide at best some approximate relative positioning (Meyer, 2014).

The lack of empirical evidence bears the danger of deriving it from scientific standards of rigor. It is therefore suggested to provide minimum of evidence for the effectiveness of such dimensions, i.e., for those beyond Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010). Such minimum evidence arises as soon as the field-study discussion confirms that a particular dimension becomes effective under the described circumstances (acid test 2).

3.2.4 Analysis and Interpretation

The consolidated set of cultural dimensions, i.e., those dimensions which successfully passed both acid tests for consistency and validity, are then applied to each section of the field study. To be concise, the validity test is a result of the successful application to the field study (by

proving its effectiveness) while the consistency check is performed beforehand by qualitative analysis.

3.2.5 Conclusion Drawing

The manifestations of each cultural dimension were carefully analyzed and documented. Both the *impact* and *frequency* of each dimension were recorded; the characteristics of its appearance were described and evaluated. This evaluation formed the basis for suggestions regarding Research Questions 3 and 4; the results were documented by appropriate means, e.g., in the matrices as presented below.

3.2.6 Tools for Analysis and graphical Presentation

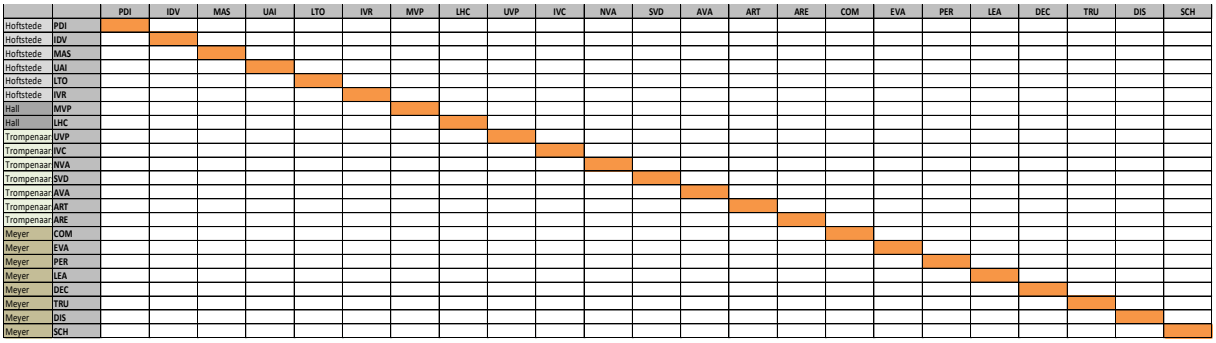
3.2.6.1 Field Study

The deeper analysis suggests that nine of 23 dimensions do not survive the acid tests. The remaining 14 cultural dimensions are applied immediately and transparently to the field study. The field study documented observations in a narrative, and hopefully, vivid style.

Manifestations of particular cultural dimensions are marked immediately in the text, including their impact on collaboration. The impact on particular stages of the IT development process is recorded separately. A deeper interpretation of the observations takes place at the end of each section.

3.2.6.2 Matrices

The following matrix renders the evaluation scheme. On both axes, it lists 23 ‘candidate’ dimensions. The matrix will represent the strength of interrelatedness and cross-references for each dimension with other dimensions as qualitative analysis will uncover.



		PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MVP	LHC	UVP	IVC	NVA	SVD	AVA	ART	ARE	COM	EVA	PER	LEA	DEC	TRU	DIS	SCH
Hoftstede	PDI																							
Hoftstede	IDV																							
Hoftstede	MAS																							
Hoftstede	UAI																							
Hoftstede	LTO																							
Hoftstede	IVR																							
Hall	MVP																							
Hall	LHC																							
Trompenaar	UVP																							
Trompenaar	IVC																							
Trompenaar	NVA																							
Trompenaar	SVD																							
Trompenaar	AVA																							
Trompenaar	ART																							
Trompenaar	ARE																							
Meyer	COM																							
Meyer	EVA																							
Meyer	PER																							
Meyer	LEA																							
Meyer	DEC																							
Meyer	TRU																							
Meyer	DIS																							
Meyer	SCH																							

***Figure 5*: Unfilled Candidate Matrix.**

3.2.6.3 Impact Analysis / IT Development Process

This matrix will be used to document the impact of occurrences of cultural dimensions in the field study. The matrix serves the purpose of Research Question 4: locating in which stages of the IT development process cultural conflicts materialize.

		Planning	Analysis	Design	Coding & Develop.	Testing	Implemen tation	Architec ture	Quality Ass.	Training	M&S	Managemt	Change Managemt
Hoftstede	PDI												
Hoftstede	IDV												
Hoftstede	MAS												
Hoftstede	UAI												
Hoftstede	LTO												
Hoftstede	IVR												
Hall	MVP												
Hall	LHC												
Trompenaars	UVP												
Trompenaars	IVC												
Trompenaars	NVA												
Trompenaars	SVD												
Trompenaars	AVA												
Trompenaars	ART												
Trompenaars	ARE												
Meyer	COM												
Meyer	EVA												
Meyer	PER												
Meyer	LEA												
Meyer	DEC												
Meyer	TRU												
Meyer	DIS												
Meyer	SCH												

***Figure 6*: Impact Analysis Matrix.**

3.2.6.4 Interrelatedness Diagrams

This diagram *might* be used to visualize context, complexity, and the dynamics of cultural dimensions. Again, one of the findings of the dissertation is that cultural dimensions rarely

materialize isolated (but come to effect in interrelated and dynamic ways) — and mono-causal reasoning is therefore misleading.

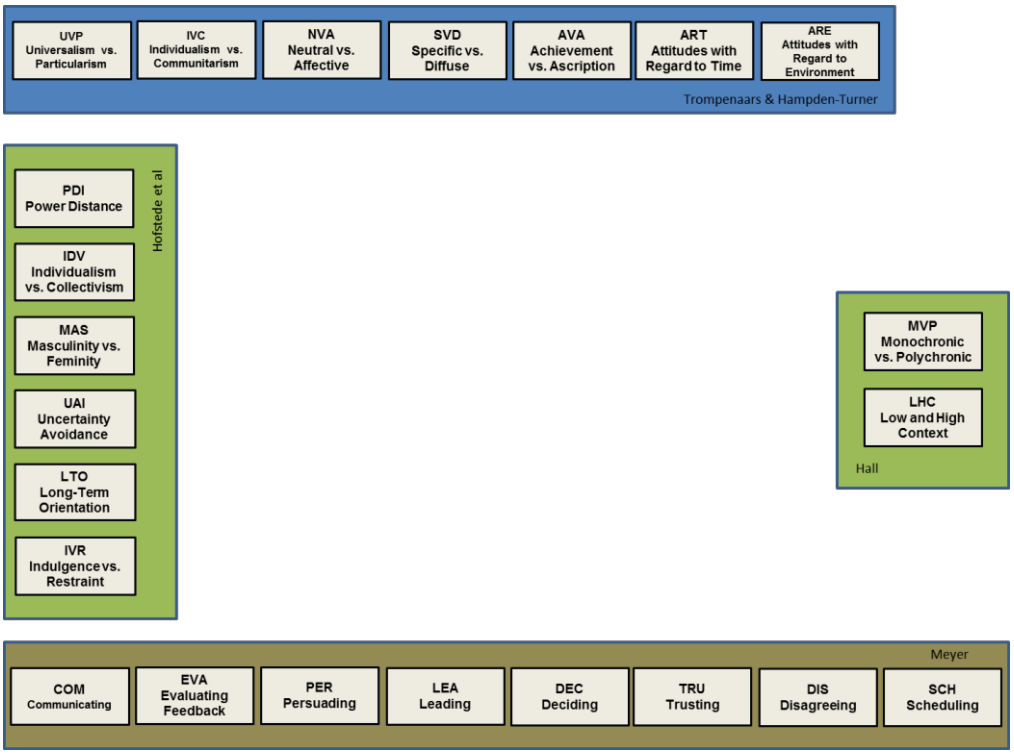


Figure 7: **Interrelatedness Diagram.**

3.3 Population, Sample, and Assumptions

Data collection happened over a two-year onsite period in Delhi and Hamburg. The focused sample group consisted of approximately 20 IT experts (from various areas of competence, such as business analysts, architects, developers, testers and managers) with whom extensive information gathering and exchange was practiced. The enlarged sample group consisted of 200 IT experts from both sides whereas personal encounters happened spontaneously at best. No organized or structured attempt was undertaken to communicate with every person, nor did this seem beneficial or desirable.

The focused sample group was accessed by various means, such as personal confidential interviews and group observation. It cannot be denied that the focused sample group was not

random. At the very beginning, the typical constraints of a power-distanced and collectivistic environment surfaced on the Indian side. In addition, individuals interfacing with the customer typically represent a high level of education and sound work experience. However, the accessible group enlarged over time. In regard to the German side, partners were selected mostly on a convenience basis, whereas some partners reacted more openly to mitigating cultural assistance than others. The observations are documented in the field study which forms the subject area of investigation.

Defining the population as the entirety of Indian and German individuals who typically participate in IT projects (which actually is a very heterogeneous group, ranging from managers over business analysis to architects, developers and testers), and having above constraints in mind, the sample group represented a somewhat idiosyncratic behavior of the population.

3.4 Materials/Instruments

This section is covered by section 3.2 Research Strategy.

3.5 Data Collection

The data were drawn by applying the following set of tools and techniques for data gathering and quality assurance: personal interviews, both formal and informal, respectively confidential, presentations and group discussions, various seminars and workshops on cultural dimensions and conflicts, operationalization of theoretical insights, personalization, and customization of advice, profiling of both groups and individuals, coaching and advising, maneuver reviews, call preparation and aftermath reviews, triangulation reviews, personal confidential feedback, the proposition of customized leadership and behavior principles, feedback and mirroring, action item lists, leisure activities, bonding, example giving and leading-by-example and accompanied execution of leadership and management, technical reporting assistance and preparation,

contingency planning discussions, document analysis, participant observation and analysis, and, finally, post mortem analysis by interviewing stakeholders over an extended period.

The outcome of the above activities is documented in the field study in a narrative format. The term “field study” is deliberately used instead of “case study” as it aims at presenting the events as they actually happened, while a case study format might suggest some latitude. Only cosmetic modifications were made to increase legibility while the substance of events and circumstances remained unchanged. The happenings, thoughts, concerns, and steps of awareness building and convergence to a solution actually happened as described.

For hygienic reasons, it must be stated that the researcher not only witnessed the events of the field study from a distance but was an active part of it — and consistently influenced it. His role was that of a liaison manager with the task of improving collaboration.

3.6 Generalizations and Limitations/Delimitations of the Study

One approach of this dissertation is to apply national score values of cultural dimensions to the operational working level. This brings up the question of whether such an approach is justified at all. Is it correct to assume e.g. high PDI score values for Indian colleagues, or might such an assumption over-simplify and reduce individual characters inappropriately? Would it come at the expense of accuracy? Would it even happen at the danger of stereotyping?

This dissertation tries to avoid such oversimplification by careful and neutral analysis. However, a momentum of subjectivity inevitably remains in such qualitative considerations. Empirical research by Rai, Maruping and Venkatesh (2009) provides consistent reasoning that the generalization of national scores of cultural dimensions to individuals is justified (p. 629), but should be applied with care.

The purpose of this qualitative extensive case study is to explore how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development

initiative. The study investigates phenomena within an Indo-German IT systems development project. Consistently, there are two fundamental limitations. First, it has to be admitted that such analysis results and conclusions are limited to the particularities of this research area. Any generalization of findings to a universal validity or its appliance to other cultures is therefore problematic and has to happen with care. But within these limits, such an examination should provide at least partly valid recommendations for the researcher and business practitioner as to where to concentrate on first. Generalizations might be somewhat justified, with applied scientific skepticism, whenever two other cultures of similar cultural profiles as India and Germany enter in interaction. As a starting point, it is suggested to assume that challenges in cooperation would be similar in such a case. First, however, careful detailed analysis would be required before drawing conclusions. Second, the field study was conducted in an IT environment. However, insights might be applied or generalized beyond IT to other business areas and industries after review.

The above limitations are valid for the application of cultural dimensions to the field study and resulting insights. The consolidated evaluation scheme itself, i.e. the cultural dimensions that successfully passed the acid tests for redundancy and validity, are expected to be generally applicable to analyze any cultural context.

3.7 Ethical Assurances

This dissertation deals with people. In particular, in the field study (but also in the accompanying analyses), many individual personal challenges, traits, and sometimes shortcomings, are reported. These observations documented therein were only possible because a sound trust base was established. Such partly very confidential and private propositions required conscientious treatment, of course. Therefore, clear names are used by default, but only after agreement of the respective person. In all other cases, or when the circumstances were potentially able to shed a negative light on colleagues, alias names are used. However, the

author strictly desires under any circumstances not to misuse the trustworthy relationships he had the privilege to enjoy during project participation.

In the remainder an attempt is made to embed these informal propositions in scientific context. Treviño, Den Nieuwenboer, Kreiner and Bishop (2014) suggest that researchers require a sufficient contextual understanding of research ethics, especially when navigating in the context of social sciences. There is no one single objective truth when research is conducted under such an interpretive approach as in this dissertation. Instead, various perspectives might apply, depending on the standpoint and potentially active interference of the observer. In such cases, emotional and distressing elements can cause pressure on participants and may be interpreted as intrusive (Kendall and Halliday, 2014).

Fortunately, research provides guidance in regard to ethics. Zucker (2014) postulates three principles which are to be respected whenever research on humans is involved. These principles include (1) general recommendations regarding obtaining informed consent from participants, (2) the assessment of potential risks for the participants, and (3) their recruitment procedure. In regard to this dissertation, only the recruitment procedure was irrelevant. The first two principles had to be followed up with care and respect; rules had to be discussed and any violation would have severely damaged the trustworthy relationship. Confidential information was explicitly classified as such and strictly kept confidential, i.e. in particular it did not find its way into this dissertation. The same applies for day-to-day gossip. The strictly obeyed confidentiality rules, supported by honest respect, payed off and were rewarded by an astonishing trustworthy openness and active contribution.

The above also affirms the elaborations of Reinecke, Arnold, and Palazzo (2016), who pointed out that such strict observance of trust-building rules encourages the open transmission of experiences and opinions and limits the need to filter information through the lens imposed by the researcher. Trust and obeyed rules were the more critical, and a crucial prerequisite, as a

privately (sometimes even openly) mentioned reproach from the Indian side was the breach of trust by the German side: Germans often returned home and started complaining from there. This disappointment was even fueled by the Indian orientation on personal relationships (IDV) and trust (TRU).

The exploration of Yin (2007) points in a similar direction. He emphasizes that people are humans but are embedded in a social, moral, organizational, and legal environment wherein people have to live and navigate. The respectful consideration of this environment is a prerequisite for obtaining relevant unfiltered prime information in pursuance of the research questions (Gostin, 1995).

Again, the consistent application of the second principle (Zucker, 2014) was mandatory in the field study. It ensures that the interviewees experience no psychological harm (physical harm was not an issue). The importance of this principle was supported by additional research (Bowie, 2017) and (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden 2001). Here, the emphasis is on protecting the moral integrity of interviewees and on technical mistakes made by the researcher, such as distributing the study too freely in the environment where participants are embedded. The responsibility to balance between the benefits of the investigation and harming risks, and to ensure fairness, always remains with the researcher (Sieber and Tolich, 2013).

Dziak (2017), assuming that such is established, proposes that an institutional entity supervises compliance to ethical guidelines in according to the above principles. Additionally, interviewees must be free to ask questions (Patton, 2014), including the continuously communicated advice, to be free to withdraw at any time. In the absence of a supervising entity, rules of conduct were applied according to general ethical standards such as the “Golden Rule” of Immanuel Kant. Additionally, all involved parties assumed a win/win situation, whereas any breach of confidentiality would be penalized by damaged relationships, which would come to the discomfort and disadvantage of all. Participants of the field study were free to join meetings

and interviews, or not, at any time without any external pressure. Questions were encouraged at any time — and contributed to the research. It was a natural course of action that Walliman's (2011) claim that research findings must not be falsified and be reported in most objective ways was obeyed.

The nature of the now following field study is participative. Due to the project task, it was not possible to occupy the position of a neutral observer: the overall primary job was to improve collaboration actively.

4 Field Study: The GLOBE Project

The following observations were made during a two-year project assignment in Delhi/India and Hamburg/Germany from 2009 to 2011. The term “field study” instead of “case study” is used for deliberate reasons. Cases may come with some latitude to modify facts for the purpose of improved learning and conclusion drawing. In contrast, the field study targets at rendering facts, events, and developments as they actually surfaced over the course of the project. However, single episodes actually might have happened in another chronological order as suggested by the field study. Some episodes happened separately, but were merged into one section for the purpose of context. Names of counterparts are not necessarily real.

When reading the field study and its comments it is recommended to keep the research questions in mind (are Hofstede’s dimensions complete, i.e. Research Question 1?). While all authors provide examples and anecdotes for their dimensions as well as appropriate counterstrategies, one focus of this section is, (a) to also verify and discuss the validity of those cultural dimensions which are less supported by empirical evidence but have passed the consistency check, i.e. those dimensions beyond Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) (i.e. Research Question 2). It (b) makes an attempt towards evaluating the damage potential of each occurrence of a dimension to lay the grounds for the ranking of effectiveness based on impact and frequency (i.e. Research Question 3), and (c) it provides the basis for the assignment of dimensions to stages of systems development (i.e. Research Question 4).

4.1 The Challenge

Remark: It is recommended to use the list of abbreviations to have the analysis dimensions immediately present.

(1) Frank knocked on the door with mixed emotions. He knew the interview would be interesting and match with his experience, at least partly. He had taken part in various IT project positions for two

decades now, but this was expected to be something new: the role of the liaison manager in Delhi had to be filled. Michael, the project and deputy IT manager of Hamburg Süd, by then ranking 14th among the world's shipping lines, offered a warm welcome.

After warming up and having asked the standard hiring questions, Michael came straight to the point. Hamburg Süd had started a large ambitious company-wide IT development project a couple of years ago. Development activities, and partly testing, were outsourced to a small provider in Delhi, who claimed to have not only the capacity for this huge task but also in-depth industry knowledge. For both, the supplier as well as for Hamburg Süd, in terms of budget, duration, visibility and relevance for the business, the project was without question of strategic nature and under direct executive management attention. Now, after five years of planning, requirements definition and development time had come to deliver results.

Albeit of his formal title, Michael spent all of his time on managing the GLOBE project. He had been hired just recently, exclusively for this purpose after a successful career at a global systems integrator and services supplier. In short, executive management expected a fundamental re-alignment of the project from him, now that the former project manager had left. Michael had spent much time on working out the particular challenges of the GLOBE project, and already had a first but well-reasoned opinion of them. Among the issues he was concerned about, some *soft factors* were particularly important to him. There was something wrong with the collaboration, Michael explained: "Some strange things have happened. I cannot fully verify or explain the background. It is simply hard to understand. All I can see are symptoms, but I can't really grasp the roots. Now I want someone to act for me in Delhi with high onsite presence and with appropriate visibility watching the situation and looking for ways to improve the collaboration with our Indian supplier." Asked to give examples of the symptoms, Michael continued: "German teams visit the Indian team frequently to define requirements in detail, and vice versa. They prepare extensively for the trip (UAI/3), but often they return without results (MAS/2). Some people were even openly rejected (IDV/3). They appear onsite, after having sent their agenda beforehand, just to learn surprisingly that no counterpart is available (ART/3) and they haven't read the material prepared beforehand (UAI/-). It has even happened that

partners refused to meet (PDI/3). And another strange thing happened just some weeks ago: we actually have two partners in Delhi. One that provides the development work and another one that is responsible for initial testing before handing components over to the Germans to conduct the final testing. Both Indian parts obviously don't harmonize (IDV/3) (TRU/2). When problems arose some time ago, both were supposed to work on the items together. But they didn't. Instead, a game of finger pointing started (PDI/3). When we required them to arrange for a meeting with both parties they resisted, stating they couldn't agree where to meet. Can you imagine this? Finally, our office in Hamburg had to arrange meeting facilities on neutral grounds, from a 6.000 km distance! It seems to be an 'ego thing' (PDI/-) which comes to the disadvantage of the project. But I cannot finally explain all this. All I feel is there is something wrong. Events like this do not come to the good of my confidence level. I want someone onsite to prevent such things from happening again and to give me the background."

Not having yet grasped the full meaning of Michael's explanations, Frank asked the question that would come to the mind of many Westerners: "Is there some kind of a job description for my job? Which responsibilities and which competencies would I have?" Michael replied: "No, there isn't any job description. Just go there and do something. I can't tell you what to do. But do something. Your obligations and the problem area you will be working on go much deeper than can be seen on the surface. In general, I want you to explain to me the observations I formerly made – and to derive appropriate actions. But I can't even tell you what "appropriate" actually means. And, by the way, the entire issue is sensitive. Do not interfere with my team, do not harm anyone, and don't stand in the way. But do something, and treat our suppliers with care, we still need them. Don't leave a mess behind you. I'll be travelling to Delhi in two weeks for our periodical steer com meeting. Will you join me?"

Frank thought that this could be the strangest job he ever had. The basic expectation laying on him now was: "wash me – but don't make me wet!" The task appeared to be both promising and challenging, because it went against all what Frank had learned about management, namely that responsibility and authority (to make decisions) always go together. But here, there was only the

responsibility to improve collaboration. And that could hardly be measured. Besides there was almost no authority to make decisions assigned to him. It would be his challenge to fill the gaps and, since there was no job description, fill it himself. It was like an ambassador's role. Frank wondered where this would lead, and curiously accepted the job.

That afternoon he called Karel, his mentor who had spent many years in the Far East, including India. Now he was CEO of the IT subsidiary of a large German retail bank. His advice had always been valuable to Frank, in particular when it came to leadership questions and soft factors. "You are going to work in India? Great! That will be a great experience for you. What a fascinating country! You'll love and hate it, interestingly both at the same time. Don't ask me to explain India to you. No Westerner can, and I doubt even Indians could. Here is my oracle: three things will happen as soon as you arrive. First, people will change their behavior, simply because of your presence (PDI/3) (IDV/3). Second, they will ask themselves how long you are going to stand it. And third, Indians are really nice people, but they won't trust you as long as they don't know you." (TRU/3)

Regarding the first two pieces of advice, Frank wondered whether a crash test dummy would have been more suitable for the job, but the third really gave him something to go with. "Is there anything on the downside?" he asked? Karel took a deep breath and replied: "Yes. One observation might apply as well. Expect the unexpected (UAI/-) (ART/-). Keep my words in mind: very proud, but no shame." (SVD/2) "Is there anything else?" "Well, actually yes: get ready for chaos." (UAI/-) (ART/-)

Frank thought that this would become even more interesting than he had thought. "Expect the unexpected." Karel's words would come again and again come to Frank's mind over the course of this two-year assignment. He already had an idea how to approach the experience in this regard and felt ready for it. And he had no idea about the description "very proud, but no shame", but he would learn very soon.

Explanation: The number "(1)" links to the respective assignment to a certain development stage as summarized in 11 Appendix C: Raw Data Research Questions 3 and 4. The brackets in the

text indicate the materialization of the respective cultural dimension. The value behind the slash indicates its severity level from "1" (low) to "3" (high). A "-" indicates that the evaluation with a number would be redundant; it's for explanation purposes only. For example, "(UAI/3)" indicates that the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension materialized with high impact on collaboration.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	3	3	9
IDV	3	3	9
MAS	1	2	2
UAI	1	3	3
SVD	1	2	2
ART	1	3	3
TRU	1	3	3
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: Of course, Indians are far from being shameless. The opposite is true: one will rarely find such nice, polite, sharing, caring, and honestly interested and cooperative people. However, if one is self-centered, as we all are to some extent, there will be surprises and it might take some time to grasp the full picture. Two examples of the above section contradict the prejudiced expectations one might have: rejecting customer representatives while they are onsite, and being demanding, or even aggressive or rude, does not at all fit with the German picture of Indians. Such incidents may be widely explained by cultural differences, herein namely in regard to PDI, IDV, UAI, MAS, SVD, and some more as indicated above. The remaining analysis of the field study will discuss occurrences of such cultural dimensions within the project in much greater detail. Such an analysis based on differences in cultural dimensions will offer answers, and, in case this is not possible through consistent reasoning, it will help by asking more pertinent questions.

UAI surfaces as Germans typically prepare intensively for meetings, just to learn that pragmatic Indians put less weight on such preparation. MAS materializes because Germans strive for tangible results. IDV illustrates that it makes a huge difference whether a trustworthy (TRU) relationship was established and whether outsiders became part of the 'in-group' or not. ART comes to effect because both cultures value agendas fundamentally differently. PDI surfaces because meeting with counterparts requires both being on the same eye-level. In addition, protocol and formal aspects as well as formal authority are much more important in India than they are in Germany. SVD surfaces as it explains the sometimes strange attitudes hardly understandable by Westerners: Indians tend to state and conclude legitimate personal demands quite naturally, in their eyes, out of their personality (subject to later explanation).

4.2 Arriving in India

(2) IGI – Indira Gandhi International airport was, before the opening of its new terminal, more of a bazar than of an airport. Albeit jet-lagged, Frank was watching the scene outside the building with increasing sympathy: the terminal doors had opened and Frank ran against an invisible wall of heat, humidity and unknown flavors. Dogs and cows walking around all across the place, only camels and elephants were missing to complete the picture, people shouting and gesticulating wildly, no order, no structure, nothing was as at home in Germany. An incredibly slim driver was waiting in his car watching the scene. He was smiling broadly at Frank when their eyes met. Frank reminded himself of his promise to himself to invariably scan for any signs of own arrogance and self-centrism. "This is an uprising country; they were already riding on culture when your ancestors were still living on the trees." Karel's advice had prepared him for chaos. What he wasn't prepared for was his driver not being there. He was getting nervous, having been waiting for half an hour now. He asked a security guy for where drivers usually pick up their guests. The security guy pointed in a direction using his chin, not his fingers, and started walking with Frank. After a couple of hundreds of meters, Frank had

the feeling this would lead to nowhere and asked the security guy again, but his face just expressed he was as helpless as Frank himself.

Fortunately, he had the number of the taxi operator: "Welcome to India, *Mr.* Frank. I was informed this is your first visit, right?" "Many thanks for your nice welcome. Sorry to be in hurry, but where is my driver?"

"Today, unfortunately, there are no taxis with *yellow* plates. (COM/2) (EVA/1) But let me check for the vehicle." Frank was both still wondering which kind of car would finally come and whether the answer of the lady was somehow related to his question, when the lady came back: "I just talked to the driver. He has been watching you for a while, but wasn't sure whether it was really you, Mr. Frank (PDI/1). And there was no name on you." "Maybe you can tell him to get out of the car and wave with his hands, so we can figure it out?" A couple of seconds later, the slim guy emerged from his car and waved. His car had *yellow* plates. When asked whether he would be the driver, he shook his head to Frank's astonishment. It was not exactly a horizontal shake; it was more like the sign for infinity ("∞"), indicating "yes".

At the end all was fine. Frank sent a message to himself: "Lesson no. 1: strange answers to simple questions indicate a problem. Better get sensitive to detect them." A phrase like "there are no taxis with *yellow* plates today" obviously translates into "sorry for any inconvenience, there might be a problem, sir. Let me check and I'll immediately come back to you."

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	1	1
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	1	1

Comment: Indians are extremely nice and polite people, always eager to help strangers and they are totally helpless when it comes to transferring negative messages. Once they feel obliged, they would rather accompany you to nowhere instead of admitting that they have no idea.

The lady was, from her perspective, clearly indicating there might be a problem. One reliable indication for this is that replies do not provide an answer to the question asked. It is a polite way of transferring fine-grained messages without explicitly mentioning them, in particular when it comes to negative messages. Germans can only process three states: “yes”, “no” and “maybe”. In contrast, Indians act on a very fine-grained scale. Consistently, Frank lacked the means to detect such delicate indirectly conveyed messages. Instead, he was simply confused.

Frank had been to many countries before. Never had he hesitated to drive by himself. But India was different in this regard as well. Frank wouldn’t dare to drive. It was far beyond what one could imagine. The honk was the most important accessory of the car. Formerly lovely Indians suddenly transform into selfish, indifferent, egoistic, and aggressive, monsters as soon as they hold a steering wheel in their hands. Frank assumed the reckless and dangerous driving style could widely be explained by the strong faith in reincarnation. Nevertheless, the algorithm behind driving seemed to be simple: just fill the available space in front of you until nothing moves anymore. He survived the drive, in contrast to the dog whose dead body was lying on the middle of the street. He must have been there for some time already. Anyway, he somehow arrived safely at the office, after having had a quick shower at the hotel.

Comment: Indian driving cannot be explained by rational and scientific means using cultural dimensions and is therefore excluded from further investigation.

(3) In the entrance hall of the office, a senior man with a turban and a huge beard was shouting at a boy, heavily gesticulating with both hands (PDI/3) (NVA/3) (IDV/1), accusing the boy of something in Hindi. The boy remained calm but raised his hands in defense. The senior man was, for sure, just about to give the boy a smack when he looked over the shoulder and noticed Frank. Suddenly, both had a broad smile on their faces and the man approached Frank. “What can I do for you, sir?” “I’m supposed to meet Mrs. Mamta. Sorry, I’m already a little late for that.” “Oh, this is not a problem at

all. Mrs. Mamta is still outside in town in a meeting (UAI/1) (ART/2). May I offer you some tea while you will be waiting?“ Frank kindly declined and decided to go for a cigarette at the fire escape. While later looking down from the outside fire escape, he made two more remarkable observations: First was the stark contrast between the cleanliness and richness of the office building and its surroundings. Just in front of the building, at arm’s length, people were living in canvas-sheltered housings. Second, he observed two men walking hand-by-hand, chatting in a friendly way to each other. What could this all mean? He was suddenly torn away from his reflections when he saw the smiling security guy standing on the ground, looking up to him and forming two fingers in a “V” shape. He was shifting them back and forth to his mouth as if he were smoking, too. Frank assumed he was asking for a cigarette, and he threw down his package from the second floor. The security guy ran to grasp the package, picked it up and immediately ran up the stairways. He stopped three steps in front of Frank, fell on one knee, and touched Frank’s shoe with one hand, his head down, while holding the package in his other hand above his head offering to give it back (NVA/1) (PDI/3) (IDV/3). After Frank had taken back his cigarettes, he stood up smiling, and proudly showed Frank his own package of local flavored cigarettes. (SVD/1)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	2	3	6
IDV	1	3	3
IDV	1	1	1
UAI	1	1	1
NVA	1	3	3
NVA	1	1	1
ART	1	2	2
SVD	1	1	1

Comment: The security guy was showing so many of Indian traits: First, he clearly indicated “I’m not worth taking such a gift from a stranger who, for sure, stands so high above me in the hierarchy (PDI).” To Frank, in this event, the Indian caste system was broadcast in live and in color right in this moment (IDV); for the first, but not for the last time. Second, it was

transparent that the underlying pride (SVD) of the security guy was to show that, after all, he still had his own cigarettes. And third, he could see the tremendous respect and kindness that is so typical in India. It is worth briefly explaining the occurrence of the SVD dimension here: an Indian person will always be consistent, regardless of the circumstances. NVA materializes twice; it is a misconception to assume that Indians do not show emotions (in opposition to Hofstede's predictions). IDV slightly materializes as it makes a difference whether one is part of the group (the boy) — or not (Frank). UAI surfaces with the absence of Mamta agreeing on a meeting, while having a scheduled appointment with Frank, came at his discomfort. However, timeliness has a different value in each culture (ART).

Albeit beyond IT, the above was added to the field study for the following reasons: (a) to prepare the softhearted reader for the toughness and strangeness of Indian reality; if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen; (b) to never accuse your Indian partner of the dirt, rats, chaos, illness, poverty that you may witness; they already know of it and do not need a reminder from a foreigner, (c) to note that conveying negative messages requires former deep bonding; and (d) to accept that other cultures have different attitudes.

(4) Frank returned to the entrance hall and waited. There was another guest waiting. It turned out that he had dates with some managers to discuss the professional and private future of his daughter. He (SVD/2) was about to marry her with a fiancé of appropriate social standing (AVA/1), but wished to clarify the consequences and perspectives with his daughter's superior (IDV/2).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	2	2
SVD	1	2	2
AVA	1	1	1

Comment: There is no sharp distinction between private and professional life in India (SVD). It is not unusual that parents take care of the professional career of their adult offspring. AVA and IDV materialize here as well: the Indian gentleman quite naturally derives his right and obligation of caretaking from his social position as a father. To illustrate the stark contrast to other cultures, just imagine the same situation in Germany or any other Western country: a father desiring to talk about his daughter's future with her management would be welcomed with surprise, if at all.

Later that day, after some meetings and an introduction to the Indian team, Frank returned early to his hotel to relax. Sitting at the pool, he had a copy of the Times of India with him, just to learn more about the country. When scanning trough the newspaper, he looked at the wedding proposals. Over several pages, many personal ads were scattered: "young woman (35), divorced through no fault of her own, seeking for…" and then some cryptic additional information was provided, obviously in regard to her positioning in the caste system (IDV/-) and (AVA/-). There were many other ads wherein parents would be seeking partners for their daughter or son, praising their social standing and virtues, and they all provided coded caste information. Ironically, among all these ads, many official warnings were scattered in bold, too, stating that the caste system had ceased.

While Frank was still reflecting on the sense of all this, a neighboring Indian gentleman started a conversation with him: "New to India?" It turned out that the gentleman just had retired after having worked in the US as a physician for decades. "How is life in the US for an Indian physician?" Frank was curious to learn. "Great! Our patients love us. We are the ones you can call at 11:00 p.m. at night and we'll come to your home. And, by the way, we are the ones that do not spend their Wednesday afternoon at the golf course. What are you thinking about?" Frank replied: "I was just wondering about the concept of arranged marriage. For me it looks strange that parents look for the right partners for their offspring. But it works, obviously. Married couples stay together for a lifetime. Divorces are the absolute exception (PDI/-) (IDV/-). But the concept of being married first and falling in love afterwards remains strange to me. It's the other way around in my country." To Frank's surprise, the

gentleman replied: “Well, that might be strange for you as a Westerner. But it’s even a strategic sustainable advantage of India. Both husband and spouse can concentrate on their job obligations without being concerned about the partner going astray.” “I have never seen it *that* way,” Frank said, “and after having been through two divorces I’m not in the position to argue about that.”

Frank’s last thought that night was that one would be well advised to unlearn many of his/her ground truths and convictions first. Keep your mind open to learn about new perspectives. This is not another continent, it’s actually another universe. People in India are hard-wired very differently from where Westerners come from. One should seek other ways of doing things. And he had an idea why Germans have been so fascinated by India for centuries. Incredible India!

He wondered what all this would mean for business.

4.3 Relationships, Trust and Crash Test Dummies

(5) Karel had been right: people were nice and approached Frank with honesty, curiosity, and interest. Since they were skeptical and wondering whether there might be some hidden agenda (TRU/-), as well as how long he would stay, they obviously changed their behavior simply due to his presence there. On the surface, meetings suddenly seemed to be more disciplined and structured, and in the set time frame. None of the frequent German visitors, there were about two to eight people every week, was left unappreciated, ignored, or even rejected by their Indian counterparts anymore. Not that all shortcomings had vanished, but there was a remarkable improvement in collaboration within a short period in time — and visitors returned home to Germany reporting so to management. Consistently, Frank’s presence and agenda were seen in a positive light, albeit people didn’t understand what he had contributed to improving the relationship. Frank was wondering about his share in it himself. “Can it be that just being there and attending meetings without having an explicit job description has already contributed to better collaboration?” he reflected. But obviously his presence alone had a positive impact on people (IDV/3). This assumption was supported by the observation that things tended to work out less smoothly when he was absent. His guess was that there were two reasons: (a)

his Indian colleagues actually guessed he was representing senior customer management and reporting directly to them about the contributions of each single individual (PDI/2), and (b) he was seen as a *facilitator* whose presence came to the reassurance of people in case whatever kind of conflict might arise (IDV/-). It seemed to calm people to have him as a fallback position in case things turned out in unfavorable ways (EVA/2) (SVD/1). Actually, people increasingly approached him with whatever kind of concerns, asking him to assist them by modifying unfavorable developments and interfering whenever appropriate (UAI/1) (MAS/1). Frank thought "There is some initial personal trust in me already (TRU/3). People like to use me to rebalance things and transfer unofficial messages among the parties (COM/2). I should be thankful for that, this is a good sign. Trust is *the* asset in your position, and it will be critical to maintain it and merit more of it. Trust evolves, but it has to be justified."

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
IDV	1	3	3
MAS	1	1	1
UAI	1	1	1
SVD	1	1	1
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	3	3

Comment: In high-context (COM) and relationship-based (IDV) environments many messages are transferred "between the lines" or indirectly. Moderators are welcomed and actively used for this purpose provided that a trustworthy base (TRU) has been established.

Westerners, used to explicit information formulation and receipt, often lack the capability to detect and deal with such fine nuances, which easily becomes frustrating to Indians who are happy to hand over the responsibility for information transfer to a facilitator. Besides this, it

comes to the convenience of Indians to have it informally transferred and tested before submitting formal statements.

In case things unfold unfavorably in meetings, the collectivistic party will send messages stating their concerns. From their perspective the message is sent in an appropriate and clear format, but to their surprise, content and intention are often not realized by the individualistic receiver who is used to receiving explicit messages (COM) (EVA). Sending it even clearer would hurt instinctive politeness roles and protocol. Such ignorance on the individualistic side too easily leaves the collectivistic sender helpless. In such cases, the collectivistic party is particularly happy to have access to a mediator or facilitator who can translate messages into an appropriate format afterwards and initiate corrective action, including balancing out former agreements, or even compromising them.

One interesting point in this context is that such translation services are more appreciated by the collectivistic side than by the individualistic side. While the collectivistic part remains helpless, the individualistic part isn't even aware that there still might be an issue. Consistently, they tend to reject advice while having the impression of being in control. Simply speaking, if a party is not aware of a problem, it will not understand the need for a solution or mediation.

The conclusion that in high-context, implicit and collectivistic environments conflicting issues, or just unresolved positions, cannot be discussed openly and freely as in individualistic explicit ones, would be misleading. They are actually discussed with surprising openness in an Indian context if circumstances allow for it (COM). These circumstances are formed by more fundamental influential factors, namely PDI, IDV and TRU. As soon as a trustworthy relationship has been built up to overcome high-PDI, even negative messages may be freely exchanged (EVA). The difference between Indian and German mentality is that the Indian part needs a trust-based *personal* relationship to a much greater extent before becoming effective. But as soon as this this personal relationship is established, the Indian part will be happy to use

it, and even direct formerly inappropriate explicit negative messages and concerns may effectively be transferred.

This is not to say that other cultural dimensions do not need to be obeyed anymore. SVD is still effective and resulting constraints need to be respected. Germans too easily forget that their criticism of issues is too easily misunderstood as an attack on the personality of the "diffuse" counterpart. In contrast to Germans, Indians do not make a distinction between private personality and their role at work.

Higher masculinity index values of Germans (MAS) still apply which puts pressure on one party to achieve results, while the more feministic part (India) is more focusing on balanced agreements, which too easily brings them in a rather defensive position. And finally, low uncertainty avoidance index values (UAI) incline the unconcerned party (Indians) to be less prepared for the organized attacks of the uncertainty avoiding part (Germans), often resulting in the Indian party being overrun.

All these dimensions together favor the presence of a mediator or facilitator to interfere before, during, and after meetings, which again is a role more appreciated by the Indian side than by the German part.

4.4 Structuring Meetings

(6) According to his strategy to position himself as an internal service provider beyond just liaison management, Frank talked to all those who frequently were "confronted" with Indian culture. Kai, the manager of the upcoming large release saw the leverage Frank could provide and reacted fast. He became one of Frank's first internal customers. Kai had been dealing with Indian culture for quite a while, and his reputation and relationship were great with both the Indians and the Germans. He had an excellent understanding of systems development as well as what typically might happen in India. Kai's character had a good share of self-irony and he was open-minded. He called Frank and said:

"Maybe, you can assist in an issue that I currently have. We, my team and I, have a status call with the Indian team every Friday. That team is managed by Raynish, whose expertise is great and we have been successfully working together for years now. Anyway, I witnessed that the issues discussed during our status call tend to come up spontaneously (ART/3). Sometimes, things are not followed up, or remain orphaned. And sometimes there are no clear results (MAS/2). I would appreciate to witness more structure, preparation and an agenda, including a maintained action item list with clearly assigned tasks and dates (UAI/3). "Isn't that the minimum standard in any project?" Frank asked. Kai replied: "Don't make me laugh, please. You are not at home. Just see what you can do for me."

Frank waited for the next informal moment to come in order to approach Raynish. His intention was to carefully mention this issue. Explicitly mentioning it (COM/-) would assign a too formal aspect to it. He was aware that these things might suddenly become more sensitive than they deserve, sometimes only by explicitly mentioning them. And such a message too easily would contain a momentum of personal criticism (SVD/-). In addition, he knew that Raynish was under critical observation by his colleagues, be it justified, or not. Rumors said that he was promoted to the important role of a release manager mostly because of his lasting relationship with senior management (AVA/1).

"Raynish, I would like to learn more about the functions of the new release. My people from home expect from me that I familiarize myself a little more with the business requirements side (COM/3). Would you mind if I joined the next status meeting?" Raynish didn't hesitate a second: "Sure, you are welcome! (SVD/2) (TRU/2). Does Mamta (the CEO) already know of it?" Frank replied that he would take care of it and inform Mamta; but he also knew that Raynish would tell her immediately as well (PDI/3) (IDV/2).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	2	2
MAS	1	2	2
UAI	1	3	3
SVD	1	2	2
AVA	1	1	1
ART	1	3	3
COM	1	3	3
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: Germans are well advised to be sensitive, obey protocol (PDI), and provide good, polite, and indirect reasoning (COM), carefully interfering without the slightest hint to a detected shortcoming. Don't touch the pride of people (SVD). Indians will understand the message anyway, in contrast to the Germans, and will take it as a chance to proudly demonstrate their professionalism. Raynish, of course, recognized the polite lie that lay in Frank's question immediately. As a professional with a savvy mind, he knew that if you want to learn more about the new functions, then just have a look at the documentation (the "RTFM" principle, as IT people say). Finally, Raynish would use this occasion of an enlarged communication channel to send *his* messages informally to Germany as well (COM). He knew Frank and trusted (TRU) him. Frank didn't mind being used as such an instrument, either. It was simply part of the mutual deal, and both felt an obligation not to hurt the turf of the other one (IDV).

The concept of ascription (AVA) appears to be strange to Westerners. Some people are assigned to certain roles and formal positions simply because of their social status or relationships with management (well, the latter applies to Germany as well but is not regarded as favorable). While some of them live up to the expectations, some do not. In the case of Raynish, such rumors lacked justification. He invariably acted professionally and was highly cooperative. However, Westerners should be aware that in some cases they might meet important partners who 'yet did not have had the occasion to justify their position by individual achievements'. Such partners remain important and influential nevertheless.

To stress another point, which Westerners will easily overlook: in a German environment, it might have been appropriate for Frank just to join the meeting after having received Raynish consent. In an Indian high-PDI and low-IDV context, such an attempt requires management consent. Without such, it might be seen as inappropriate and against protocol. Low-PDI Germans easily ignore the sensitivity, which is rooted in hierarchical high-PDI organizations and also forget that they are interfering with well-balanced relationships.

In this context it is worth mentioning that high-PDI individuals will inform management even about issues which are considered of minor importance by low-PDI Germans. Consistently, the exchange of information between superiors and subordinates is much more intense in India than it is in Germany in both intensity and frequency. As a high-potential Western manager once said to a colleague regarding her boss: "Don't BCC: him, because I will do it already."

(7) At the end, Frank asked Raynish for the agenda in order to prepare for the status call. "Unfortunately, we don't have one. All experts will be in the room and perfectly know what's currently up (IDV/2) (UAI/2). So, why do we need an agenda? We can deal with any issue on the fly…" (ART/2) Raynish replied. Frank suggested: "Maybe, you could just scratch 4-6 bullet points and put them on paper before the next conf call? You know that Germans need to be secured by whatever kind of structure. And they want to see the progress (MAS/2). Let's just satisfy their need."

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	2	2
MAS	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2
ART	1	2	2

Comment: This part of the case represents a frequently observed standard situation between Indians and Germans. The high-UAI German part desires structure beforehand and clear goals

to be documented (MAS), while the low-UAI Indian part de-emphasizes such goals, optimistically relying on group competence (IDV) and the confidence to pragmatically address any problem as soon as it materializes not only in theory, but in also practice (UAI). Such an uncertain and potentially chaotic (in Western eyes) approach comes at the discomfort of the monochronic German part (ART), while the polychronic Indian part by predisposition is used to navigate in unsafe waters and to process unstructured and spontaneous issues in parallel. Interestingly, Indians can switch to other issues and then return to the offset point as if they have never left. This Indian ability makes monochronic linear agendas widely obsolete, which cause unnecessary efforts and ignore the perceived interrelatedness of issues. However, by the time Indians return to the issue at hand, they have already lost their German counterpart who is confused by the complexity and their inability to process different items in parallel. As a result, the German part easily interprets the Indian part as disorganized, and the Indian part perceives the German part as focusing on unnecessary formalism and ignoring context. This is invariably a source of mutual frustration.

(8) The very next week, just before the status call, Frank occasionally mentioned the agenda. Raynish stiffened and admitted he had none: "You know, this was a busy week, and in addition, my mother in law was visiting us." (SVD/2) (TRU/2) (IDV/2)

Frank was puzzled. He wondered how he could transfer that message, to be more specific, *that reasoning*, to Kai. But then he relaxed when he realized Kai's mature attitude. Not having an agenda was one thing, but transferring such a message was another and could easily be done by relying on Kai's humor. Frank was very aware of the fact that other, more unskilled managers would go ballistic.

Frank could just imagine what would happen in a purely German environment in the case where he would provide reasoning like this: using his mother in law as an excuse. This thought made him laugh. "Arbeit ist Arbeit – und Schnaps ist Schnaps!"

Anyway, Frank would not need to come back to the issue of the missing agenda. Raynish would deliver it for the next meeting. By being reminded for the agenda again, Raynish understood very well that this point was important for his German counterparts. He would not need an explicit reminder. (COM/1)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	2	2
SVD	1	2	2
COM	1	1	1
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: An Indian person will always be the same, regardless in which role he/she currently acts. There is no contradiction in being a manager and a son-in-law at the same time (SVD). It is accepted to mix both spheres, because one always keeps the same personality. The social embedment of Raynish becomes obvious here as well (IDV). The concept of (not only) Germans acting in certain ways depending on the role one is currently filling appears strange to Indians. It appears potentially impossible for them to act in such opportunistic ways. This is where an example of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) applies: "An Indian superior will always be a superior, regardless under which circumstances one encounters them."

The TRU dimension also materializes in the above case. Raynish, very well experienced in dealing with Germans, freely shared his thoughts. He wouldn't have dared in the case that there was no trust base between him and Frank. He felt free to share thoughts just as they were. One severe mistake a German might make is misusing this trust (as it happens in other parts of the field study). Established trust deserves, as an outcome, mutual loyalty and protection of the counterpart. The worst thing Frank could have done was to share Raynish's reasoning unfiltered and broadly with German colleagues.

To summarize, expect the unexpected when working in India. Excuses deriving from the private area are not unusual and generally accepted. By asking him about the agenda again, Frank sent a sign of urgency that Raynish could perfectly understand. It would have been inappropriate to explicitly *insist* on providing an agenda. Again, dealing with Indians requires fine tuning and detection of nuances (COM). It is fair to say that other countries would support that this is not a German strength. Misunderstandings, resulting from the Germans not being delicate enough and Indians being too personal, frequently led to conflicts, as reported in the other sections of the field study.

Another week later, just before the status call, Raynish proudly presented his high-level agenda to Frank. It was used as a guideline in the call. Right after the status call, Kai called him: "How did you do that? Not only that we had an agenda, but also the entire call seemed to be so structured and focused! We proceeded item by item. My team appreciates that!" (UAI/-) (ART/-).

The following week, Kai came to Delhi in person. Frank asked whether he would like to have a look at the agenda for the upcoming status meeting beforehand. "Not necessary, Raynish would say: 'Once more? *Why*? I already provided one last week'" Kai joked in response.

Comment: There is some truth in Kai's joke. Indians and Germans are hard-wired in so many different ways that such unexpected misunderstandings actually happen.

4.5 Reporting, Responsibility and Trust

(9) A few weeks later, Kai approached Frank again: "All figures and checks for the upcoming release indicate status 'green'. Not that I'm mistrusting reporting, but I would appreciate to have more accompanying information about the status and the informal confidence level regarding the reliability of delivery and quality. Maybe, you could use your channels to tell me more?" (UAI/2)

Frank was aware that this was not an easy question for many reasons. First, gaining exact and reliable information about the actual status of a huge piece of system under development itself is not that easy a job. There is much noise in all this; some subjective bias as well as hidden surprises may surface, in contrast to the reported figures that purport to objectivity through using decimals. The informal evaluation of such factors and risks of a skilled development manager would actually improve the quality of predictions. Second, each statement regarding the status of such a delivery too easily becomes a political issue, whether intended or not, and regardless whether justified or not. Consistently, any such statement had to be treated with care. Frank decided to handle this question purely informally and confidentially; he would wait for an occasion to approach Sharad, the responsible Indian release manager. "When in doubt about complex sensitive questions, one good way to address them is to play it openly and frankly, but in private first", Frank decided (COM/2). This strategy had paid off several times before and applied to both countries, Germany as well as India, provided that the trust base was solid (TRU/2) that there was a formerly practiced relationship (IDV/2), and that formal distance had been overcome (PDI/3). Any negative information would have to be handled with care (EVA/2) and the appropriate attention be presented to management by obeying protocol (PDI/2).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
PDI	1	2	2
IDV	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	2	2

Comments: UAI surfaces as Kai desires to know the confidence level. COM materializes because it is recommendable to discuss delicate issues in private under four eyes first instead of putting them on the official agenda of status meetings. Any such official question will lead

to an official defensive answer and this exactly is of little interest in this context. TRU materializes because asking such informal questions without an established mutual trust base is of no use. This applies to both parts, regardless of their IDV scores. EVA materializes, because the transfer of negative messages challenges the Indian sender to be clear as well as the German receiver to detect the message (COM). Frank's approach is promising not only because of the trust base (TRU) between both, but also because both had a practiced collaborative relationship (IDV) and had overcome power distances since long (PDI). However, the venture remained sensitive and required the protection of Sharad. Its results had to be shared with care, because opening another line of information beside the official one might be seen as a breach of protocol and would upset Indian management (PDI). However, the intention was not to upset anyone, but to support expectation management for the best of the project.

(10) Frank met Sharad for a cigarette at the outside fire stairways. "Hi Sharad, we *all* are not sure about the reliability of the upcoming release. Will we deliver in time? You know that twenty business requirements originators from three continents will be travelling to HQ to do the testing. Consistently, it will be under observation of many people, including senior management. Being late or showing poor quality would seriously harm the reputation of the project. This will be political and we have to do expectation management early". Frank knew Sharad was aware of all these direct messages; it was just an opener for the informal discussion.

"Who sent you? Was it your idea? You ask for a purpose, I know! I mean, you wouldn't come and ask me "Hi Sharad, what about going to the train station to steal some suitcases", right?" Sharad joked. Frank replied: "Don't tell an Indian about relationships, untouchable signs, hidden problems and agendas, no point in it! You got me! But jokes aside, this is informal between you and me and will be treated with care and only after filtering. We need to do some expectation management. Kai is concerned about the delivery and asked me to use my informal paths. This is a great opportunity to send some messages."

"Well, you know what reporting says, right?" Sharad asked. Frank perfectly understood the message (COM/3). There were concerns and Sharad was not fully supporting the schedule prescribed and the status reported by his management.

Frank replied: "Of course I do. I'm always attending the weekly status meetings. But I would like to learn what your expectations are. Are we at risk? If so, we should send some early warning messages to the organization in time."

In comparison to Indian standards, Sharad just shared his observations, convictions and concerns in an unusually open way with Frank. He knew he could trust (TRU/2) him since they had been working together to the mutual benefit of both (IDV/3). Sharad was aware that he would receive Frank's support in return. Frank would deliver advice regarding expectation management or in regard to any other issue. It would be Frank's job to transfer and position bad news informally and early, and to unfold an appropriate strategy (EVA/2).

Like all professionals, both desired to learn about the potential risks in time. And Kai, as well as project management, were mature and experienced enough to deal with that. However, there was still senior executive management, and those people judged by results. Besides there were influential users who were hopefully speaking positively about deliveries. All this would require double care.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	3	3
COM	1	3	3
EVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: The above encounter is remarkable because it puts aside many stereotypes which one might expect. It devaluates expectations one might have when purely relying on the static score values of cultural dimensions. Honesty in critical or sensitive situations is strongly appreciated on both sides. However, this requires an established trustworthy relationship (IDV,

TRU) and PDI differences having been overcome. In such a case both parties can come comparatively straight to the point by still complying with their COM predisposition. What can be extracted from this encounter is that the influence of cultural drivers changes over time. There is a *dynamic component* in the mix of cultural dimensions. They simply do not materialize in static ways over long periods of time.

What is of significance in the above conversation is less what is said, but what is *not* said (COM). Sharad *does not* say he is standing behind official planning. His phrase "Well, you know what reporting says, right?" is clear and comprehensive. Any further challenging of this statement would be obsolete and counterproductive. It would leave Sharad with the impression that Frank is incapable of reading between the lines and concerns better not be shared with him.

> "Frankly speaking," Sharad continued, "I actually have two areas of concern. The first one is purely internal. When I recently took over the responsibility for release and development management I quickly noticed that Sunil's team was underperforming. They reported progress, but there wasn't. In reality, they were late, and the provided code was of low quality. They somehow managed to pass internal quality procedures. My mistake, but I already took appropriate action as soon as I learned about it. I added some more people to that team, and a few were assigned to other responsibilities. And I strengthened team-internal quality assurance. I also already parallelized some tasks. Designer testing now happens as far as possible in parallel. But this is of limited help, because many of the gains are consumed by the recently increased number of test cycles. I did initiate all this already weeks ago, but I'm not sure whether we can compensate for the delay. In order to meet the deadline, the only option I still have is to focus more on development work and to downgrade quality. In other words, we have to decide which death we want to die, being late or being unsure about the quality."

Comment: Although there are substantial cultural differences, professional management can sometimes act the same across cultures. Sharad had already acted as a professional and in

similar manners as a German manager would have been supposed to act. Again, once cultural barriers are overcome people can talk frankly as if they were from the same descent.

(11) “Good to hear you already addressed the problem. You reacted early and this is something I’ll happy to report upwards. Sounds as if we should prepare management for this recent development”, Frank replied. Is there any good news I can report?”

Sharad took a breath. “This was the good news! It’s good news because the options and appropriate actions are quite clear. Now the bad news: what I’m really concerned about is the still ongoing requirements discussion regarding the product catalogue system. We discovered some inconsistencies during design and development. The requirements suddenly became quite unclear when we looked at the details. Some things were missing and others did not fit together. We immediately started discussing all these issues internally and then, maybe much too late, with the German originator (PDI/3) (IDV/3) (EVA/3) (UAI/3). But they don’t seem to be in the position to finalize and confirm the requirements (COM/3). This means we still have a moving target in a highly complex and, worse, ground-laying area. I can’t finish development as long as this basis is unsecure. Changes in this master-data area have a direct impact on other system structures and functions, such as bookings. As long as these issues are not clarified, I can’t even make a reliable plan, not to speak about confirming deadlines. I already informed management long ago (PDI/3). The blame game has started already on the working level: the originator should have provided a better specification and we should have detected the quality issues earlier (ART/2).”

Frank was astonished. He hadn’t heard of any such conflicts on the operative level and wondered whether Kai would know already.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	2	3	6
IDV	1	3	3
UAI	1	3	3
COM	1	3	3
EVA	1	3	3
ART	1	2	2

Comment: PDI materializes here because the team was reluctant to challenge the German requirements originators immediately. It is fair to assume that Indian team dynamics (IDV) suggested to work on an internal solution before approaching the Germans. An often-observed result of collectivistic environments is that responsibility is not that clearly assigned. Low-UAI and consistent pragmatism may have contributed to the optimism to somehow address the issue. EVA might have contributed to the delay because formatting negative messages does not come with convenience for Indians. The German part did not understand the urgency because the Indian messages were too framed for them (COM). ART surfaced because the cause-effect relationship of issues was not that transparent to the Indian team. In total, it is interesting to observe the intensity of the materialization of different cultural conflicts in just a couple of Sharad's words.

Another interesting point in this situation is that Indian management *learns earlier* about problems than German management. The reason for this finds its cause in PDI. Low-PDI German management acts solution-oriented with the consequence that the need for escalation arises very late and only in case problems cannot be solved on the working level. In contrast to this, Indian management acts more task-oriented which requires more intense and more frequent top-down and bottom-up communication. This *structurally* gives Indian management an information and time advantage when preparing for discussion with German counterparts. In brief, Indian executive management would already have their arguments ready for the upcoming blame game while German management still wasn't aware there was a problem at all.

(12) Sharad continued: “I’ve already escalated to my senior management. But they are not willing to forward bad news as long as there are only expectations and no confirmed hard facts. They feel being on the safe side and suggested waiting a little before formally informing the customer. By when should we do that? What do you mean?” (ART/2) (EVA/2) (UAI/3)

“Right now,” Frank replied, “but very carefully with appropriate positioning. I’ll prepare my management for that. And you take care of your management, ok? We can still prepare management informally as long as this is not out of the box.” (TRU/3) (UAI/-) (IDV/2)

This was a complex situation, no doubt about that. There were technology and personnel challenges on one hand, but they could be addressed, at least. Even in case the delivery would be delayed. These are challenges the IT engineers could work on. But on the other hand, this situation had become highly political. There was an official line of information saying that the status was green. And specifications have been acknowledged by QA. But there was now an informal line that contradicted, or at least raised substantial concerns. Frank’s obligation now was to contribute to limiting the potential damage and communicate the picture and options timely. And, of course, he couldn’t directly refer to Sharad.

Frank picked up the phone and called Kai to update him: “Kai, your apprehension was right. There is something in the bushes. We should start thinking in contingencies and have a plan for expectation management. And we have to send an informal warning to project management. They don’t want to learn about problems as late as during the steer com meeting in two weeks. They need to know and be prepared by now.”

That night, when meeting his friend Dr. Kingfisher at the hotel bar, Frank reflected over the wisdom of a quote he had heart of recently: “Risk management is project management for adults.” (Tom di Marco).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	2	2
UAI	1	3	3
ART	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	3	3

Comment: Sharad might have had problems, but he had a clear understanding of what to do — and where his constraints were. He could deal with the technical problems in very similar ways a German manager would have been supposed to act. Insofar, few cultural conflicts could be detected in this regard. The most important challenge now was not the technical part; it was more about the intangible cultural influences on information formatting for the upcoming steer com participants. Interestingly, the responsibility was shared, and resided on both sides now, on Sharad and Frank. It required a joint trust-based approach (TRU) (IDV) and good advice. Frank would have to mitigate the uncertainty level (UAI) on the German side. Another interesting observation is that Sharad had overcome his cultural background to a great extent. This again points at the fact that cultural barriers are not cemented but can be softened over time as soon as the relationship has matured (TRU).

In addition, cultural constraints herein materialize in regard to senior management, which was reluctant to convey bad news (EVA) early (ART), supported by optimism (UAI) that things would unfold in favorable ways as it always did before.

(13) With the advice of Dr. Kingfisher, Frank decided to recommend a strategy to Sharad that has worked fine before: “When in doubt, just say as it is. But be ready for the questions that will arise. And distribute the feeling that the problem actually is in good hands.”

Two weeks later senior executive management and project management arrived in Delhi for the regular bi-monthly steer com meeting. Kai and Frank had informally briefed both management parties beforehand. In general, managers hate surprises, and this rule applies the higher they sit in the hierarchy. Early information is a hard and appreciated currency in top management (UAI/3).

Executive management was aware that a severe, but still unquantified delay would be reported, which could be costly and require a substantial rescheduling of the plan. All participants were briefed, and Kai and Frank had discussed the problem and communication strategy with Michael, the project manager, who had in return sent similar messages to senior executive management. Frank expected the drama to unfold according to a well-known pattern often observed with professional German senior managers. This importance of pursuing a linear script was made quite clear to Sharad (ART/3): First, they would try to gain an understanding of the problem and its impacts. Second, they would challenge whether this problem was in good hands by checking the attitudes of operational management (when did it materialize and which options are available now?) The clearer the pros and cons of options were presented by operational management the better (COM/3). Reasoning would have to happen carefully from the problem to the solution. Just jumping into the matter would exceed the abilities of the German part (PER/3). A clear and strict linear approach would put them in the position to make decisions at the end. One thing that Frank did *not* expect to happen, having witnessed the professional attitudes of the customer's executive management before, was that the messenger would be shot for the message. This exactly was Sharad's biggest concern. (PDI/2) (SVD/3)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
UAI	1	3	3
SVD	1	3	3
ART	1	3	3
COM	1	3	3
PER	1	3	3

Comments: The situation did not allow any Indian pragmatism on the fly (UAI). Things had to be presented quite clear and structured (COM): here was the problem, and these are the options now and a clear path to get out of the problem (PER). It had to be presented in quite linear, monochronic ways (ART) and in digestible portions to avoid the danger of confusing the German decision-makers. Moving spontaneously from one item to another would come at the

cost of hurting the confidence level. Sharad needed to be reassured beforehand that he would be challenged, but his position would not be in danger of being hurt (PDI) as long as he could prove professional attitude, and any criticism would not be personal (SVD).

(14) The difficult part had rather been to gain commitment from the Indian executive management about the strategy. They were not used to delegate such difficult issues down the hierarchy (PDI/3), and perceived such approaches as a loss of control. In their eyes, such problems should not be discussed openly in meetings, but in private respecting the personalities of those involved (IDV/3) (SVD/3). Management was at first reluctant to acknowledge that there actually was a potential problem that should better be clearly (COM/2) addressed right now (ART/3) and in proactively structured ways (UAI/3). In sum, executive supplier management had to overcome their inclination to assume that all problems could be *somehow* solved in time (UAI/-), or would better be addressed informally on the exclusively executive level in private. In addition, it came at some discomfort to publicly present explicit and clear negative facts-based messages (EVA/2).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	3	3
UAI	1	3	3
SVD	1	3	3
ART	1	3	3
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2

Comments: PDI materialized here because of the strong conviction that such severe issues belong exclusively in the control of authorized hands. IDV and SVD materialized (in close conjunction with PDI), because of the strong conviction that any problem can somehow be solved based on personal relationships among mature characters. ART came into effect because the severity of the problem required a timely, proactive, structured, concentrated, and linear

approach. UAI materialized because any optimism not underlined by facts would be counterproductive. COM materialized because no space was left for any unclear diffuse discussion. Interestingly, EVA did materialize only to a lesser extent in this context: the Indian executive management might have had to overcome its natural reluctance to provide negative messages, but all executives were experienced enough to understand that problems needed to be addressed, in particular when dealing with Germans.

(15) At the steer com meeting Frank sat in the audience, feeling relieved not to be obliged at all to be on stage. He was curious to learn how the drama would unfold. Explicitly transferring bad news is always a difficult matter for every manager, regardless of his/her culture, but to clearly and openly state it (COM/-) alone on stage (IDV/-) simply as it was, was unusual for Sharad's position (PDI/-), not to mention the challenges at hand (EVA/-). Frank regretted not having any popcorn. As the show began, his mood was tense. Anyway, there was no way to flee to humor and irony (IVR/1). Kai, Sharad, and Frank had prepared intensively for the presentation. The supplier release management had a strategy at hand of what and how to report. But the burden was now personally on Sharad's shoulders and he was the one to open the discussion:

"After careful analysis of the status we came to the conclusion that we should recommend to postpone the delivery of the upcoming release until all issues are clarified and we can return to a quality-based and well-organized approach… we actually do have development and quality problems."

The bomb had exploded. There was no way back. It was on the desk now. There was absolute silence. And more hammering silence. Incredibly noisy absolute long-lasting silence.

After ten seconds that felt like eternity, the CEO Dr. Guest looked up and calmly asked in his sonorous voice, each single word being of huge weight expecting to be respected, and not a gram of fat in it: "Since when do you know?" (SVD/-) (PDI/-) (ART/-) (UAI/-)

Absolute and roistering silence again. Frank could hear Sharad's heart beating from a distance. However, Sharad was prepared to give a concise answer. He had expected exactly this question; it

simply had to come. He accurately and honestly reported the reasons. All of his sayings and even body language indicated he would come to results (MAS/3).

Not surprisingly, Dr. Guest continued to ask the obvious: "What did you do against it?" Sharad explained again, being properly prepared. (MAS/-) (AVA/2)

And finally, Dr. Guest came to ask the question, not surprisingly again: "What exactly do you recommend now?" which gave Sharad the occasion to present and defend his prepared and balanced, synchronized plan — which was discussed and agreed upon with all insiders of both parties beforehand (UAI/-) (IDV/-) (MAS/-). Sharad provided reasoning, starting from each problem to its solution, adhered strictly to the chronological order of the events, and resisted the temptation to deviate to other issues which in his perspective were somehow connected (ART/-) (PER/-). Most importantly, he didn't over-emphasize the weaknesses of the specification. This would have triggered the blame game and overloaded the presentation. This problem would better be addressed separately by project management, which would also communicate it to senior management by appropriate means.

There was no applause, but Sharad's explanations had increased his credibility (TRU/3). He was in charge and obviously the right person to fix the matter (MAS/-). At the end, senior executive management suggested to withdraw to a private space to discuss commercial matters with the inner circle. White smoke came out of the chimney astonishing quickly, and the delivery date was shifted for quality reasons to Sharad's great relief. The commercial impact was not publicly shared.

Kai, Sharad, and Frank had more than one beer that night along with Dr. Kingfisher.

Manifestations (only as far as not being redundant to former parts):

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
MAS	1	3	3
IVR	1	1	1
AVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	3	3

Comments: The above section is about both good management principles and cultural factors. It provides an example how a manager can overcome his natural cultural predisposition to thrive in a crisis. Ironically, German executives evaluate people how they deal with problems. They look for people who can professionally solve challenges; this might even potentially increase the reputation and trust assigned to that person.

Sharad had to master a wide variety of cultural obstacles while he was presenting his case: high-PDI (the C-level attendants stood at least two hierarchy levels above him, and they were still the customer). Further, he had to act as an individual without navigating in a safety net of relationships (IDV), he had to argue strictly results-oriented (MAS), he had to comply to a structured plan which left little latitude for deviation (UAI), he had to relax in regard to criticism, and not to take it personally (SVD) using humor and irony, tools which are occasionally applied in India in crisis, would have been lethal (IVR), he could not rely on his formal position, but his track of former achievements and reputation supported him (AVA), he had to moderate in strictly linear ways to keep the audience focused (ART), he had to provide explicit condensed messages (COM) which were mostly negative (EVA), he had to first explain the challenge in full detail and then a well-reasoned solution (PER), and finally he had to build up a trust-base first by performance (TRU) without relying too much on whatever former relationships. Friendships wouldn't have helped him in any way under these severe circumstances (IDV).

4.6 The Irony of Crisis Resolution

(16) "Do you have a second for me?" Sharad asked. Obviously, he had something sensitive on his mind. "You have my unlimited attention as long as needed, of course. Go ahead, please", Frank replied. "Well, many thanks for your kind assistance in in preparing a strategy how to transfer the

messages during our recent delivery crisis. I really didn't think I would come through it without being personally undamaged!" (SVD/-)

Having been in India for a year now, Frank had learned that there was a great difference between the national sense of oneself and how others perceive your cultural attributes from the outside. While Indians perceived Germans often as being dominant, pre-emptying, overwhelming and overrunning, unwilling to listen, insensitive, and rough, and with a little taste of arrogance or ignorance, the picture from within was quite different. Maybe, Sharad's inherent high power distance had contributed to his expectation of being punished personally for bad news by aggressive accusation (PDI/-) (EVA/-). All this actually did not happen. In contrast, the problems had been discussed based on facts with a focus on evaluating the options at hand. Moreover there hadn't been any personal attacks, to the surprise of Sharad (SVD/-).

Frank was eager to clarify this; for him, it was going to the core of collaboration and a great opportunity to clean up some misconceptions. "Sharad, we were acting in a highly professional and mature environment. Everyone was briefed beforehand; there were no surprises (UAI/-). Everyone already had an idea how to face the problem. Not that the problems were appreciated, for sure; no one likes bad news (EVA/-). But in case of trouble there is no point in increasing the stress level, but to work constructively on a solution (IDV/-). This required preparation, accuracy, clarity (COM/-) and honesty (TRU/-). In other words, this meant personal consistency (SVD/-). In brief, I advised you to apply a simple principle that will work in *most* cases: "Say what you do — and do what you say!" Fact-orientation, the willingness to work on solutions (MAS/-) in a team (IDV/-) and transparency pay off at the end. Dr. Guest's questions had to come; they were not at all surprising. And you were well prepared with well-reasoned and clear answers (PER/-). So, everyone had a clear picture of how to get out of the mess. The most important thing was to avoid uncertainty and confusion, but to make the direction quite obvious." (UAI/-)

"But I really expected them to attack me personally by accusing me of incompetence (PDI/-). And I expected them to become very noisy and emotional (NVA/2). All this simply did not happen.

Everyone remained calm, and even the person that was worst harmed by the delay, Michael, the project manager, positively contributed by offering rational options."

"Don't be concerned, Sharad. Personal accuses would never happen (SVD/-). Germans may attack the issue, but never the person, and particularly they wouldn't do that in public. This would be considered inappropriate and unprofessional, and simply poor management style. I understand that the direct style of Germans is too easily misunderstood as being a personal attack. I've seen so only in rare exceptional cases and can confirm that such bad attitude sustainably leaves a mark on the reputation on the person who misbehaves in this way. It somehow disqualifies you for management in Germany. I understand that the often dominating attitude of Germans you might feel to be exposed to might bring you to expect tough attacks. But that's only your perception or expectation; it has little to do with reality. There is even some more irony in that: your credibility has substantially increased recently!"

"What?" Sharad couldn't believe what he was hearing. Frank continued: "Professional German managers evaluate you by your standing when you are under fire. It is easy to manage in the sunshine, but true managers unfold and thrive in a crisis. That's what you successfully did: you faced a severe problem, you communicated properly, you stood up when your proposal was challenged, and you offered options for ways out. You made it easy for management to trust in you (TRU/-), and that the right person is on the job. Did you observe Michael? He is under fire every single day, much more than you are, and he is fighting on more than one flank. Did he panic or overreact? No, he didn't. Executive management hired him to solve a long-term problem with persistence. This requires structure, calmness and a very long breath. And it requires long-term backing by executive management, which he has to justify by professionalism. He is a marathon runner who stands and follows a long-term plan, not a sprinter. There is no problem you can't discuss honestly with him, not a single one. And you just laid wonderful grounds for future cooperation. Management will trust in your sayings and abilities. Welcome to the club."

Sharad left the office full of pride. And Frank felt he fully deserved it.

Manifestations (only as far as not being redundant to former parts):

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
NVA	1	2	2

Comment: The previous part of the field study summarize the observations formerly made. Therefore, hardly any evaluation of impact was made. Only NVA materialized additionally. Sharad expected emotions to surface in the similar way with which he was familiar in his home environment.

This summary offers a review from different angles: there were some prejudices to overcome. High power distance (PDI) on the Indian side in conjunction with German stiffness, deriving from high uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and with their inclination to achieve results (MAS), and some characters who sometimes tend to act self-centered (IDV), and the fear of being personally damaged (SVD) altogether formed a picture of certain expectations for Sharad, which were difficult to overcome.

With some assistance and encouragement, Sharad successfully mastered the challenge of overcoming his own traditional cultural constraints. His uncertainty regarding formal positions was mitigated by Frank to avoid being paralyzed by high power distance (PDI). He was prepared to exhibit a strong momentum of results-orientation (MAS) by being able to position the problem and clearly state the options at hand (UAI) in linear ways (ART). He overcame collectivistic constraints (IDV) by *not* assigning the responsibility to others as well, but instead acted as an individual that was willing and able to take responsibility and initiate solutions. He overcame the Indian inclination towards pragmatism on the fly by carefully and intensively preparing for the meeting and himself (UAI). His fear of being personally attacked (SVD) was mediated by the proposal that Germans might attack the plan, but not the person. And finally, he mastered the way to send clear and negative messages (COM, EVA).

On the upside, Indian flexibility (UAI) and openness to advice (IDV) might have helped him to successfully avoid the crisis.

To summarize, Sharad effectively bridged the cultural gap by adapting to the cultural values of his German counterparts. Simply speaking, he became more German in style, approach, and thinking and not only successfully passed through his presentation, but also strengthened his reputation.

4.7 Of Architects and Humans – Quality Prescriptions

(17) Hape was a highly skilled and respected senior consultant and expert in architectural design. His appearance and mindset was as German as one can be. His white socks and sandals identified him as being German even from a distance. He had been to India before without succeeding to the extent he had expected in terms of sustainably implementing his prescriptions. Now he had drawn his own lessons from that, filtered from a German perspective: he was concerned about how to bring structure into something that he considered to not fully comply with the rules and state-of-art development.

In addition, Hape met all the stereotypes prevalent about IT system architects in general. Experts like him often develop a demanding, prescribing and dominating character over the course of their career. Even in a purely German environment, the attitudes of architects often lead to conflicts with developers who felt their skills and knowledge would not be sufficiently valued. Developers often feel inhibited in their creativity and productivity by the frames and constraints prescribed by architects. To make things worse, architects usually have a strong stake on setting quality assurance and testing criteria up to system acceptance. Positioning oneself as being the master of quality invariably wins the battle and brings developers to immediate silence, particularly in a German environment.

Having been responsible for setting the grounds for quality by enforcing standards, Hape had the skills of how to design, but not necessarily how to implement, those standards which he considered of importance. In contrast, convincing people was not easily found in his dictionary at a prominent

space. All this came together with a fast and sharp mind and a sound education. As so many savvy people he had a hard time in understanding why other people would not simply follow his advice (or: prescriptions) that he had come to before by deep thinking and analysis. All of the above made it a challenge to have another opinion other than his, regardless whether his counterparts would be Indian or German, or from anywhere else. He would hardly take prisoners, but did tend to overrun people. In total, Hape had a clear and strong conviction of how to navigate through what he perceived a chaotic challenge.

Caused by his frustration not to have fully achieved his goals during former visits, Hape had prepared extensively for the trip (UAI/3). He had reviewed and updated all documentation, built-in newest state-of-the-art standards, and deeply discussed and synchronized with his German peers. In addition, he had presented his approach to IT management and had gained commitment and support beforehand. Consistently, he knew exactly his space of competence: what to achieve and by which means, what to enforce rigorously, and where it would be acceptable to make concessions (IDV/3) (PDI/3) (MAS/3). Management was briefed to expect escalation in case of need. And, of course, he had sent his 40-page expert paper to India beforehand, with a summary at the end after carefully pulling all strings together piece-by-piece (PER/3). It was a complex and consistent document. He was proud of his work and expected that everyone else who would study it must come to the same conclusions as him (ART/3). His mail announcing his visit came with a recommendation to have his paper studied and discussed in depth before his arrival (UAI/-).

After careful preparation, he had a clear picture of what to achieve in just one week onsite. His agenda was tough and ambitious, carefully planned and broken down to the minute (MAS/-) (UAI/3) (ART/3) (IDV/-).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	3	3
MAS	1	3	3
UAI	2	3	6
ART	2	3	6
PER	1	3	3

Comment: One stereotype about Germans turns out to be invariably true: they prepare extensively for any meeting to compensate for their high uncertainty score (UAI) -— and inherently expect the same from their counterparts. Beyond that, the vast concentration on methodological accuracy, consistency, and reasoning (PER) is supported by management. Hape not only prepared for the concept, but also explored his area of responsibility and authority beforehand (PDI) (IDV). In addition, he had worked on a fine-tuned sequential plan wherein each task set the basis for the next one (ART) with a convincing summary session at the end (PER). In total, it was a typical German approach to minimize uncertainty (UAI). His plan was ambitious, and he felt obliged to achieve the results he had agreed on with management (MAS). His paper would not be an easy read and would challenge the concentration and patience of any reader. For non-Germans it would be difficult to recognize its essential parts, and no reading assistance was provided. In brief, one had to read it completely from the beginning to the end, maybe even thrice, before the red line became clear. The deductive methodological section was comprehensive; the section on pragmatic advice was rather thin (PER). It would leave the reader helpless when trying to translate it into pragmatic action. The summary consisted mainly of the message that no short summary could be provided due to the complexity of the matter, and the recommendation to be aware of all details (PER).

(18) His new Indian counterpart was Sundeep. He was equipped with a nice pleasant personality and the ability to look for consensus and liked balancing interests out (MAS/2) (IDV/2). Sundeep was as knowledgeable as Hape but new on the job, and much younger. They hadn't met before. Sundeep met all the stereotypes with regard to Indians to the same extend as Hape did with regard to Germans.

Frank was aware of their incompatibility, which made him nervous and therefore offered Hape to attend the meetings; some of them were supposed to happen just between the two of them, others among the enlarged team. Hape was surprised about that offer, which Sundeep had formerly happily accepted, but he rejected it: “Don’t be concerned. Everything is already settled and it is quite clear what has to happen. I feel I’m fully in control. I guess you have other important errands to pursue.”

Sundeep was astonished to witness such a brute rejection (COM/3) (EVA/3). He had hoped for some kind of moderating assistance from Frank. Now he felt left alone and exposed to this unknown powerful customer representative who would obviously not hesitate to send him stringent and imposing messages. (PDI/3) (IDV/2) (TRU/2). His friendly concept of assembling his team and openly and pragmatically discuss maters would quite obviously not work (UAI/2).

Frank left the scene with sorrow. Rejecting one’s assistance leaves everyone with a devaluating feeling, regardless of cultural background. This was not the first, and would not be the last time that his services were rejected. But interestingly, such rejection invariably came from Germans, never from Indians who always appreciated any kind of assistance (IDV/2) (TRU/2). Another German architect of the same kind would later even state clearly: “Don’t interfere with my people! I know how to handle them.” His results finally shared the same destiny as those of Hape: cupboard-ware*.

But the worst thing now that Frank could see was the expression of discomfort on Sundeep’s face where he could discern the man’s concern about what this week would bring.

* Cupboard-ware is a term among IT engineers for work results which never found their way to implementation, but would remain on the shelve forever.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	3	2	6
MAS	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2
COM	1	3	3
EVA	1	3	3
TRU	2	2	4

Comment: MAS materializes because Sundeep understood the upcoming week as being part of a joint process that needed to be moderated to achieve a common result. He was shocked by the explicit negative message given in public by Hape (COM, EVA). He felt unrooted from his calming relationship with Frank and suddenly realized that he had to act with much more individuality (IDV) than expected, to deal with a confrontational customer representative (PDI) he had never met before (IDV, TRU).

(19) That evening, Frank met an exhausted Hape at the hotel bar. Frank asked Hape how his day had unfolded.

Hape sighted: "Leading such meetings is like controlling a bunch of toddlers. People come in, sit down, stay a while, and then get out. Some return, others don't (UAI/2). What is really irritating is that they write emails while I'm talking to them. They even accept phone calls during the meeting (ART/3). One was even discussing the visit of his mother-in-law with his wife (SVD/2) (IDV/2). However, there is a core of people continuously attending. But these guys permanently switch from one issue to another (ART/-). Consistently, the meeting lasted longer and we are far from having finalized today's program (MAS/3). And guess what? They have studied my paper at best superficially (UAI/3). I have to explain obvious things again and again. I think I should press harder tomorrow." (MAS/-)

Frank resisted the temptation to comment. It would be worthless; the time hadn't come for that yet. Hape would be resistant to any advice. A quote came to his mind: "Ignorance is the sister of

arrogance." Increasing the sympathy level between Germans and Indians for the best of collaboration was part of his job. Cleaning up behind Hape would be a challenge.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	2	2
MAS	1	3	3
UAI	1	3	3
UAI	1	2	2
SVD	1	2	2
ART	1	3	3

Comment: Linear monochronic Germans dedicate their full attention to their counterparts and expect the same in return. They easily get off balance due to their incapability to understand that other cultures are able to process several issues in parallel. Any deviation from the linear agenda is understood as disturbing and indicates a lack of concentration and seriousness in their eyes. It is a potential source of severe irritation, because it is considered unprofessional, ineffective, and even impolite. Indians are well-advised to continuously stay tuned to the issue at hand and bringing each theme to an end before coming to the next one (ART). Otherwise, they would too easily overload the linear processing capabilities of their German partner. SVD and IDV materialize because Indians do not make a sharp distinction between private issues and business obligations. Their attendance might also be required in parallel activities and therefore it is quite common to switch whenever required without being limited to just one role. UAI materializes because the carefully prepared plan was immediately compromised to the inconvenience of the German part; short-term changes are not appreciated. This leads to frustration, in particular when in common effect with the self-indicted pressure to achieve results within the set time frame (MAS). In addition, UAI materializes by means of Indian pragmatism: the team did not feel the need to have Hape's paper discussed and studied in depth beforehand. Their workload was high, and the urgent had replaced the important.

(20) Two days later, Hape stormed into Frank's office upset and red-faced. "Guess what just happened! You won't believe it! We spent all day yesterday working on the new architectural requirements. It was really great! And it was highly constructive — and not at all as my former concerns suggested. We could discuss all the items on the agenda and analyze them in great detail from all viewpoints. Sundeep and his team mentioned just a few concerns, but I could *convince* them about the advantages (COM/3) (EVA/3) (PDI/2). I was happy to see that my investment in preparation was paying off, although I felt they had not really studied all the documents I had sent to the extent that I expected (UAI/2). I applied all I know about meetings and decision-making. At each stage they were all shaking heads, signaling commitment (EVA/-). I carefully listed all the items, marked them off piece by piece, and summarized all results again in the evening with the entire team (ART/2) (PER/3). We were all shaking hands and felt relieved about a productive day's outcome (MAS/2). I really considered it done. A great team effort!"

"And, what's bad about that?" Frank asked.

"I just met with Sundeep. He neglects substantial parts of the items that we agreed upon yesterday. I'm going to put his back on a hot plate right now. I just came to your office to calm down a little." Hape said and stormed out, slamming the door. "Looks like the desire had been the father of the thought. The good news about Hape is that he is known for keeping his promises. But I really hope he won't make things worse", Frank thought when following him to the meeting room. Hape could hardly hide his anger, and his entire expression was unusually emotional (NVA/3) (IDV/3) (SVD/3) (TRU/2). Always before, he had been calm and hardly raised his voice (IVR/1). Now he was actually going ballistic and shouting loudly. Sundeep and the entire Indian team sat still, looking down to the floor, avoiding eye contact, and feeling uncomfortable with the situation. Frank advised to postpone the meeting until tomorrow and to return to the hotel, having a shower so all could relax.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
IDV	1	3	3
MAS	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2
IVR	1	1	1
NVA	1	3	3
SVD	1	3	3
ART	1	2	2
COM	1	3	3
EVA	1	3	3
PER	1	3	3
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: A major problem herein finds its root in Hape's inability to detect concerns carefully mentioned in this high-context environment (COM, EVA, IDV). Concerns are typically not mentioned explicitly. Reducing shaking heads to a commitment is a dramatic misinterpretation. The sheer complexity of the material and its deductive presentation most probably exceeded the capacity of the attendants (PER). Instead of unfolding the drama theoretically, Hape might have tried to organize his package by starting with an application-oriented demonstration of the solution to problems of the past.

In regard to UAI, Hape made the mistakes of: (a) assuming that all participants would have studied all the material with the same intensity as him, and (b) that recording all discussion results on paper and summarizing them, would prevent misunderstandings and harmonize team results. These best practices and techniques might work in a German environment and Hape wrongly projected his German attitude to his Indian counterparts. Any disturbance to the carefully prepared agenda came to the discomfort of Hape (UAI). He was constantly afraid of losing control.

Sequentially approving each single item mimicked the successful acknowledgement of all attendants. (ART) On the other hand it might be assumed that the Indian team felt uncomfortable with the package as a whole. There was most probably a certain hesitation to

contradict an empowered dominating customer representative (PDI). Additionally, Hape still applied pressure to produce results and to move forward quickly (MAS).

Finally, a German person who otherwise reacts “cool” but now is extremely angry and showing unacceptable emotions, is very irritating for Indians (who themselves can be very emotional) (NVA). Such explosions have the potential of sustainably damaging relationships (IDV). In addition, this is amplified by the Indian focus on personal consistency. Hape’s behavior was disappointing in this regard (SVD). To make things worse, Hape attacked Sundeep and his team openly in public by becoming loud and emotional (SVD, again), which severely hurts Indian pride.

All these cultural factors came together and created a complex disadvantageous mix and an ambience in which the Indian team was simply overrun and lacked defensive tools. The severity and high damage potential of these events justify a deepened analysis of the events: Hape was both totally convinced about the appropriateness of his approach and free of any self-reflection or even irony (IVR), absolutely resisting any advice, a pure engineer, having committed several mistakes by ignoring the cultural differences that were described above.

Hape was authorized to make decisions, but most important, he assumed his counterpart, Sundeep, to be in the same position to make decisions as Hape himself. But India is a highly collectivistic culture, which requires a carefully balancing out of issues, in particular when these issues are fundamental. Sundeep had to take up each single item as well as the whole massive package and discuss it in detail with his peers (IDV) and management (PDI) to synchronize, harmonize, and finally gain commitment. Hape instead ignored such fine and sensitive nuances of protocol deriving from PDI and IDV; he was, probably, not even aware of their existence.

Sundeep, at the same time, assumed that Hape was aware of this obligation to reconcile with his peers and management. Consistently, any handshake given by an Indian happens under the

constraint that all other stakeholders will confirm it. Germans are well advised to be aware of this unless the Indian part confirms that he has immediate decision-making power.

Sundeep was overwhelmed by many attitudes he had never witnessed before. First, he met Hape for the first time, having no idea about his personality and how to handle him. He had no occasion to build up a trustworthy relationship with Hape (IDV, TRU). In parallel, Hape had not given Sandeep time to warm up and familiarize— he had come straight to the points of his tight agenda.

Again, Hape had misunderstood the shaking heads. Most probably, given his style and character, he had not detected any concerns mentioned by the Indian part. Hape, as many Germans, understands words like “yes”, “no” and, possibly “maybe”. Hape had most probably ignored clear concerns (sent according to Indian standards), such as ‘this is worth another thought’. It is very confusing for Indians when such statements of concern or opposing opinion, which are clear to their ears, are overheard, leaving them insecure as to whether their counterpart has listened or not; this leaves them speechless (COM, EVA).

Among the things one should never do to a German is to state that yesterday’s agreement *never happened*. A handshake values high and should never be relativized or neglected. The problem is: the handshake as assumed by Hape actually never happened for the above reasons (COM and EVA, in particular). The interesting question now is why did Sundeep neglect what was considered being a handshake by Hape, compromising a week’s outcomes? The answer is that Sundeep hardly had another choice, at least not from his perspective.

Not finding oneself in the position to keep agreements is a dilemma which is difficult to address for everyone, regardless of the cultural background. How would a skilled mature German person most probably have solved such a situation? One way of doing so would have been to express regrets that management did, unfortunately, not accept the outcome and now one finds this very embarrassing; the issue however needs renegotiation. Unfortunately, this was an

option very difficult to pursue for Sundeep, because there was not yet an established trustworthy relationship with Hape (IDV) (TRU). In addition, the high power distance (PDI) paralyzed him; Hape was still representing the customer. Hape, in addition was pressing for results, which put Sundeep in an even more passive or defensive position (MAS).

For Sundeep, all this came to his disadvantage. He was not in the position to follow the path a mature manager would haven probably taken. Each of the cultural dimensions contributed its share to refrain him from 'paddling back'. At the end, he obviously saw no other option, but to neglect the meeting results — very much to the disappointment and anger of Hape.

Another observation can be drawn from this section of the field study is that there were major differences in the decision-making process. The particular German mix of high-UAI assisted by comparatively high-MAS and high-IDV, as well as by the linear perception of time and reality (ART) favors an intensive and organized preparation for meetings. From this perspective it is remarkable that in Hape's case all of the former happened *before* the meeting actually took place. Indians are, in this regard, more open-minded and pragmatic (UAI) than Germans: they freely come together and converge to an agreement *during* the meeting

Hape's approach did not encourage involvement and contribution of his counterparts (IDV). The latitude for involvement and modification was consistently little. In general, this comes with consequences when teams from Germany and India interact or negotiate. Basic decisions are already made by the well-prepared high-UAI party when entering the conversation, while the low-value party enters the meeting to freely and openly discuss matters, just to learn at the end that the venture directs to results and decisions which they cannot support or feel uncomfortable about. Supposedly, low-UAI parties do not feel the need for pre-emptying vast preparation, at least not to the same extent as high-value cultures do. In a purely high-UAI environment such mishaps are considered as being inappropriate and will immediately and substantially devaluate the meeting, not to mention the embarrassing perception that the

accurately prepared material was obviously not worth reading. A German will never join a meeting without accurate preparation — and if they do, they will feel extremely uncomfortable and vulnerable.

Similar situations were repeatedly observed during the field observation: the German part deliberately presented positions and defended them with well-argued reasoning while the Indian part was simply overrun by the complexity of the issue suddenly and massively put on the desk. A strong and disadvantageous mix of dimensions materialized (PDI, IDV, MAS, UAI, ART, COM, EVA, PER, TRU) during such conflicts. Germans typically do not present issues in digestible portions. Instead, they even enjoy and appreciate complexity, which they feel they have just proudly mastered by their deep thinking —and assume their counterparts feel the same. But the opposite applied; convincing and persuasion happen differently (PER) in both cultures. The Indian part joined the meeting open-minded, assuming that less preparation would be sufficient because all competent partners would be attending anyway. In purely Indian meetings, group consent might be achieved by a surprisingly open-minded discussion (IDV). In case of conflict, superior managers might balance out (PDI). The mindset is much opener because pre-conditions apply less. Again, decisions are made *during* the meeting, not *before*.

It could be repeatedly observed that Indian-German meetings on the working level frequently followed a certain script. As described above, strong positions were presented and soundly defended by the Germans, while the Indians were trying to evaluate the meaning of the complexity in just a very short time, and ending up overwhelmed.

As a consequence, both sides acted defensively: the Germans by defending the strongholds they just conquered, the Indians desperately being challenged to justify and transform their emotions into reasoning under time pressure. Thus they sent signs of discomfort (COM, EVA, PER), which were not however perceived as such by the Germans. As a result, such meetings were not only defensive in nature, but also hardly constructive. Mutual consent looks different. In

particular, the Indian party would leave the meeting not being convinced and with the feeling of hardly having contributed to the outcomes. In brief, it leads to the bitter taste that something was oppressed and that no one was really convinced. The irony is that it was not at all intended by the Germans to dictate the outcomes, nor was it in their best interest. The drama simply unfolded naturally, driven by cultural differences.

To summarize, this part of the case presents how a set of dimension can together form a complex intertwined set of problems that is difficult to solve — but which appeared symptomatic for this project. From the Indian perspective, working with Germans could be partly very challenging. At the same time, Indians found it difficult to describe where the problems actually resided. It was certainly not always fun to work with Germans, as Indian colleagues confirmed in private.

(21) Even after weeks, Frank was still concerned about the direction the architecture discussion had taken. Too much damage had been caused. He used the occasion to come back to the matter when Matthias, another leading architect, visited onsite to discuss architectural prescriptions. Matthias was in many regards the opposite of Hape and did not fit the German stereotype at all. He was calm, less driving, open-minded, and willing to discuss sensitive issues at any time. And he didn't wear white socks and sandals.

"Matthias, can you describe me with just a couple of words where the conflicts in collaboration reside?" Matthias needed some time to reflect: "Well, the Indian part does not always comply with our prescriptions. If you did some code review you would immediately see that our concepts were only partly implemented, at best." "Why would they do that?" Frank wondered. "Part of the problem might be that they have their own opinion on how things should be done, but don't clearly say so (COM/2) (EVA/2). When discussing, all seems to be fine. When implementing, things unfold differently. At the same time we encouraged our Indian team to become more active in challenging and contributing. Now that they do that we can't complain about it." Frank was puzzled: "I hoped it

would just be a matter of training." Matthias replied: "That would be too easy, there is more behind." and off he went to start his meeting.

Frank decided to join the meeting. To his surprise there was no fine-grained ambitious agenda (ART/2) (UAI/2) and little impatience to come to results (MAS/2). Matthias would discuss all items in great detail and encourage his Indian counterparts to contradict him whenever they felt uncomfortable (PDI/1) (COM/-) (EVA/-). He dedicated as much time to each item *as needed*. And his reasoning came in a very specific style: he would not start with a theoretical concept and break it down to operational details (PER/3). Instead, he would pick up current shortcomings and make transparent how they could have been prevented by his architectural approach. And he never forgot to show how his approach would make the life of everyone easier. It required much patience and willingness to stick repeatedly in many steps of iteration with details. The same item would come up again and again, among others. There was no pressure to move on (MAS/-) before everything was discussed and clarified in a detailed way with the attention each issue deserved (ART/-). And Matthias mastered to somehow deal with frequent deviations and calmly brought the team back to the agenda. Frank dropped out of the meeting; he had seen enough to understand.

At dinner that evening, Frank had the occasion to share his observations with Matthias. "You seem to be relaxed. Do you have so much time to implement? You dedicate much time to gain team commitment (IDV/3). Doesn't this patience cost much energy, time and money?" Matthias seemed to be ready to respond to such a question: "It's the other way around: how much does it cost if we don't do it? If we can't come through with all items I'll come back next week. I've been with the team many times and will continue doing so. Just forcing a concept into their throats will not help. We need a sustainable team buy-in (IDV/-) (TRU/1). And if I'm good in guiding this process, people will think they have come to the solution by themselves – and will be happy to implement it. Don't forget: our Indian counterparts are highly skilled and trained engineers and they have their well-reasoned strong opinions. The problem is to detect where they agree and where they don't (COM/-) (EVA/-). If they don't, your concept will never come to life, regardless how beautiful it is."

Frank realized that many parts of Matthias's elaborations applied to Germany as well. Ensuring team commitment with a bunch of developers is not an easy job. However, the critical factors seemed to be a little different in here.

"How does management feel about it? Is there no pressure to come to results?" Frank asked. "Don't be concerned." Matthias responded. "I have their full backing. The manager of the architecture department, Moritz, has been here often enough to understand. We are ready when we are ready (ART/-) (MAS/-). It's not a good idea to swim against the tide. Which other options do we have? We have produced huge amounts of cupboard-ware in the past."

"How can you be so calm and self-reliant?" (NVA/1) Frank asked. "Oh, I'm not at all. First, I'm never absolutely sure whether I converge to a solution. Second, if I remain calm it doesn't mean I'm not boiling up from inside (IVR/1). Sometimes, I'm close to going ballistic when we are discussing the same issue for the 23rd time (ART/-). But again, tell me where the options are!" Matthias replied. "Keep in mind that any carefully developed agenda becomes obsolete as soon as it comes out of the printer."

Kai confirmed: "They always want to be timely, but somehow something comes in-between (ART/-).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	1	1
IDV	1	3	3
MAS	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2
IVR	1	1	1
NVA	1	1	1
ART	1	2	2
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2
PER	1	3	3
TRU	1	1	1

Comment: Matthias was aware of critical drivers in Indo-German cooperation and of his own predisposition. His character made him chose another approach than that of Hape. In particular he had overcome any inclination to press for results (MAS). And he had overcome his personal uncertainty level (UAI). Matthias navigated in a secure environment with management backing. Otherwise he would have been in danger of being torn continuously fighting on two fronts: one with problem solving itself and the other with management at the home base who would be asking to come to terms and provide results. He was aware that things need time to ripen (ART) and would require established and continuously maintained relationships to exist (IDV) (TRU). By practicing in this way he had successfully mastered PDI barriers, which had become obsolete and not detectable anymore. In particular he was open to *not* following a linear agenda, but to mitigate the discussion in its natural polychronic development (ART). He refrained from any top-down deductive attempt to enforce his concept (PER) (UAI). Instead, he resisted the temptation to overload matters with complexity but provided digestible portions. In addition, he patiently discussed matters with an open mind and on a pragmatic detail level (UAI) and gave the team space to mention concerns (COM, EVA) in order to come to team consent. And finally, he expressed some self-irony (IVR).

4.8 Requirements Analysis — the 'Works-As-Designed' Phenomenon

(22) Kai still had severe continued concerns regarding the quality, consistency, and completeness of the business requirements. He shared his objections informally with Frank: "The preparation of the requirements was under responsibility of the German team, consisting mostly of highly-skilled business experts, but with partly limited skills in business *analysis*. Documenting a set of complex and comprehensive requirements is, without doubt, not an easy job. One can easily make mistakes and oversee details. And sometimes, one can't be sure how complete and consistent one is. In addition, it appears natural that business-oriented experts have a deep understanding of what they want, but

have a hard time exactly understanding what is important for the designers and programmers, who follow in the development life-cycle after them. The designers and programmers have to pick up many pages and often half-structured text, review and understand it, and mold it in structured ways into an IT system, which is not an easy job as well. It is an intellectual challenge, and it requires openness and an intense exchange, explicit communication (COM/2) and the feedback of errors (EVA/3) to people who stand higher in the hierarchy (PDI/3), and whom they have often never met (IDV/2) (SVD/2). As a result, one can detect some kind of rather passive or consuming attitude (MAS/2) in the exchange.

"Anyone who is familiar with the systems-development life cycle will confirm two things: (1) there is no such thing as an error-free consistent specification (UAI/2), and (2) the user doesn't know what he wants, but he recognizes it when he sees it." Kai joked.

Frank had been long enough in system development to know of these consistency and transformation problems. "So, where in particular are your concerns?"

"I have heard almost no complaints about our requirements specification and this really makes me nervous." Kai replied. "We are coming closer to delivery and there should be much more noise regarding system functionality. There is much noise, but it's not about our business requirements as such. There *must* be undetected errors in it and nobody talks about it."

Kai was concerned for good reason. As the responsible release manager, he had to be a little 'paranoid to survive' (UAI/2) and to plan ahead (ART/2) The pressure was that he had to deliver not only results at defined dates (MAS/2), i.e., the requirements, but also to ensure their quality at the same time (UAI/2). What also stood in his way was the paralysis-by-analysis problem: it is difficult to confirm that a business specification is actually ready and the originator could sign it off. Being aware of the complexity of the task, people were usually reluctant to sign off, because this meant they formally declared their responsibility for its quality in terms of completeness and consistency (UAI/2).

The irony invariably was that each complex specification must come with errors at the same time. A strategy usually applied was to use quality ensuring procedures like reviews and then leave it up to

designers, architects, and programmers to detect (hopefully minor) inconsistencies when they try to implement and to provide feedback. This challenging of the specification by IT engineers was widely missing and that exactly made Kai nervous. The later inconsistencies would be discovered along the development chain, the costlier they would be. (UAI/-) (ART/2)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	2	2
MAS	2	2	4
UAI	4	2	8
SVD	1	2	2
ART	2	2	4
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	3	3

Comment: To repeat, there is no such thing as an error-free and totally consistent specification. There are always items not described in sufficient detail, others are missing, or things turn out to be contradictory as soon as one looks at the details from an IT perspective. Anyone who picks up a specification in order to generate a piece of code out of it will have to review the specification in great detail. This review should bring up all the inconsistencies; at least many questions normally arise (COM) (EVA).

If requirements are not reviewed properly and challenged in depth, the danger of finally delivering a module that "works as designed" arises. From a formal standpoint, this module fulfills all its requirements, but it wouldn't be of much use for the customer, because it would not be what they actually wanted. Instead, a step back has to be made then: after testing, one has to return to analysis, correct the shortcomings, return to design, coding, and testing again. This came to the concern of Kai (UAI).

Detecting errors lately is a costly and time-consuming process, and invariably the question arises who will be responsible for the cost: the supplier will point at the poor requirements specification, the customer will argue that supplier's experts should have detected the shortcomings, in particular in case the supplier has positioned himself as being knowledgeable of the customer's industry. This discussion usually has the potential to seriously disturb the relationship (IDV) and is invariably escalated to management, often finally reconciled only on steer com level. In other words, shortcomings on the operational level finally end up on senior executive management level, which is not appreciated by German C-level executives. This discomfort happens because they then have to dig into details they normally don't want to know about. Following their instinct, they are inclined to delegate it back down to subordinates (low PDI); this triggers another round of iteration, adding more cost and delay. Consistently, the need for reconciliation processes like this should be avoided, because they are annoying, do not add value, and are costly.

The developer, to whom the requirements are handed over, faces a complex intellectual challenge. He has to read, swallow, and understand a huge set of sometimes very complex requirements. If questions arise in this process, they should be documented explicitly in highly structured and formal ways (COM), both by means of documentation and process. The natural tendency of an Indian person would be to look for informal relationship-based and pragmatic ways to solve the problems at hand (IDV, UAI). In case there is no such established relationship with the originator of the requirements, this will be difficult for him to do. In parallel, power distance (PDI) comes to effect in several ways: the developer might simply not be entitled to communicate directly and on the same eye-level with the originator of the requirement. Instead, he will be obliged to inform his superior, creating loss of information and time, which is even amplified by the fact that, due to small uncertainty avoidance (UAI), structured, accurate, and explicit documentation (COM) is not easily prepared.

Low masculinity (MAS) might also expose its influence, because it inhibits the tendency to a rather passive, accepting, and consuming attitude as opposed to an active and achievement-oriented role.

Finally, power distance (PDI) materializes in other ways as well: to inform the requirement's originator that he forgot something, or made mistakes, or didn't think in context (EVA), is not a message easily transferred in high power-distanced environments. It might even be considered as a personal implicit insult (SVD) in the Indian perception. The idea that challenging the other part's work is not only *not* impolite, but also expected, appreciated and welcomed for quality purposes, and even deliberately intended, might appear strange to an Indian person.

The German perspective differs from that: the originator of the requirements will carefully check his work and apply some QA techniques, such as peer reviews and defending IT management presentations before handing it over to development. He will always be concerned whether he had described it all well and appropriately (UAI). Anyway, he will be relieved partly by passing through the peer review process because this shares his responsibility for the quality of the outcome with the team and management. And, at the end, he will be relying that in case there are open items or shortcomings left, design and development will come back to him, asking questions for updating and refining the requirement. This would even come to his comfort, although a flavor of not having worked properly before remains. It is simply understood as an unavoidable part of the quality-increasing process. Consistently, he would not feel disturbed when contacted by the Indian side whenever questions arise (SVD); he would even expect this.

The Indian perspective is fundamentally different. All of the above cultural factors come together in an intertwined set and create barriers to solve the problem at the root and at the right point in time. Instead of involving the originator (COM) (EVA), the developer might look for ways to somehow arrange the inconsistencies that he detects when trying to transform the

requirements into code. In addition, he will assume that errors and shortcomings will be detected by quality assurance later on (UAI). This perception and attitude is supported by the still widely prevalent paradigm of division of work in India, which favors hierarchical functional organizational designs (PDI).

The underlying pattern of organizing based on the principle of division of work is that, from the developer's perspective, there will be a phase of testing, involving the customer in general and the originator in particular, at a later stage. His/her task is to apply the input he/she received (MAS) and to concentrate on his/her (isolated) core expertise. Testing will happen anyway, so why not get productive right now? Indian pragmatism materializes again, inducing the idea that any problem can be solved as soon as it literally surfaces at some point in the future and not only in theory (UAI).

To summarize, above mechanisms, driven by cultural forces, might contribute to the explanation of the "works-as-designed" phenomenon. This phenomenon describes the situation that the provided system formally meets the specification requirements, but the provided solution actually does not completely solve the business problem because of specification shortcomings. Such effects happened repeatedly during the field study, and they were widely fostered by cultural differences. The reconciliation process of such a disadvantageous development is complex because the responsibility lasts equally, but diffusely, on both sides. The inconsistent specification was the problem of the customer, while the supplier failed to detect errors. Addressing the cultural reasons for such delays and costly iterations in time, by encouraging the involved parties to overcome barriers, is supposed to be an effective measure.

An additional option to address the problem of distributed responsibility and resulting cost by organizational means is to add formal acceptance steps on the supplier's side: after careful quality checks by the customer, the supplier has to review and accept, or reject, the requirements. Once accepted, the supplier takes over full responsibility for the quality of the

specification. Because suppliers tend to hesitate to apply such a procedure, it is helpful to point at their formerly stated emphasis on industry and development expertise.

In total, it can be reported from this ethnographic field observation that there is little awareness for the paradigm that the earlier mistakes are detected in the development life-cycle, the less conflicts, cost and delay arise. On the Indian side, pragmatism and optimism prevail. Work force is cheap in India, which is one of its competitive advantages, but also one of its challenges. The underlying thinking pattern is that any problem can be solved by adding more resources to the challenge instead of focusing on effectiveness and efficiency. In sum, cultural drivers prevent one from addressing issues early and effectively.

4.9 Change Management and Belly-Dancers

The tayloristic, division-of-work-driven attitude, which is so prevalent in India, presumably contributes to an increased number of avoidable change requests (CR). For commercial reasons, all integrators have fine antennas to detect change requests and position themselves accordingly by processes and organizational means. Indian integrators are not an exception from this rule. Additional factors contribute to the number of change requests, such as the differing perceptions of quality. In any case, the resolution is complex and requires much management attention as the idiosyncratic discussion whether it is an error or a change request, or even a feature, shows:

(23) Along with the bi-monthly steer com meetings came a set of accompanying management working sessions. Change management invariably required periodical management attention. Jörg, responsible for the business part of project management, opened the discussion: “I was told you still have not addressed the bug which we detected in bookings (COM/2).” Manu had set this item on the agenda of the CR meeting. It had burdened him for a while because it had a huge commercial impact. Errors would come at the expense of the supplier while CRs would create more revenue. However, it came to Jörg’s annoyance and he was already in combat mode when he entered the room (EVA/3).

Manu and Mamta were alerted: “Jörg, we told you already last time: it’s not a bug, it’s a CR.” Jörg got very upset: “NO, IT-IS-A-BUG! I thought we were through with this kind of discussion! (IDV/2) Now, raising the voice when arguing with Mamta was not exactly effective. She would pay back in that currency (NVA/2). All participants knew each other very well. Frank leaned back with amusement and watched the scene. Jörg was a very senior business manager, and very skilled in negotiating with his Indian partners especially when it concerned commercial issues. There was a long track record of former events that were similar. Mamta continued: “We have spent much effort in investigating this issue, which we will not be compensated for, by the way. The outcome is quite clear: it is a specification error. The delivery contains exactly what you ordered. No error in it.” (PDI/-)

Jörg again increased the volume on the emotion scale: “Mamta, you told us you are not only experts in systems development, but you are also industry-savvy. If you had this business expertise, you would have detected this error immediately when we forwarded this requirement for crosschecking by your designer team! Instead, you continued developing this module, and now it’s too late! The money has gone down the drain, not to speak about the delay. And what should I tell my super-users? They already think we are walking around like orientation-less zombies.” (NVA/-)

There was some truth in his words, and Mamta knew it. So, she switched to some distracting facts, an often successful tactic Frank had observed before in India, and not only with her. He admired her negotiation skills. Mamta continued: “My team had a discussion with Kevin from the Hamburg team a while ago. He admitted the specification was wrong and the responsibility resides fully with his team.” (PDI/3)

Frank realized that it was not at all important, how substantiated her statement was. He recognized it as a smoke grenade. Most probably, Kevin would not even remember to having given such a statement, at least not with such clarity. But that was not the point. Based on a particular piece of information, Mamta successfully had increased the uncertainty level, and that was exactly her intention (UAI/3). Frank thought to himself: “Mamta would not hesitate to order a group of belly-

dancers into the room if it would help her to distract people and achieve her goals." He admired this kind of Indian-negotiation folklore (NVA/-). And he wondered whether both Mamta and Jörg deliberately used emotion as a tool. "Was it authentic, or was it kind of acting?" he wondered.

The issue was closed for the day. It was agreed to give priority to solving the bug first and discuss any commercial aspect later. Jörg would first have to return and verify the background by synchronizing with Kevin.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	2	2
UAI	1	3	3
NVA	1	2	2
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	3	3

Comment: Two suggestions may be drawn from the above report: first, stereotyping is dangerous, and cultural profiles apply not necessarily to individuals, but rather in general to group behavior. Both Mamta, as well as Jörg, did not purely act in typical Indian or German ways (NVA, PDI, COM, EVA, IDV). Since both had been working together for some time, they had overcome cultural constraints. Second, culturally based predictions seem to apply lesser the higher the position in the hierarchy. Mature senior managers master a more extensive range of tactics than can be explained by simple cultural analysis.

Therefore, conclusions have to be drawn with caution, given the circumstances. Mamta was un-Indian as she was ready to react directly, emotionally, and explicitly. She could correctly compensate for the low-context negative messages (COM, EVA). The conversation even had become emotional, also on the German side (NVA).

However, the unusual behavior in this very particular example is partly in conjunction with the following suggestions: most important, it navigated in an established relationship-based environment (IDV). All parties know each other from long cooperation. This relationship enabled a direct and immediate discussion of the problem at hand. High-PDI cultures tend to manage task-based in contrast to low-PDI cultures, which preferably lead solution-based. Consistently, low-PDI managers tend to be less involved in issues on the operative level.

There is one inherent sustainable advantage for managers of high-PDI environments. In essence, communication with subordinates happens more extensively and frequently along to the vertical line of reporting. Consistently, high-PDI managers enjoy the sustainable advantage of being more familiar with what happens on the operational level. Low-PDI managers, in contrast, try to avoid such strong involvement; they are inclined to consider this as being "micro-management." Digging into operational details often comes to the annoyance of both managers and subordinates. In contrast to this, high-PDI managers perceive such interference as being a core part of their job.

It is of particular relevance to highlight both the influence of PDI and UAI. Applying insights from both opened a flank that Mamta successfully used by issuing a statement that needed later verification. Whether justified and supported by facts or not, this increased the uncertainty level on the German side (UAI), which, by the way, is a tactic that leaves Germans usually helpless. Increase the uncertainty level on the German side, and you will win the battle.

4.10 Reporting, Perception of Reality, and Miracles

(24) Michael called Frank two weeks after the last steer com meeting. "Let me share an observation with you. Do you remember the issue-filled pipeline for release 42.4711?" "Sure, it looked nice, was non-critical and under control", Frank replied. Michael laughed: "This is exactly my point! I checked the pipeline before I took the plane to Delhi for the steer com meeting. The very next day, around a

100 issues had been closed and taken off the pipeline." "Isn't that good news?" Frank asked, "someone probably did some housekeeping in the ticket system to report a nice status at the steer com." "Frank, you didn't get the message: it's funny they all disappeared surprisingly for the steer com – but now they are all back!" (UAI/1)

"Do you want me to investigate this?" Frank asked. "No, don't dig too deep. It's not worth to increase the stress level at the moment. Just provide me with the background, please", and off he went.

Frank leaned back. "This is mysterious, even for Indian standards. How am I going to explore this? The concept of *alternate facts* will not help. It will be invented only in a couple of years, as late as in January 2017."

It would be best to use an unofficial and private moment to occasionally mention this point (IDV/1) (TRU/2) (COM/-). This occasion came soon while he was waiting with Sanjay for a meeting to start. Sanjay was quite a young engineer, and among his obligations were reporting on testing progress and maintenance of the ticket system. Just to bridge the waiting time, Frank mentioned: "Sanjay, maybe you know that I'm lecturing at a business school in Paris (AVA/2) (PDI/-). In this context I'm looking for a topic to write my Ph.D. thesis about. I'm currently considering an approach to examine whether there is a relationship between the noise during development, judged by the number of CRs and issues during development — and the number of tickets *after* delivery. In brief, I would like to explore to which extent developers need stability and are disturbed by frequent changes." (COM/2)

Sanjay was delighted. This was within the area of his competence and he was happy to share. However, he was nervous because Frank seemed to be far above him in the hierarchy (PDI/2) and they hadn't had much time to become familiar with each other before (IDV/2). And Frank was in steady contact with senior management, which made Sanjay choose his words carefully.

Frank decided to concentrate first on the technological aspect (COM/-): "Is it possible to draw a report about all tickets of a specific release showing all status information including dates of status change…?" Sanjay relaxed more and more; this was his home turf and he was happy to contribute. After a while, time had come to come to the point: "In this context, I had a look at the tickets for

release 42.4711 and I made some strange observations: their status has changed back and forth which I find difficult to explain. I can't really verify since I lack the credentials to draw a comprehensive report."

Sanjay stiffened. Suddenly he detected danger (PDI/-): "Well, I was advised by management to clean up the issue pipeline some time ago. Such housekeeping is part of my job. (EVA/2)" Frank could tell from Sanjay's expression that he felt cornered and decided not to dig deeper. (COM/-)

Later that day, Mamta, as if it was occasionally, passed by Frank's office: "Hi Frank, I heard you had a chat with Sanjay. How did it go?" But then she suddenly had to leave for an important call. Frank was astonished how well Mamta was informed even about minor things in her organization (PDI/1) (IDV/1). Sanjay had, for sure, reported immediately and this piece of information had immediately found its way across several hierarchy layers. Why would Mamta pass by and mention such a minor issue? Frank came to two conclusions from this: First there actually was something going on, and it was sensitive; second, Mamta's few words contained a warning between the lines (COM/1). Translated into Western language it meant: "Get out of my way. Don't interfere with my people. Obey protocol. In case you have any questions ask *me*, not them."

"This is mined territory then" (PDI/-), Frank thought. "I should better use confidential ways to further explore it." (TRU/-) Since he had built up a more than trustworthy relationship (IDV/-) with Sharad, he freely shared his problem with him. Sharad was amused with it: "Poor Sanjay, you put him in a difficult situation! Mamta asked him to clean up in person and he went a little too far (PDI/1). Maybe, he assumed that he should go beyond just some face lifting. Please understand that his job is rather administrative. It's up to me to open, forward and close tickets, although he has the credentials to do so as well. Here is what happened: he came to my office one day and asked me questions about the status of the tickets. I told him that they were all addressed and under way, and that appropriate resources were assigned to each of them. I couldn't explain the status of every single ticket specifically to him, so I calmed him in general that everything was fine. He left my office summarizing that "actually all tickets were addressed; it would only be a matter of very short-time.

Virtually, they are already solved, or it was as good as if they *actually* were…" (ART/3) (UAI/1). When I noted that my tickets had vanished, I re-opened them, of course. I need this to steer my team."

Frank returned to his office, now having an easy answer for Michael's question. The phenomenon of pre-emptying 'forward obedience' (PDI/-) was not unknown to him. He had seen it before, even in traditional hierarchical German organizations. Senior managers would make a statement, and subordinates hyperventilate and go too far.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
PDI	2	1	2
IDV	1	2	2
IDV	2	1	2
UAI	2	1	2
AVA	1	2	2
ART	1	3	3
COM	1	1	1
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: Details of the issue pipeline are not in the focus of German large-scale project managers, but under the responsibility of respective release managers. However, whenever strange observations are made they will take appropriate action (UAI). Frank chose to apply informal indirect communication means (COM) when approaching Sanjay; he did not directly come to the point. In addition, he used his formal position as a lecturer at a business school and his potential research area (AVA, IDV, PDI) to build up credibility. Such initiatives and ascription are highly respected in Indian environments. The above factors gave Sanjay the occasion to overcome constraints of power distance (PDI) and to come to an initial trustworthy (TRU) relationship (IDV). However, Sanjay was very aware of hierarchical rules and protocol that stopped him from freely continuing (PDI). Instead, he became *vague* by pointing at

management prescriptions in general (without giving names and details) (COM) (EVA), at his duties in general, and at some vague moment in the future. All of the former are symptoms that could easily be observed in the Indian organization — and are supposedly idiosyncratic for hierarchical organizations (PDI). Consistently, Mamta was reminding Frank to obey protocol (PDI, again) and not to interfere with her team. She didn't have to explicitly mention her point, as she knew that Frank would detect it immediately (COM).

Sharad was enlightening the situation by explaining what actually had happened. He could easily do so because he had a trustworthy (TRU) long-lasting relationship with Frank (IDV). Sharad immediately realized the defensive position Sanjay occupied. Sanjay, a young engineer, had received a task from Mamta and tended to hyperventilate with that. He over-emphasized this task as an order to go to the limit, or even beyond (PDI). In addition, his Indian background seduced him to mix facts and "almost"-facts into an intertwined whole (ART). There are many truths, so why not use the most suitable one? Desire and facts merged into one. The perception that all issues were almost addressed and therefore could be seen as solved ("virtually closed") provided a picture he felt was fair to share. Again, the linear strict reasoning of cause-and-effect of the west does not necessarily apply in India, and the perception of time and reality are closely related.

Remark: It might be suggested to understand the above observation as an occurrence of Indian pragmatism (low-UAI) and not as the surfacing of the ART dimension. This would neglect the distinctive insights the ART dimension delivers. Even low-UAI Western cultures (USA, UK, Scandinavia, The Netherlands etc.) would still insist on staying close to objective and measurable facts. In their positivistic tradition, there is only one truth.

4.11 Architecture and Chuzpe

(25) Michael took Frank aside: "Frank, there is a problem: errors which have been solved in former releases come up again in this subsequent release. They have been inherited and now require redundant rework."

"Isn't that a technology problem? It looks as if mistakes were made in the appropriate use of the development tool. Or maybe its philosophy is not fully understood…" Frank wondered. "Yes, but this can be fixed by our engineers, and maybe some re-training. It's a little ugly, but we clearly know what to do. What makes me a little speechless in this context is that they want to bill us for redundantly fixing the same error. What is your perception of this?"

Frank realized: the supplier made an error causing substantial rework and delay, and now wanted the customer to pay for it. He wondered what kind of reaction beyond laughter such an attempt would cause in a purely German environment. Karel's words came to his mind: "Very proud, but no shame." (ART/3) (SVD/2)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
SVD	1	2	2
ART	1	3	3

Comment: The analysis of problems by decomposition into single parts and the clear assignment of responsibility accompanied by strictly linear time-based and root cause-effect arguing (ART) does not play the fundamental role in Indian environments as it does in Germany. Instead, the perception that reality happens in non-linear parallel polychronic patterns fosters the conviction that everything merges into an undividable intertwined whole, which confuses the picture from a German perspective. In case this is paired with the particularistic tradition of 'diffuse' characters (SVD), i.e. the expectation that common problems can be solved by personal intervention of senior management in good mutual consent to the benefit of both

parties, then easily claims arise which are perceived as ‘inappropriate’, or even ‘shameless’, by Germans.

To clearly avoid any misunderstandings: Indians do not wish to appear “shameless” and actually they are far from being so. The example illustrates how such a *perception* might arise in the eyes of Germans. In brief, expect the unexpected.

4.12 Delivery: To Deliver – or Not to Deliver?

(26) Frank arrived at the office early on Monday morning. It was the date the delivery was promised. Many busy weeks had transpired and the entire team had been working hard on ensuring delivery to the revised schedule. The day of truth had now come. Sharad stormed into Frank’s office: “We worked all weekend to assemble the delivery, and presumably we are ready.” Frank was aware of this; he had spent the weekend at the office as well: “So, where is the problem?” “I don’t feel good about the delivery. The entire package just came out of the oven and still is too hot to have it digested. I would feel much better if we had the occasion to have the package cool down and checked for completeness and interoperability another two or three days”, Sharad replied. (IDV/-) (TRU/-) (COM/-) (EVA/-) (UAI/-) (ART/-)

Frank shared Sharad concerns. It was highly seductive to have the delivery actually provided on the promised date regardless of whatever concerns. It almost had become a matter of pride to meet the re-agreed schedule (ART/1). On the other hand, every single error would now count twice, and again harm the reputation of the project. Frank was aware of two things: he knew how project management was thinking. In case of doubt, it would be quality first. And second, he knew there was some buffer time; this was not by coincidence, but came with a purpose. German operations would need only two days to check and install the delivery, getting ready for key user testing by Monday next week. *That* date was not debatable, in contrast to the pro forma delivery date. Key users from three continents would arrive at HQ next Monday and start testing.

Frank replied: “This is far beyond my responsibility. It’s up to Michael, the project manager, to decide. But I’m confident I can convince him. Just give me three hours until Germany wakes up and I’ll get back to you.” Sharad left the office with great relief and great hope. The responsibility lasted on more shoulders now, to his great relief (PDI/2).

“Guess what?” Michael replied over the phone. “Am I surprised? No, I’m not. I saw it coming, so I built in some latitude in the plan. Go ahead and tell Sharad that I agree.”

Sharad came back to the office: “Could you convince Michael? And how did you do it?” “Yes, and it was not a difficult job. First, he had anticipated it. Second, you can re-align every German manager just by arguing quality-wise (UAI/2). If they have to decide which death to die, they would rather sacrifice a date than compromising quality. And again, Michael had expected this situation to arise. He is not doing this job for the first time. But now do your best to ensure good quality, please. If not, we’ll *all* find ourselves in a very embarrassing situation by next Monday.”

Frank concluded: “Personal loyalty and trust rate as high in India as they do in Germany. Help yourself mutually when in trouble and gain reliable friends for a life-time.” (TRU/2) (IDV/2)

However, he wondered why Mamta didn’t intervene. She was without doubt fully informed and involved, but preferred to send Sharad to sort out the options in this case. This was a severe political issue under senior management attention and usually would be handled on CEO level. Instead, she had sent one of her managers (PDI/1).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
PDI	1	1	1
IDV	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2
ART	1	1	1
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: In this case again, a stereotype mono-causal application of the cultural dimensions would partly fail to provide reliable predictions. Both Sharad and Mamta acted in rather untypical ways. Indian low-UAI would have suggested to deliver under any circumstances and to optimistically deal with any obstacles on the fly. Instead, it was suggested to increase the confidence level beforehand (UAI). Furthermore, Sharad came directly to the point (COM) and freely shared his concerns (EVA) under an established trustworthy relationship (IDV) (TRU). He allowed himself explicitly not to argue based on facts (which were not clearly visible in that situation), but on feelings. These most probably derived from former experience and patterns (ART), which is consistent with what one would expect; however, he knew that Germans would most probably ask for hard rational information and reasoning (UAI). Additionally, Sharad was aware of a frequent cultural conflict: whether to stick to dates, or whether to deliver when ready (ART). But anyway, Mamta's and Sharad's approach would appear to be surprising in a stereotypically presumed high-power distance environment (PDI).

These differences between dimension-based predictions and reality might be explained by various reasons: First, a deep trust-based relationship had been established over the years (IDV, TRU). This allowed to overcome cultural barriers and to professionally and openly discuss the problem. Second, the Indian part had learned to adapt to German behavior patterns and now had a clear understanding how to deal with them. Third, the Germans had done the same. In such a dynamically and mutually influenced environment, any static analysis based on cultural factors becomes increasingly worthless or misleading. Furthermore, the above case represents an example of successful cultural integration and mutual adaption. The Indians had become a little more German, and the Germans had become a little more Indian.

In this environment, Mamta could partially step away from protocol (PDI) and delegate the task to Sharad. This came with the advantage of her still having the option to intervene in case of need. This is an attitude, which can also often be observed by Western managers: in case there

is a problem, one still can overrule his/her subordinates. The benefit is that, in total, the range of options is much wider. First test, and then intervene to correct if needed. This escalation step would not be available if senior management interfered right from the beginning.

4.13 The Iceberg: Decision Authority and Management Styles

(27) Another minor delivery was approaching. This regular release seemed to be ready, things were going fine and there were no concerns. It was non-political and not under executive management's attention. However, the release had to be stable and timely, because, as it was established practice, super users from three continents had been travelling to Hamburg HQ for testing. The delivery was agreed for Monday morning Hamburg time, and testing was supposed to start after its installation.

Frank was expecting an eventless day when he sat down at his desk at 8:00 p.m. Suddenly Sharad stood in front of his desk. And it was not only Sharad, but also almost the entire middle management team poured into the room, including Mamta, the CEO (IDV/2). In particular, Guruprahalasad (nom de guerre: 'Guru'), the test manager was nervously teetering from one leg to the other: "We have been building up the new integration test environment over the recent days and just learned yesterday in the late evening that some parts of data migration failed."

"So, why don't we just fall back to the former test environment? You have been testing in that environment for a couple of weeks, and it worked perfectly fine." Frank wanted to know. He was not an IT engineer, but this question seemed to be obvious.

"We have to admit that parts of the reworked code wouldn't work in that old environment due to some changes we made of the recent weeks." Guru replied. Mamta was getting nervous about that statement. It made too transparent that such a too pragmatic approach (UAI/2) had been applied, at the cost of testing and accuracy. In brief, for the purpose of gaining time and meeting the schedule she had decided to shortcut testing and skipping parts of the integration test. They had modified the code, but not the test environment. Her bet was obviously that the good results in designer testing

would allow such a shortcut. Anyway, such a discussion would lead to nowhere now, and an immediate solution had to be found.

An old 'bon mot' came to Frank's mind: "only cowards do testing", but he resisted the temptation to mention it.

Not being an IT engineer Frank was now in danger of being overwhelmed by complexity in unknown technology territory. The last thing that would help him now was techie speak. He asked: "Guru, please help me to summarize the options which we have now. And please tell me which are the pros and cons of each option." (MAS/2)

Guru took a breath and tried to bring it back to pure logic, unspoiled by techie talk: "Option A is to use the carefully prepared production and performance test environment for training and testing purposes. It was not created for that purpose, but it should work. We could erase all data afterwards by running some scripts and respecting data integrity rules. We would have to take care of some cascade delete effects on the database. Or just throw it away and build it up new again afterwards. On the downside is that some master data will not be available because the migration failed for data consistency reasons rooted in the data base management system."

That actually *was* techie talk. "Why is it so difficult for IT engineers to clearly speak logic?" Frank asked himself. But he was able grasp the basic meaning of Guru's explanations. "And option B?"

"Option B would work perfectly fine — with the exception that the product catalog would not work and no booking functionality would be available. The code expects another database structure because some mandatory relationships and attributes including property definitions… and this would require Oracle 42.08/15 being installed which we haven't done yet."

That was enough for Frank. He decided: "We go for option A. I kindly suggest doing the necessary immediately."

"How can you dare making such a decision? It's beyond your competence in both expertise and responsibility! You need to synchronize with management at HQ first!" Mamta protested. "Oh yes, I *can* do it. And I *will* do it. I take the risk." (PDI/3) Frank replied. "It's now 4:30 a.m. in Germany.

We need to make a decision *right now*. Your team will need some time to have it all up and running. The key super users have been travelling tens of thousands of miles over the weekend and will switch on their machines at HQ in less than four hours from now. If the screen remains black *this* will be a disaster. The only disadvantage of option A is that the key users will have to enter some master data. This is not a constraint. We can even sell this as an opportunity to gain some routine and practice."

All left the office, relieved not to be responsible for what was going to go on during the day. Only Sharad returned: "Are you crazy? Why did you accept the responsibility for this decision? Others have made mistakes, not you! If now something happens it will fall onto your toes." (PDI/-)

"Well, at 4:30 a.m. Hamburg time I was the only officer at the bridge. Someone had to make the decision to steer around the iceberg immediately, right? They could fire me for that, but they won't, that's for sure. Would you like to bet a hundred rupees against me?"

"I would easily make some money, but loose a friend." Sharad replied and left.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	2	2
MAS	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2

Comment: The criticality of the problem required all managers be present (IDV). None was willing to take the responsibility for the decision, and everyone was relieved someone else would take it on his shoulders. This fear of being held responsible and sanctioned is typically high in India, as high power distance suggests (PDI). Working without direct direction from a superior isn't comfortable for people. Moreover, German management would not punish anyone for making a decision that had to be made under time pressure. This applies especially when all options have been carefully evaluated beforehand. And finally, it was a risk evaluation:

what was the worst thing that could happen and had to be avoided under any circumstances (UAI)?

The interesting and frequent combination of PDI and IDV in India could be observed: no individual wanted to make the decision, but the group stayed together as a whole and was waiting for someone to decide. Since Mamta, the formal leader of the team was reluctant to decide without prior synchronization with customer management, the group was paralyzed. Although the options of technology were clear and the team could evaluate them, it lacked willingness to make immediate decisions. One way out of this dilemma was to involve Frank.

Frank was fully aware that a decision needed to be made immediately (MAS). It might further be assumed that the entire management team did not come to Frank's office with the expectation to come to such an immediate decision. More probably, it might be assumed that it was actually a side strategy to proactively mitigate the noise, which would arise in case of late delivery.

Another observation in regard to this particular case is that it addressed a dilemma in liaison management: the effectiveness of applied tools and techniques. While workshops and presentations come with the danger of *not sustainably* implementing changes, such rare occasions to lead-by-example come with the possibility to strongly induce changes in attitudes in the long-term (leading by example). It provided the management team with encouragement to make well-reasoned decisions themselves (which was an issue the German side occasionally had complained about).

Ironically, uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and ART did not materialize in expected ways, if at all. Usually, low-UAI supports the search for pragmatic solutions in chaotic and unexpected situations (ART) while high-UAI values suggest the prevalence of reluctance to make decisions based upon grounds that have not been carefully examined. This situation would have suggested for the Indian team to come to a solution while the German side would have been paralyzed and afraid to make decisions on shaky grounds under time pressure. It further indicates that the

traction of otherwise strong cultural dimensions, such as uncertainty avoidance (UAI), may decrease or vary depending on factors of the actual situation, or may in fact be superseded by other dimensions (or a combination of them), or even that other unknown factors apply.

4.14 Values, Beliefs, Unfreezing and Behavior Consistency

(28) After a while Frank had collected enough observations to discuss them in a workshop with all relevant stakeholders. He neutrally and politely presented the observations to the assembled team, but he wasn't sure about the underlying determinants of observed behavior and therefore wanted to go deeper to the roots. And he wanted the Indian colleagues to buy in. This required grasping the typical ways of thinking of the Indian colleagues and the free sharing of their perspectives on the observations made. Of course, it required some minimum of openness in an emotionally secured environment, but his former focus on building up trustworthy relationships (IDV/2) (TRU/2) had ripened the first fruits and had laid the grounds for freely sharing thoughts. His only concern was whether the presence of senior management might prevent the attendants from speaking freely (PDI/2).

He had observed an occasional inconsistency, which applies not only to India, but also to Germany: some people change their behavior, style, and sayings depending on *who else* is present (IDV/-) (PDI/-). It made a huge difference sometimes whether things were discussed in private or whether colleagues or even senior management were in the room. Frank was eager to learn more about this phenomenon. In order to unfreeze the atmosphere, he started the workshop with a joke on Japanese behavior (IVR/2). He was not sure whether he would dare doing so in a German environment, where humor too easily might be lost at the cost of seriousness. Anyway, here he was confident it would help in relaxing the situation. Germans are not exactly known for their humor ("one of the thinnest books on earth is about German humor; the other one is about British cooking"), but it would help increasing the personal sympathy level (IDV/-). Anyway, there was some suspense in the room; everyone wondered who this Liaison Manager was and what his mission would be.

"One of my professors from Cornell University once gave a speech in Tokyo. The speech was translated simultaneously into Japanese. The attendants were listening closely and concentrated in the

disciplined way you would expect from that environment. Obviously, the translator did a great job. Therefore, my professor decided to make a joke after a while and wait for the reaction. The attendants were laughing loudly and passionately, holding their bellies, very much to the delight of the professor. After the speech, my professor went to the translator, asking him how he had made it. Translating jokes simultaneously is not an easy job! The Japanese translator's face went red and he looked at his finger tips: "Well, all I said was "American professor is making a joke! Please laugh… wait a moment… laugh *now*!"

The Indians wholeheartedly laughed at this joke and would come back to it very often in the future.

"Now, why was I starting this session with a joke? I did so for two purposes: first, to relax. Second: if we can laugh about the same joke, we must have something in common, right?" He continued in a similar and partly self-ironical (IVR/-) way by identifying the cultural differences of both parties.

Frank did not mention the third reason: to build up further personal relationships by increasing the sympathy level (IDV/-) (TRU/-).

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
IDV	1	2	2
IVR	1	2	2
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: There are more lessons in this example than one might expect at first sight. First, if people can laugh together about a joke, they must have something in common, in particular common values and perspectives on which relationships can be built, despite of all the cultural differences that might exist. Second, storytelling and metaphors are appropriate tools particularly in India. Third, there is nothing bad about using humor in India (IVR). Fourth, it demonstrates alternate paths to approach Germans beyond formality (PDI) and their stiffness (UAI). And fifth, Germans can show some relaxed self-irony without hurting their standing. It

will increase their sympathy level (IDV), making them even more approachable for the Indians (TRU). Consistently, Germans are encouraged to use humor and self-irony. This might be of concern for them, but the danger of over-excess will hardly materialize, having the self-constraining German mindset (IVR) in mind.

In total, there are many more overlaps with regard to values than expected, although the first impression indicates that both cultures are "hard-wired" differently. The further course of the workshop will support this observation:

(29) Another statement made by Frank turned out to effectively impress and touch the attendants: the issue of arrogance. Frank knew almost for sure that many attendees would consider typical German behavior as arrogant: they hardly smiled, were less interested about warming up about personal things (IDV/2), were often distant but came to the point issues immediately (COM/2), always exhibited strong opinions not worth challenging because they already had thought it through (UAI/2) while ignoring concerns of Indian colleagues; generally they were in sending mode rather than open to receiving messages, and much more.

Needless to say, their self-perception was totally different. Anyway, it was time for an ice breaker. Having built up trust (TRU/1) with some participants already, he just asked the frank question: "I guess most of you consider Germans to be arrogant, right?" The answer was: silence. Such a direct response had hardly been heard before (COM/-) (EVA/2). Frank continued: "If I now told you that when you were to say frankly to a German colleague: "You are simply arrogant!" he would be personally and deeply injured, would you be surprised? They might be actually arrogant, and much in their behavior points in that direction, fair. But this arrogance is not intended it's just the way they act. It's not the way they want to appear to others. Arrogance is not an appreciated trait in Germany. In opposite, arrogant colleagues are more or less rejected!"

Manu raised his voice first: "That is really interesting; I have to admit that I have never seen it *that* way." And the discussion continued openly (IDV/-).

This made Frank more than glad: if he could manage to ask such a question and start an open discussion it meant that he had started building up trustworthy relationships (TRU/-) and had become part of the team (IDV/-). He was accepted. *That* was an achievement and a prerequisite for his further tasks to come.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	2	2
UAI	1	2	2
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	1	1

Comment: Universalists (UVP, a dimension which unfortunately did not survive the consistency check) might be seduced to say that business is business, and there is no point in increasing the sympathy level in relations. It is simply not required, because everyone should know where his/her obligations are. This position appears to be debatable in any environment. The quality of relationships has a direct impact on communication and, in particular, how people solve dilemmas. This applies more in particularist environments (IDV), of course.

Above part of the case contains an experiment: how would Indian colleagues react to a direct, sharp, explicitly expressed, negative and delicate message (COM, EVA)? It is not a surprise that Manu reacted first; he was one of the most respected senior managers (PDI) with sound experience in dealing with Germans.

To contradict a misunderstanding occasionally heard of: a low-context Westerner and a high-context Indian can actually communicate in very direct ways and discuss delicate issues provided that PDI, TRU and IDV circumstances permit.

(30) After discussing another round of questions to enlighten the space of cultural *differences* ("What is considered the biggest crime in Germany, France, USA, UK, India…?"), Frank could finally come to another special area of interest:

"I feel there is something more in common. Just another question: to whom would you pay the most respect, if you looked around at your colleagues and friends? To be more concise: which would be the personal attributes and traits you would be looking for? What do you think makes working with certain people more valuable and enriching than with others?"

The majority of answers showed a clear tendency: the colleagues with the soundest knowledge base enjoyed the most respect as opposed to those that achieved the highest income. Highest respect was attributed to those colleagues to whom you could ask anything whenever you had a problem; and who give friendly and sound advice, even in a complex environment where others would have problems to navigate. Respect was also paid to those who had gained influence and power by climbing up in the hierarchy, but only as far as achievement and promotion were justified by the above-mentioned traits. Formal comprehensive education was also highly valued (AVA/2). Affiliation to a certain caste was neglected (maybe for reasons of political correctness, as Frank immediately assumed).

Frank received broad commitment when he summarized the discussion: "Indians and Germans have some values in common: both strongly appreciate intellectual power. We both respect most the colleagues with such traits."

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
AVA	1	2	2

Comment: Both cultures value intellectual power extremely high, in contrast to other cultures, e.g., Anglo-American cultures where, presumably, income is highly valued. Frank had observed before that only by mentioning he had a lecturing assignment at a business school in Paris had suddenly, significantly, and sustainably increased his reputation and credibility. Gurus reside

in India for a purpose. Another interesting point is that only AVA materializes immediately when analyzing the above part of the case. It required some moderation to dig deeper for additional appreciation-determining factors:

(31) Frank continued to provide examples of management behavior he had witnessed in his former career:

"Upon request of my personal senior mentor, Karel, who was by then CEO of the IT system subsidiary of a large German retail bank, I was once giving a presentation about a new technology (BPM) to his team. It went perfectly fine; the discussion was controversial, but fruitful. I made two observations: (a) when Karel came into the room, just to put weight on the importance of the issue, those which were formerly heavily criticizing the new technology immediately fell silent, and (b) when I returned for a de-briefing two weeks later, some of the participants had switched sides, but could not provide reasoning for such.

How do you feel about people who (a) change their opinion depending who is present, and (b) change their opinion too opportunistically over time?"

Again it was Manu who took the lead. Mamta was present with a skeptical face, which did not encourage operative managers to raise their voices too clearly. Frank panicked a second whether he had been going too far by breaking protocol (PDI/1). However, Manu's explanations calmed him: "Well, both situational opportunistic behavior as well as well as opportunism over time are not appreciated and leaves a mark on any person exhibiting such. But it really depends on the context, the colleagues (IDV/1), and on the personality of your boss (PDI/-). The more senior a manager becomes, the more he is expected to show what he stands for (SVD/3). Having an opinion one day and another one the very next day is not consistent. Contradicting our superior may happen, of course. But not in public, and for sure not in presence of a customer (PDI/3). If you are part of the team you can freely share your ideas as long as you don't interfere with the terrain of others. But one thing is clear. The final decision is made by Mamta. Better get out of her way in case she has another opinion. Full stop."

Frank had to swallow all this. It was not at all what he had expected. All of Manu's sayings could have been stated by any comparable Western manager. Later that evening the insight would ripen that it was all less about the formal power distance and more about being 'in' or 'out', or an 'embedded' and 'accepted' part of the team, or not (IDV/3). If you were not, you better keep silent. But if you were in, you enjoyed surprising privileges hardly visible to outsiders.

Another thought came to Frank's mind: "Mamta will always be Mamta, same as Manu. This applies independent of the situation, be it in various business roles or in private. I doubt this applies to Germans to the same extent." (SVD/-)

And another item which was recently reported to him came up: "One of the bad things with the Germans that Indians complain about is that they return home to Hamburg just to talk (partly) negatively about their recent experience — instead of doing it immediately onsite. Better do not tell Indians what consistency of character is all about; they don't need *that* lecture." (SVD/-)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
PDI	1	1	1
IDV	1	3	3
IDV	1	1	1
SVD	1	3	3

Comment: While power distance (PDI) materializes in many transparent and obvious ways, collectivism (IDV) tends to materialize less visibly, but sometimes with the same power. In the above case IDV almost supersedes PDI. It is therein fundamental for the configuration of group behavior and influences its dynamics. When applying cultural analysis measures, it makes a substantial difference whether the focus of the investigation is *within or across* groups. Another suggested conclusion is that predictions drawn from cultural analysis apply the lesser the higher individuals are located in the hierarchy of the organization.

Personal consistency is a virtue strongly appreciated in both cultures, in India and in Germany: the "say what you do — and do what you say" principle applies. People value others, in particular managers, by comparing words and actions. The smaller the gap, the more consistent the person appears and the more respect is paid to that person. Closely related to that, the concepts of personal consistency in regard to time and consistency in regard to situations apply. Consistency in regard to time means that a certain person does not easily change in his opinion and basic convictions over time. His/her reflections on a given issue are deep and well-reasoned. Changing convictions too easily would mean his/her thoughts have not been that profound and therefore compromise their character and reputation.

Consistency in regard to situations incorporates similar mechanisms, but is now associated to the specific circumstances of a given situation. If a person stands for his/her opinion in content and style, independent of others, for example superiors who are present, this exhibits consistency.

A shallow stereotype approach would suggest that high-PDI Indians change their behavior to a major extent whenever superiors are present. Manu's elaborations re-calibrate this expectation. Instead of obedience, the often-observed consistency in character becomes transparent (SVD), independent of any situation or time-based context. Interestingly, this observation couldn't be explained more plausibly by any other dimension than SVD.

4.15 Relationship Building and Bonding

(32) When Frank had been in Delhi for a while, he came to two insights: first, if liaison management is your job, there is no point in sitting in your office waiting for customers like a physician. Instead, Frank had decided to position himself as an internal service provider, offering his services to his internal customers. These were, on the German side, release managers, architects, business analysts and, of course, project management. In brief all those whose obligations would require close

collaboration with the Indian colleagues. He focused on those colleagues, who reportedly had experienced conflicts before.

There is no such thing as isolated liaison management alone; it has to be embedded in the overall context – and it has to provide visible value. It has to circle around the issues that his colleagues had. Maybe, he could offer his advice and assistance, or just actively following difficult or orphaned tasks. His professional background in business analysis, requirements management, change management, contract and negotiation management, and project management would increase his credibility. And, even as important, he offered his services to the Indian colleagues as well.

Another insight was that trust building happens in a similar way in both cultures. Not only do both share many common values, but they also share some means to gain trust, including humor and self-irony (IVR/2). Attending official meetings was one thing, but acting in the informal background was another, maybe even a more effective one. In particular, the smoker's breaks on the fire stairways turned out to be of high value in sending and receiving messages (IDV/2) (TRU/2). "Forget about politically correct reflections on the value of informal water dispenser or coffee percolator chats that you may find in management literature", he reflected. "If you want to be connected and understand how an organization works, the smoker's corner is the place to be. This is where early warning signs surface and information as a currency is traded. Even in case I wanted, I couldn't stop smoking as long as I'll be here."

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
IDV	1	2	2
IVR	1	2	2
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: Concerning the important role of trust and relationship building (IDV) (TRU), the bad habit of smoking is not a bad start. You share secrets with companions, they pay back the favor by sharing theirs, and both end up relying on the other's side unspoken promise and

obligation to keep them for private and wary use only; and it generates an atmosphere of trust by protecting each other. This is how loyalty evolves even across cultural boundaries. Misusing inside information is the worst thing to do and could be punished with a ruined relationship (IDV); it is less about gossip, but more about sending and receiving background information.

After a while, it goes even beyond that. One learns about the strengths and weaknesses of the counterpart, and the mistakes he formerly made. One even learns that, provided the trust base already allows, people freely admit the mistakes they made in the past and what they would do differently in the future. So you learn about their 'hidden corpses in the basement'. And they learn about yours. The third stage starts when you learn of a problem a colleague has; you help out by contributing to solving it using some informal paths, and the colleague happily accepts (IDV) (TRU). The fourth stage then is that you have, sooner or later, a history of mistakes you made together. To have 'common corpses hidden in the basement' is a sustainable foundation for a long-lasting and trustworthy relationship.

All of the former actually happened during the fieldwork. The effects were exploited to the best of the trusted participants – and to the best of the project. The question at hand is whether such fraternizing attitudes would be considered appropriate in a purist universalistic environment. Most probably they would not. The UVP dimension fails to pass the consistency check because *particularism* can widely be derived back to the IDV dimension. The dilemma is that such reasoning in regard to *universalism* leaves some unanswered questions: it might be reasonable that (German) universalism might find its roots in UAI, but why then are there cultures which exhibit low UAI and high universalism (e.g., USA)? Anyway, in regard to Indian vs. German relationships, only minor substantial differences in UVP-originated effects could be observed.

In regard to Meyer's TRU dimension, there might be differences between both cultures, but it is suggested that relationship-based trust supersedes task-based trust in the long term when it comes to German-Indo collaboration.

4.16 Sustainably ruined Relationships

(33) Rainer was upset. He and Sunil had become friends over the course of the project. Not only had they had worked together with great results, but they had also often met on evenings with both families. Now it was all over, and Rainer had no idea what had happened. For no obvious reason, Sunil had turned his back to Rainer and rejected any attempt to approach him.

"What has happened before?" Frank wanted to know. "I really have no idea. It's all since the presentation when he delivered his concept four weeks ago. Sunil had worked on it for many weeks and I had given much advice to him. In particular, I had warned him not to include that particular part on inheritance. But he incorporated it. Consistently, I had to challenge him during that presentation. It simply didn't fit with corporate prescriptions."

"Does this mean you cornered him *during* the presentation?" Frank asked. "Actually, yes (COM/2) (EVA/3) (PDI/2) (IDV/2). I thought it would be better I would do it instead of letting him run into the knives of HQ architects and QA. And again, I had warned him severely before. But he wouldn't listen and continue on his path. He can sometimes be such a blockhead and totally resisting to any advice!"

"Was management present?" Frank dug deeper. "Well, yes, of course. His management and mine as well. And his entire team." Rainer replied (SVD/3). "I've seen such behavioral changes before, but I can only partly explain them with traditional cultural dimensions (PDI/-) (IDV/-). Let me think of it" Frank said and left.

Against all hope and attempts, Frank could not do his share to repair this spoiled relationship, unfortunately. Sunil refused even to talk about the issue. The bad relationship could never be repaired.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
IDV	1	2	2
SVD	1	3	3
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	3	3

Comment: The influence of PDI and IDV are contradictory in this very particular case. On one hand, one might assume that high power distance (PDI) and collectivism (IDV) would have caused some inclination for Sunil to return to a balanced friendly relationship. On the other hand, they did their share to amplify the negative effects of Rainer's attitude: challenging Sunil while management and the team were present was inappropriate and hurt any rule of group harmony and politeness. However, PDI and IDV could only partly explain the radicalness and fierce determination of Sunil to terminate this friendship. Their negative impact on Sunil was even superseded by his sustainably hurt pride (SVD), which made it impossible for him to understand that Rainer was attacking the issue but not his personality.

Side remark: The author witnessed such difficult-to-explain reaction of Indian personalities several times in other contexts as well, and it always came with an extraordinarily high damage potential. In all these cases, SVD provided the most plausible immediate explanation.

4.17 Power Distance: Amazing or Disturbing?

(34) One morning, Frank called the reception desk of the hotel: "When Mr. Kai and Mrs. Tracey leave the hotel, I want to know, please." Frank waited for a while, but no call from the desk came. He was getting nervous, because there was an important meeting scheduled for that morning, and he didn't want to miss the briefing during the common taxi ride. Finally, his phone rang: "Mr. Frank, I just wanted to let you that Mrs. Tracey and Mr. Kai have just left the hotel." (PDI/3)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3

Comment: The two-year presence in Delhi brought up many anecdotes like this. It's not only amusing for Westerners, it's actually symptomatic for the all-prevalent power distance (PDI) in Indian society and business. The lady at the front desk assumed Frank being of importance,

because he was welcoming senior management regularly. In her perception, Frank was controlling whether and by when 'his' people would go to work. But all he wanted was to share the same taxi. It might be only an anecdote, but it gains substantial relevance if one multiplies it with one hundred Indians working with one hundred Germans. If one adds this up, the high power distance creates a high barrier to collaboration, as the remainder will show.

(35) Arriving late at the office, he met Kai: "Frank, I have to tell you something funny. Guess what just happened! I was walking around the architecture office to greet some colleagues. I passed by the space of Sunil, the young architect. When greeting him I saw a diagram on his disk and asked: "Hey, what is this?" The poor guy was embarrassed and panicked and just said: "If you don't like it, I can remove it!" (PDI/3) (IDV/2) (TRU/1)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	2	2
TRU	1	1	1

Comment: This is another event that exhibits the high power distance (PDI). By instinct, Sunil immediately withdrew his diagram. The difference of formal standing in the hierarchy amplified his reaction: he was just a simple architect, now suddenly faced with an, (a) foreign, (b) European, (c) customer representative who, (d) was from a couple of levels higher in the hierarchy. Sunil could never speak freely with Kai. In contrast, it put him in a very awkward position. Without his management being present he could not be sure about which statements he was entitled to give (PDI and IDV). Any mistake, or individual deviation from group consensus, would immediately fall back on him. When navigating in high power distant countries, mixed with high collectivism indexes (IDV), a Western person will embarrass their counterparts in the case that they do not come from the same hierarchy level. It is strictly

mandatory to obey protocol. Kai would not have heard anything of relevance or gained new insights from Sunil anyway. Not only do PDI and IDV prevent that, TRU contributes its share as well. There is no established relationship between Sunil and Kai; consistently there is no trust base. To make things worse, Indian management does not appreciate such approaches without prior consent. Again, any German, or Westerner, is strongly advised to obey protocol.

While the widely observable differences in PDI apply in general in an Indian environment, they not necessarily surface in individual cases. However, an important lesson that can be drawn is that apparently occurrences of PDI are directly linked to the level an individual inhabits in the hierarchy of the organization and the maturity of the relationship (IDV). In sum, differences in PDI are supposed to come into effect rather on the operational level and within group dynamics than during management encounters.

4.18 Protocol and Hidden Messages

(36) Things were unfolding fine and Frank was glad that some major obstacles in collaboration had vanished. Some had disappeared by his mere presence, and others had disappeared by his active involvement. It was a good time to pay back the friendliness of his Indian colleagues by inviting them to some kind of incentive event. He had organized an evening at the bowling center some months ago, and his colleagues were referring to it again and again. “Let’s do it again”, he thought. He had learned that the first step for such an invitation would be to ask management for permission (PDI/2). He had to obey protocol, and it would not be appreciated to interfere with it by simply inviting his peers without previous consent. However, he assumed this to be an easy job. Everyone would be happy and there were no severe conflicts in and across the teams by that time; political noise was low. He went to the CEO’s office: “Hi Mamta, things are up and running and we have mastered some important issues over the last weeks. Now it’s relatively calm and I would like to invite the team to another bowling evening as I did two months ago. Is this fine with you?” To his surprise, he felt without it being openly stated that Mamta was not as enthusiastic as he expected (COM/2). It was not

a big deal, so why didn't she simply agree? Maybe, she was busy with other work on her mind, he thought. "This is a great idea. Let me check (IDV/2) (PDI/2) and I'll come back to you very soon." (EVA/2), Mamta replied.

This left Frank alone wondering what would have to be checked by the fully empowered CEO of the business just to answer such a simple question.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	2	2	4
IDV	1	2	2
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2

Comment: Frank was aware he had to obey protocol (PDI) even in regard to presumably minor issues – but he had forgotten the fact that this applied to Mamta as well. Let alone for courtesy reasons she would have to discuss and agree with her peer group, to which some selected members of her management team belonged (IDV). Although she was considered as providing strong leadership (PDI) and without doubt being in the position to make such a decision, it was important for her to agree with all parties. Most important, and Frank had not considered this, Mamta was still reporting to the major shareholder of the business, who often interfered with business actions (PDI). To the Western perception it appears strange that such simple decisions are subject to executive management and directors' considerations and sensitivities, but one is well advised to simply respect such positions. Indian management puts much importance on well-balanced relationships.

(37) A couple of days passed and Frank still wondered were the problem resided and whether to follow up at all. But Sharad and Manu were asking him again for the event; having some fun, good food, and a couple of drinks were a strong incentive for them, as for everyone else on earth. Frank

used the next *informal* occasion to come back to the matter. Unfortunately, Mamta was not a smoker one could occasionally meet outside the building, but a busy person. So he had to wait some time for the right moment. When meeting her on the floor he used that occasion: "Hi Mamta, what do you think about the bowling event?" Frank could immediately tell from Mamta's body language that there was a problem (COM/1). But, because he was from a low-context environment, her words were more significant to him than her gestures: "Well, weather report tells it's going to be chilly next week. I don't want my team to get sick" (EVA/2) she said and passed by.

Frank was astonished. In general, Delhi isn't exactly known for its chilly weather. Temperatures might climb up to almost 50° Celsius, but would hardly fall below 15° Celsius in the winter.

Kai couldn't stop feeling amused when he learned about this. "Frank, you have been here for quite a while now. You should have known this was a clear 'no' already the first time (COM/-) (EVA/-). Mamta herself is now thinking: "Maybe Frank is a nice guy, but why didn't he immediately get the message? I had already clearly told him! Why did he ask again?" (IDV/2) (TRU/2) (PDI/2)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	2	2
IDV	1	2	2
COM	1	1	1
EVA	1	2	2
TRU	1	2	2

Comment: Frank should have understood immediately. Whenever there is, in Western ears, a strange answer to a simple question this means 'no'. Once more, and as elaborated in separate sections of the field study, Westerners from low context environments too easily overhear signs of concern or what is considered a clear 'no' in Indian or Asian minds. This comes very much to the frustration and annoyance of Indians, because, against their nature, they finally have to send explicit messages that are considered inappropriate or impolite in their home environment (COM) (EVA). Although being sensitive and carefully obeying protocol, Frank should have

understood Mamta right from the beginning: she simply did not want this event to happen. It later turned out it was the owner of the business who had interfered for reasons that require a closer analysis, which is to follow.

In contrast to persons from highly individualistic cultural environments (IDV), Indians are much more embedded in a system of relationships and consistently think in such intertwined terms. In case an outsider who does not really belong to the in-group is attempting to enter this balanced system of formal and informal relationships this is instinctively perceived with skepticism. Establishing informal lines of relationships and information flows (and personal bonding (TRU)) too easily disturbs established, fine-balanced and trusted lines. In addition, high power distance (PDI) comes with the tendency to jealously protect areas of responsibility and authority. In such an environment, providing reasoning is less seen as being mandatory – as it is in low-PDI environments. Adding an out-group candidate to the system comes with the danger of biasing or giving away control and competencies. In brief, uncontrolled bonding beyond established group affiliation awakens concerns in management. Instinctively, any informal circumvention or disturbance of traditional reporting lines is rejected.

In addition, it might be appropriate to assume that in highly collectivistic environments (IDV) information is valued and applied differently. Having access to information defines insiders in all organizations worldwide, but it cannot be of surprise that in strictly formal (PDI) and relationship-based collectivistic environments (IDV) the question of who has access to information (and who has not) has a different value, presumably higher, than it does in low power distance and individualistic organizations where information is shared more freely. Sharing and controlling information is used in different ways in both cultures. The observation from the field study is that Indian management and individuals have a much more concise awareness and memory of which information has been shared with whom, and when (PDI). Briefly, information is used as a selective means of leadership, but also symptomatic of group

affiliation. Having access to information is a characteristic common of a certain group, and defines the distinction of in-group members and outsiders.

Frank might be a welcomed and trustworthy partner, but he is still representing the customer and considered not to be a part of the internal management in-group. His uncontrolled access to information by establishing informal lines would disturb the balanced system and would be interpreted as potentially undermining leadership mechanisms.

The insight that "knowledge is power" (Francis Bacon) applies in Western organizations as well, and information, and the privilege of having access to it, is also applied for leadership purposes, of course. There is, probably, no difference in principle but only a gradual one, as elaborated above.

Some years after Frank had left the Delhi project, he attended a presentation on Asian cultures. He immediately regretted that this presentation came too late for his work. It would have helped in understanding India, and he could confirm every single part of what was reported:

The speaker (H. Buchmann) had spent many years in negotiating contracts in Far Eastern countries. He provided the following example of a Westerner inviting his Asian counterpart: "Now that we have been working together for a couple of weeks, I would be honored if I could invite you and your wife to dinner next Friday." The careful timid, polite and humble answer was: "I'm honored, many thanks, dinner on Thursday, yes, I'm happy to accept, with great pleasure."

The speaker commented: Far Easterners repeat what they confirm to. It is important to realize what they say and, *more important*, don't say, and consistently don't confirm to. Translated into low-context (COM/-) (EVA/-) speak, the reply meant: "Many thanks for your invitation, I'm happy to accept; but not for next Friday, and, for sure, not with my wife." The irritating, confusing, if not embarrassing, consequences, which might arise in case these small indirect signs are ignored, are obvious.

4.19 German Stiffness and Resistance to Change

(38) Frank was very happy with how some things had unfolded. In particular his work with Sharad had proven to deliver excellent results. This was only possible because Sharad had been open to advice and willing to try new paths. Frank wondered whether his German colleagues would be as flexible as well. Without having thought it out by that time, his perception by then was that high power distance created the most severe, most visible, and most frequent constraints for his Indian colleagues (PDI/3). In regard to the Germans, their high uncertainty avoidance (UAI/3) seemed to have the deepest and most cementing and constraining impact. New ideas were too easily blocked and rejected — unless they came from the German colleagues themselves. The "not-invented-here-syndrome" was prevalent. Frank had observed already several times a deeply rooted belief and conviction that they could do it all and everything best by themselves, provided that they had enough time for thinking and getting used to it beforehand (ART/2) repetitively. Anyway, short-term changes, or spontaneous ideas, were hardly welcomed.

"Without doubt", he thought, "this attitude might be even partly justified, particularly when it came to structure and in-depth analysis, but when it came to chaos or the need for flexible responses, German attributes too easily come into their disadvantage."

Interestingly, there was a gap between the inside perception of the Germans and how they were seen from the outside. Internally, they often openly debated about the best approach to a problem, and even sometimes admitted uncertainty as how to proceed. They considered themselves open-minded although only experience-based, well-prepared, and bold contributions were accepted to this inside discussion. Everyone had to defend his ideas, which were subject to open attacks (on the issue, not the person) (SVD/1). However, from the outside their appearance was perceived as determined and dominating for whatever reason, often overrunning their counterparts (MAS/1) (COM/2) (EVA/2) with whom they wanted to discuss, as Frank had learned from background chats with his Indian colleagues. When confronted with this view, Germans were honestly surprised, not intending to appear dominating or even arrogant. "Maybe, many of these observations are rooted in the strictly

deductive German approach to present and follow complex theoretical methodologies after vast preparation" (PER/2), Frank thought. "This tends to take all energy out of counterparts who are invited to discuss with Germans. But what can you do?"

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
MAS	1	1	1
UAI	1	3	3
SVD	1	1	1
ART	1	2	2
COM	1	2	2
EVA	1	2	2
PER	1	2	2

Comment: As discussed in various parts of the field study analysis, high uncertainty avoidance (UAI) supports the desire for intense planning, structure and preparation. In conjunction with little power distance (PDI), high individualism with an authorized area of authority to make immediate decisions (IDV) and the desire to achieve committed results (MAS) this forms a typical German pattern that resides at the root of many cultural conflicts. Their deductive approach (PER) comes with the danger of their counterparts, losing attention. Problems are put on the table frankly (COM, EVA). And finally, strict linear reasoning (ART) forbids parallel chaotic information processing and any such attempt would be rejected. Each of these dimensions comes to effect separately, but in meetings they usually apply in combination with each other.

The fundamental challenge for other cultures, including Indians, when dealing with German culture is that the combination of the above dimensions suggests that decisions are, to a certain extent, actually made *beforehand*. Once ready for interaction, Germans are well prepared and

pre-emptying; it is then challenging to contradict, or even slightly change the once already taken course. This German stiffness is too easily confused with a presumably high power distance.

Potential conflicts are easily amplified by the opposite Indian dimension score value and the idiosyncratic mix of effective cultural dimensions. As a result, many encounters between both parties are far from being dynamic, open-minded, and well balanced for the best of the project. The Indian part too easily finds itself in a rather defensive position, while the German part ironically was not aware of its dominating manners.

It is important to understand that above drivers all too easily lead to a pre-emptive German discussion attitude: all goals and reasoning have been clearly defined, all concerns have been evaluated, all options have been discussed, and management backing has been assured. Each disturbance to this carefully prepared package must be conceived as potentially threatening and will be rejected. From this perspective it is not only per se that Germans generally resist any kind of change (UAI), but it also suggests that German stiffness and inflexibility is the result of culturally driven internal process dynamics. This assumption is supported by the observation that Germans intuitively reject the allegation that they are resisting change. In their self-understanding they are willing to adapt to changing circumstances, but only as far as such reasoning for change is the result of a carefully conducted evaluation process. However, invariably they admit that spontaneous, well-reasoned, appropriate, and opportunistic changes to the course leave them helpless, and they react by instinct by rejecting the initiative.

4.20 Particular Indian Challenges

4.20.1 Quality: Fixing the Machine

(39) “You Germans have a misleading understanding of how systems are assembled and how quality is achieved at the end.” Dr. No said during one of innumerable cigarette breaks. Dr. No was a highly respected senior in the Indian organization. His word had influence. He was experienced in dealing

with Europeans and Germans in particular. His expertise and character allowed him to directly mention his strong opinion clearly in very unusual and unexpected ways for Indians. Quite untypical for German-Indian collaboration, the Germans often found themselves in the position of defending their requirements towards Dr. No who was eager to examine, decompose, and cannibalize them piece-by-piece with increasing joy and satisfaction. He was respected by professionals, however even Germans were afraid of his sharp judgements. His nickname was both well-deserved and program.

Dr. No mentioned this subject because most recently concerns about quality had evaporated. He continued: “Putting a system together is a little like assembling a complex engine. You have various parts that come together for the first time. Now, they suddenly have to fit. But it is quite normal that they don’t. There is much re-adjusting and fixing work to be done over some time. At the beginning, the engine will not start, but maybe spit and stutter, evaporate steam from all ends, and make strange noises. Then the engineers will check for the reasons and rework all the details that don’t fit. After that it will be tested again, and if results are not satisfying, the engineers will repeat the cycle. After several iterations, and after some time that requires patience, all will be fine and running smoothly. All concerns and criticism will vanish. This is simply the way it normally is, and none will later remember the noise once heard and regret the lack of confidence they once had.” (PDI/3)

A quote of the former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer came to Franks mind: “The stress of today is the good old time of tomorrow.”

However, Frank left Dr. No’s message unchallenged for the moment, but thought to himself: “Well, the German maintenance and support people will most probably remember him for a very long time. And the quality assurance people who conduct testing and code inspections will remember as well, not to speak about the architects who will go postal when looking at the result and standards potentially not obeyed. This too much tastes like spontaneous fixing and somehow making it happen, leaving ‘spaghetti’ code behind. The metaphor of the spitting engine contradicts everything I have learned about systems development — and about quality. Quality should be built in right from the beginning, according to pre-defined standards (UAI/3). How should I transfer this message to

management? It seemed to be a delicate piece of information, if it turned out to be the general philosophy regarding quality. At least, we seem to have arrived at the source of a problem, which is influenced by an interesting mix of underlying cultural factors." (IDV/2) (TRU/1) (ART/1) (SVD/1)

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3
IDV	1	2	2
UAI	1	3	3
SVD	1	1	1
ART	1	1	1
TRU	1	1	1

Comment: It might appear surprising to relate the above sayings immediately and intensely to PDI. This requires further explanation. The reasons are found in the widespread Indian philosophy of hierarchical organization and work design: division of work is the rule and not the exception. Jobs are usually organized around tasks, not around results. As a consequence, work results have to be synchronized by separate subsequent processes. In this context, the metaphor which Dr. No presented makes sense: workers work separately and isolated, designers do coding, testers do testing, and their components do not necessarily fit together right from the beginning although each one incorporates his/her great expertise in their distinctive area. As a consequence, the responsibility for a result's outcome is easily shifted to a later third party who will have to separately check and assure quality.

In contrast to this, high UAI might contribute to the German inclination to plan for and provide immediate quality before handing outcomes over to someone else. Not only is it Germans who are obsessed about quality, of course. Other nations base their global competitiveness on quality as well.

Remark 1: It might be interesting to examine whether, and to which extent striving for quality relates to cultural dimensions. It might also be valuable to examine whether such national strengths are developed deliberately or derive from within as an exhibition of deeply rooted values. Unfortunately, this would go far beyond the range of this dissertation (potential research question).

Remark 2: If one assumes that countries such as Germany, Sweden, Japan, South Korea, The Netherlands, and Switzerland exhibit a particular focus on quality, data suggests that many of these cultures exhibit low-PDI scores, with the exception of Japan and South Korea. In contrast, a first glance at UAI scores does not suggest any correlation between quality-orientation and uncertainty avoidance (potential research question).

Within the scope of this dissertation, one assumption is suggested: the German aspiration for quality is, at least widely rooted in its high uncertainty avoidance index (UAI). The assumption is that Germans typically try to compensate for uncertainty by emphasizing structure, planning, and quality right from the beginning.

This assumption might offer an explanation, but an incomplete one, as it is not fully effectual as Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) index scores show. Further, among the cultures ranking high on uncertainty avoidance (UAI), there are others not closely associated with a strict quality-orientation. Consistently, there must also be other factors, which determine the attitude of a nation towards quality. However, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) do not go as far as closely associating high uncertainty avoidance scores with superior planning, structure, or even quality. Instead, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) simply emphasize the *emotional* need for rules and a basic behavioral reluctance to appreciate change.

Regardless of the question of whether different cultural approaches and attitudes towards quality can be ascribed to the uncertainty avoidance dimension (UAI), the case visualizes fundamentally different perceptions of quality: It seems to be at the core of the problem, and

maybe even be in the genes of the Germans, to build in quality immediately and *right from the beginning*. This applies to every single individual in the process chain. The inherent target of strictly quality-oriented cultures is to provide results where all components can be assembled without further rework, and immediately. The entire organization is designed to follow this philosophy and supports the individual in behaving accordingly.

The idea of having the synchronization and fixing left to a third party is not only strange, but also considered inadequate and even dangerous. The expectation to provide high quality results immediately and right from the beginning is high, directly linked to the personal reputation of the individual and easily sanctioned by peers and management if not met. For these reasons, and the inherent desire to produce quality, any German will hesitate to sign-off a document or work outcome to leave his desk in case she is not sure whether quality standards are met. This makes dealing with Germans often a little stiff, and inhibits them from proceeding on fast, and it slows down decision-making, but the conviction that quality pays off at the end prevails.

Regardless of quality questions, it is valuable to point at conflicts, which potentially arise when high-UAI pre-planning and structural cultures meet pragmatic low-UAI cultures. The result is expected to be of mutual frustration on both sides: the Indians being challenged with extended planning, strict prescriptions and contingency scenarios and the Germans being annoyed by confident indifference in a rather volatile environment (ART).

Indians, of course, also value quality, but do not identify personally with quality to the same almost neurotic German extent. Their pragmatism (low-UAI) and the very particular combination of power distance (PDI) and collectivism (IDV) prevail over strictness in case of doubt. In a highly collectivistic environment actual or prospected problems are easily addressed by following informal paths (SVD) (IDV). High power distance favors the escalation of problems to management, which will attempt to also use such informal paths. Low uncertainty avoidance (UAI) offers the inclination to postpone potentially challenging but still theoretical

and intangible problems to somewhere in the future. In parallel, high particularism (IDV) favors the tendency to allow focus on exceptions rather than on rules, putting solutions via trusted relationships (TRU) (SVD) in the foreground.

Dr. No's explanations also reveal another fundamental difference in regard to how quality is understood. From his perspective, quality is achieved as soon as the system fulfills all its functions as specified. This represents a user's perspective, focusing on what is rendered and seen from the outside. The invisible inner design, code quality, and architecture are less an area of concern for him. As architects, quality assurance experts and such as code reviewers repeatedly reported, development standards and prescriptions were often and to a wide extent not obeyed over the course of this project. In a highly pragmatic environment, characterized by low uncertainty avoidance (UAI) with little awareness for the need of structure, such standards tend to be disregarded, abused, or even violated. At least, rules and conventions are not pursued with full conviction.

Remark: over the course of the project, code was repeatedly rejected by code inspectors because of unstructured design or false application of prescriptions – although the outcome itself fulfilled its formal requirements, i.e., the modules were up and running and fulfilling their purpose. But maintenance and support of such code were regarded as "a nightmare."

4.20.2 Tent Holding and Competitive Advantage: India and Division of Work

(40) Frank walked out of his hotel room to have a coffee next to the pool in the beautiful park of the hotel. There were activities going on to prepare for a celebration on the wide lawn close to the pool. A tent had been erected to protect the guests against Delhi's burning sun. Four men were obviously ordered to hold the tent poles. He watched the four men for a while and waited for an attempt to fix the poles durably to the ground, but there was no such attempt until he left for the office. He felt irritated about the four poor men standing in the heat probably for the rest of the day, but he thought

that they would earn their day's income of 100 Rupees (1.70 € by that time) to pay for the food of their families, at least. He had much time to reflect, as his taxi was late today.

Later, at the red light, his taxi was stopping close to a tractor, which had about fifty people loaded on its trailer. Thirty pairs of eyes were staring curiously and intensely down at him, half of them happily returning his greeting, half of them being bemused that a foreign businessman would consider them worth a slight nod of his head. "Where are they going?" he asked the driver. "They were probably hired for the day to work on the construction site over there", the driver replied. "What about tomorrow?" Frank wanted to know. "Who knows? They are hired only for the day, and get their money in the evening. Tomorrow will be another day. There is a market for work force down the street where employers hire them at low rates. If you plan to build a house you just can go there. If construction work is late, you can just hire the double of them", the driver replied.

Soon the taxi was stuck in one of the inevitable traffic jams. Frank had much time to study some men at work fixing potholes. What was remarkable was that one man was busy while three others were standing around him, observing what he was doing with great attention. None offered a hand, they were just silently watching.

"Please stop at the telecoms shop, I need to buy some new mobile phones for my kids at home." Simple mobile devices were ridiculously cheap in India. Frank went into the shop and looked at the product offerings; he was the only customer. Five salespeople were chatting emotionally somewhere in the back of the shop busy with themselves obviously not taking much notice of him. When he raised his hand, a sales clerk came to give advice. Frank was happy to identify three simple devices with his help. However, he had concerns about the connectivity, so the sales clerk guided him to another person for help, and left him alone. That expert confirmed all would be fine, and Frank was ready to pay. The expert re-directed him to the teller at the cashier who happily accepted the payment. When Frank asked for wrapping the devices as gifts, another person appeared to do the wrapping while the three others stood close watching him. "I just bought three simple mobile devices and encountered four people to serve me. Each of them was responsible for his particular job, and

everyone was happy to politely hand me over to the next one. None even had the idea to serve me from the beginning to the end. Did I appreciate this? Yes, people were really nice, as always. No, because I always had to adapt to the next person to appear and serve me, and I had to explain what I want repeatedly," he thought when he left the shop.

Frank arrived at the office and waited for Sharad whose taxi was late this day, too. He walked around the office observed Sharad's developers working. One was highly concentrated and watching the code on his screen, deeply reflecting. Four of his colleagues were silently standing behind him also watching the screen with great interest. This lasted for 15 minutes. None said a word. Suddenly the developer started to add code to the machine in a cascade, his hands rushing over the keyboard. Finally, the four colleagues went away; still no word had been spoken.

"What if we developed IT systems in the same way as I have witnessed several times this morning? What if we are so much attached to this traditional way of working in discrete, sharply marked-off areas of responsibility (PDI/3)? Are there underlying patterns and paradigms?" Frank asked himself. Something came back to his mind which was reported to him several times before; that he would make the acquaintance of nice and polite people, among them many profoundly educated and excellent experts in their area, each one in control in his specific domain — but that the organizational outcome would probably not correspond to the expertise of individuals.

Michael had made similar remarks: He wondered why he had met wonderful and highly educated and competent individuals, but that, at the same time, Indian *organizations* tend to have problems in providing desired results. In particular, inhaled and practiced customer orientation from the beginning to the end appeared to be an obstacle. Consistently, organizations cannot be understood as a mere assembly of great experts. There must be an inhibiting or somehow determining factor involved which explains the contradiction between the availability, and prevalence of great individual experts as well as the organizational collectivistic outcome as a whole. But ironically, the competitive advantage of having great experts at low cost inhibits modernizing processes.

When Frank returned to the hotel that evening, the four men he had observed this morning were still holding the tent poles.

Manifestations:

Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score
PDI	1	3	3

Comment: When looking back at two years in India, and when being asked where the major economic challenge of this fascinating country is rooted, there is one major obstacle that comes to mind. It is not only the caste system that prevents young potentials to unfold regardless of constraints of their social standing. Instead, it is the deeply rooted hierarchical power-distanced (PDI) thinking that materializes in organizational design. This in turn brings about substantial all-prevalent impacts, in particular segmented, strictly functional thinking. It even goes beyond that; it is the underlying paradigm of how to organize and lead. Westerners should not look at this with amusement. It is only since the mid of the 1990ies that the tayloristic philosophy and the principle of division of work were challenged in the Western hemisphere. It took another couple of years to implement the insights in order to become more efficient and customer-oriented.

The below diagram visualizes the vertical lines of reporting in a high-PDI environment versus the horizontal customer-serving processes: interfaces coming at the cost of quality, time, and result-orientation.

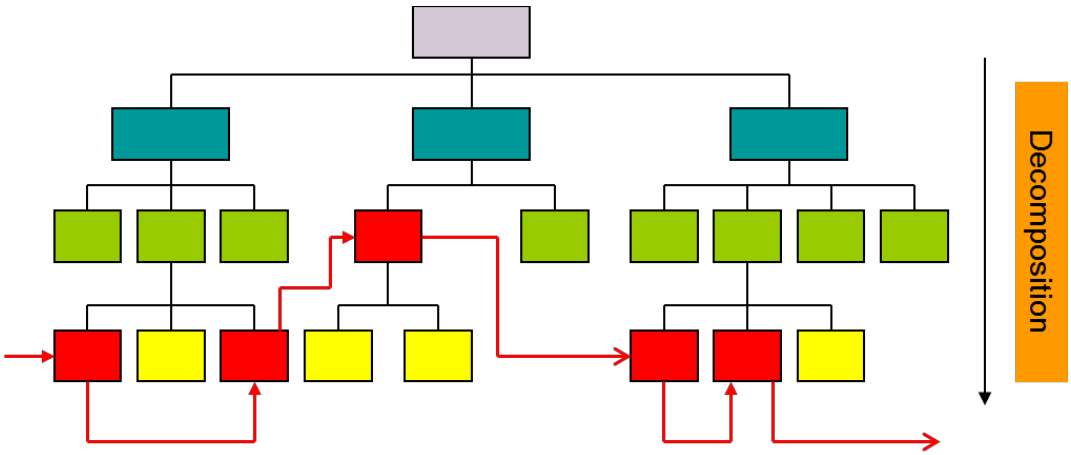


***Figure 8*: Top-down Functions and cross-functional Business Processes.**

(Source: Ralf Borchardt DBA dissertation)

5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions

"Everything has already been said– but not yet by everyone." (Karl Valentin)

5.1 Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010)

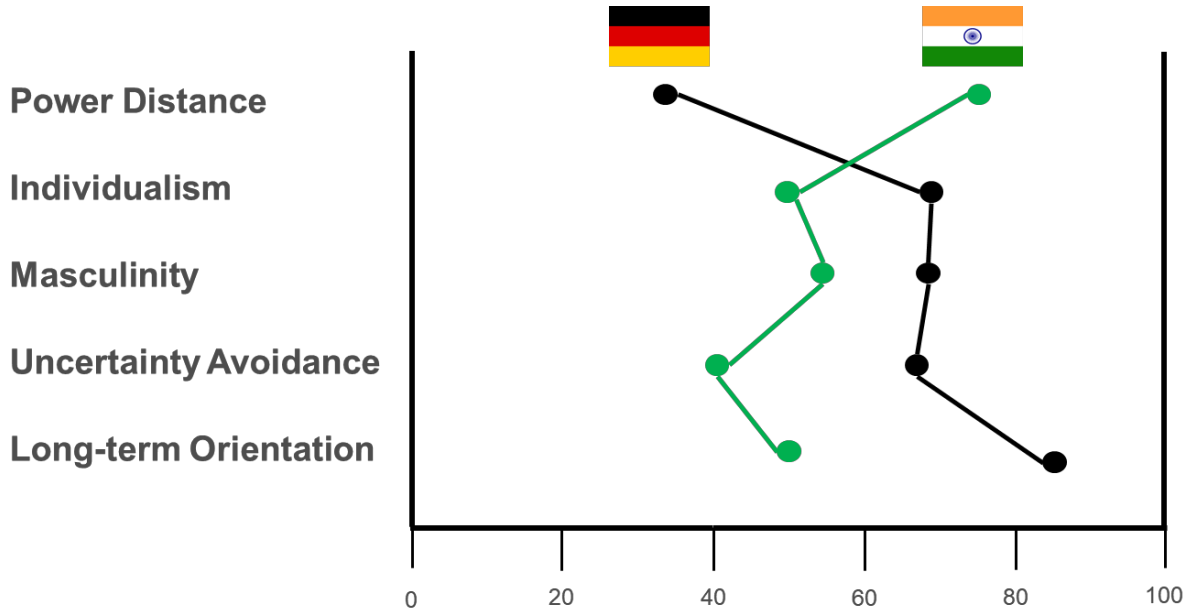


***Figure 9*: Visualization of cultural Differences.**

(based on https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/germany,india/)

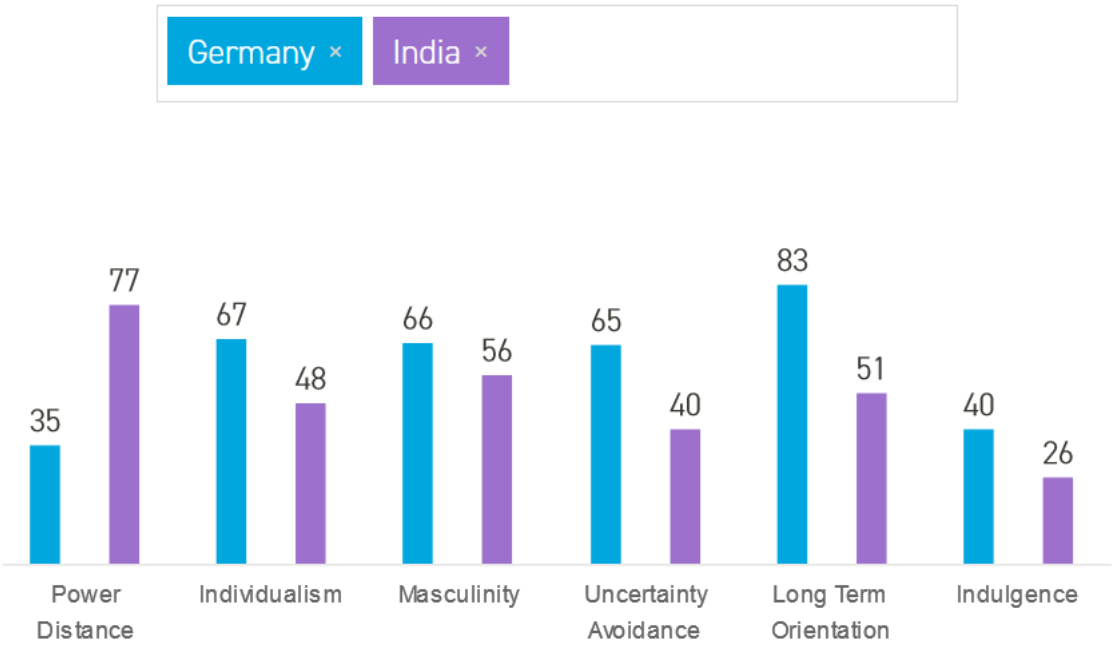


***Figure 10*: Visualization of cultural Differences (part 2)**

https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/germany,india/)

This diagram visualizes the differences in the scores of the cultural dimensions. These differences are of particular interest because such differences are supposed to form the root of cultural conflicts. However, one particular problem is that only Hofstede provides accurate data. Another problem is that contemporary research tells little about the *actual* ranking of effectiveness. This is exactly what Research Question 3 targets.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions form is a de facto standard in cross-cultural science and management. Consistently, little focus will be given at challenging their effectiveness respectively and their validity. In regard to redundancy, the maturity and refinement of the work of Hofstede and his team – which has been subject to comprehensive peer review for decades – justifies its position as superseding over dimensions of other authors and researchers whenever redundancies surface. It is not the major goal of this dissertation to challenge Hofstede's dimensions when comparing them with other dimensions. However, using other

dimensions potentially adds to the body of knowledge and might be more appropriate when explaining certain observations. But when in conflict, the dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) will supersede.

Albeit a de facto standard, it is important to revisit those cornerstones of the research of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) which are of relevance for the field study. Hofstede and his team claim to provide the most scientific evidence and accuracy in comparison to other researchers. But interestingly, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) as well as all researchers and authors, refrain from providing statements regarding any kind of ranking among their particular set of dimensions. No author states that particular dimensions in their set are more influential or provide more, or less, barriers for intercultural collaboration. Such an investigation of some kind of ranking of effectiveness or impact of dimensions is missing. Not even partial attempts to investigate such a ranking were identified during literature analysis. This is astonishing because for both researchers and practitioners it appears to be an obvious approach to examine the subject according to its effectiveness, but not even suggestions are provided in this regard. In particular in those parts of the literature where pragmatic hints are offered, the interested reader, be it a researcher or an advice-seeking manager, is left alone when it comes to the unanswered question *where* to start cross-cultural initiatives. For obvious reasons, one should start such an initiative with the most effective, respectively important ones. At least, one should have some awareness of which dimensions impact collaboration more than others. This dissertation will pick up this thought and suggest a procedure for a first iteration towards a ranking of cultural dimensions.

Again, it is not in the scope of this dissertation to evaluate the research of Hofstede as such. Frequently heard attacks, such as, (a) it does not make a distinction between both genders, (b) that it assumes a country hosts only one culture, (c) his initial findings were gained from only one company (IBM), mixing national and corporate culture, and (d) more severe, predictions

based on Hofstede were not supported by facts (Fazli and Bittner (2017), will not be investigated herein.

Many of such reproaches often obviously refer to the evaluation of individuals. It is fair to assume that they diminish in importance as soon as focus is given to groups and their dynamics. There is no such thing as the average stereotype Indian and German. Insofar, insights from cultural analysis based on cultural dimensions always have to be seen with skepticism. What applies to a culture or large groups does not necessarily apply to the individual.

5.1.1 PDI: Power Distance

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) offer the following definition of power distance:

> In summary, PDI scores inform us about *dependence* relationships in a country… Power distance can therefore be defined as *the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.* (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.61)

The most important words are *dependence*, *expect*, *accept*, and *unequally*. It can be confirmed from the field study that Indians accept inequality as natural and omnipresent. It could also be observed that the presence of a superior power to give direction was appreciated. Responsibility is defined and distributed in narrowly defined areas and individuals often show the inclination to neglect responsibility or re-direct it to others (or upwards) in case of problems. There is a general fear of being held responsible and a strong tendency to avoid sanctions. Leadership is mostly executed by task-orientation instead of solution-orientation.

Another observation is remarkable: the unexpected low PDI score for Germany. As the field study suggests, the often-reported German stiffness, or the hesitance or even reluctance, to make short-term decisions is less rooted in a presumed high power distance with a desire to obey directions and management support, but finds its reasons mostly in high UAI values and the

pursued ideal of a "well-oiled" machine. The low PDI scores reverse the above observation regarding India: German leadership is mostly characterized by solution-orientation instead of task-orientation. For obvious reasons, potential conflict arises whenever a high-PDI manager meets low-PDI subordinates, and vice versa.

The figure below highlights some major characteristic features of the PDI dimension:

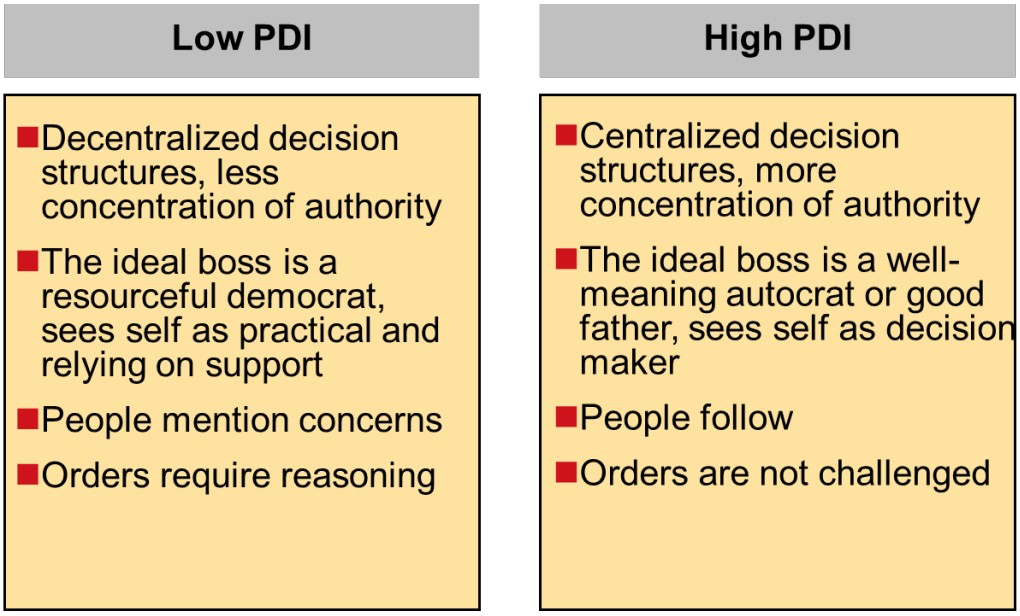


***Figure 11*: Power Distance Cornerstones.**

Characteristics of the PDI dimension (source: presentation Tuba Khesraui, summarizing Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) p.73-74)

While both the qualitative theoretic description and the pragmatic occurrences of the PDI dimension in the field study make it and its effects very transparent in very distinctive and immediate ways, the same does not apply to the IDV dimension. It comes into effect by more subtle and intertwined ways, as the analysis in the next section shows.

- Applicability: The effect of differences in power distance (PDI) are all prevalent and materialize in invariably transparent and direct but also indirect ways in the field study. Therefore, PDI is without doubt of high validity. In regard to redundancy, PDI is of high originality and fundamental. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) frequently use

many of its components in their dimensions, namely in their UVP, NVA, SVD, AVA dimensions, creating a strong deriving tie from the PDI dimension. Even Meyer (2014) formulates her very similar own discrete dimension (LEA - Leading: egalitarian vs. hierarchical), which is fully covered by the PDI dimension and therefore is considered redundant.

5.1.2 IDV: Individualism vs. Collectivism

According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), the individualism vs. collectivism dimension (IDV) is defined as follows:

> Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: *everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family.* Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies *in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioned loyalty.* (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 92)

In brief, the IDV dimension is about the power of and adherence to groups, the dependency of the individual on that group, the ability to make decisions without group consent, and sanctions in case of deviation. In particular, as observed in the field study, it is important to understand that high-IDV individuals are in the position to make their own immediate decisions. They are fully aware of their pre-defined, and usually large, area of responsibility and the decisions they can make without further consultation with superiors and colleagues. In contrast to this, highly collectivistic individuals operate within a narrower area of their own authority to make decisions. They depend on group consent before making agreements effective unless they are explicitly authorized by their formal senior position. This observation, together with high PDI, explains substantial parts of cultural conflicts of the field study.

From the perspective of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) the IDV dimension sufficiently explains the differences in the importance and role of *relationships* between cultures, e.g.:

> For the Swedes, business is done with a company; for the Saudis, it's done with a person whom one has learned to know and trust. When one does not know another person well enough, it is best that contacts take place in the presence of an intermediary or go-between, someone who knows and is trusted by both parties. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 90)

Interestingly, very similar examples are presented by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) and Meyer (2014). However, there are differences in their further approach and categorization. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) create their own dimension (IVC – Individualism vs. Communitarism) in this regard which is considered fully contained in Hofstede's IDV dimension and therefore redundant, as detailed analysis in section 5.2.2 IVC: Individualism vs. Communitarism shows. At the same time, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) use widely characteristic components of the IDV dimension (and their own IVC dimension) to define their other dimensions UVP, SVD, and AVA. Following Hofstede's philosophy, in particular his conviction that any observation may be explained by his set of dimensions, would lead to the rejection of such *derived* or *composed* dimensions. This indeed might be well-reasoned, but ignores the fact that the dimensions UVP, SVD, and AVA potentially are well-suited to explain certain observations and phenomena which would otherwise remain covered, incompletely explained, or their ignorance would require far-fetching reasoning. In brief, their existence potentially enriches the angles of the evaluation scheme unless deeper investigation in the following sections comes to other results.

Another interesting point is that Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) discuss another potential dimension labeled *exclusionism* versus *universalism*:

> *Exclusionism* can be defined as the cultural tendency to treat people on the basis of their own group affiliation and to reserve favors, services, privileges, and sacrifices for friends, relatives, and other groups with which one identifies, while excluding outsiders from the circle of those who deserve such privileged treatment. While exclusionist cultures strive to achieve harmony and good relationships within one's in-group, they may be indifferent, inconsiderate, rude, and sometimes even hostile toward members of out-groups.
>
> *Universalism* is the opposite cultural tendency: treating people primarily on the basis of who they are as individuals and disregarding their group affiliations. (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010, p. 98)

This definition strongly is reminiscent of the elaborations provided by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) in regard to their UVP dimension (Universalism versus Particularism). However, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) do not go so far to postulate a separate new dimension, but declare that empirical research in this regard underlines the validity of their former research, namely their IDV dimension. However, there appears good reasoning for the UVP dimension, even by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), and it remains *so far* uncompromised on the list of evaluation criteria. Otherwise, it would have been in danger of being immediately removed for redundancy reasons. But exactly these reasons are then delivered later when Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) come back to the poles of particularism and universalism (without referencing to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) UVP dimension):

> The distinction between in-groups and out-groups that is so essential in the collectivist culture pattern has far-reaching consequences… In individualist societies, the norm is that one should treat everybody alike. In sociological jargon this is known as *universalism*. Preferential treatment of one (customer) over others is

> considered bad business practice and unethical. In collectivist societies, the reverse is true. As the distinction between "our group" and "other groups" is at the very root of people's consciousness, treating one's friend better than others is natural and ethical and is a sound business practice. Sociologists call this way of acting *particularism*… A consequence of particularist thinking is that in a collectivist society, a relationship of trust should be established with another person before any business can be done. Through this relationship, the other is adopted into one's in-group and is from that moment onward entitled to preferential treatment… only natural persons are worthy of trust, and via these persons their friends and colleagues become worthy, but not impersonal legal entities such as a company. In summary, in the collectivist society, *the personal relationship prevails over the task* and should be established first, whereas in the individualist society, *the task is supposed to prevail over any personal relationships*. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, pp. 122-123)

Within this comprehensive citation, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) achieve two points: first, they fully embed a potential dimension such as "UVP - universalism versus particularism" into their own IDV dimension and secondly, they pre-empt any reasoning to add Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) UVP to the set of evaluation criteria as a distinctive dimension.

At the same time, further elaborations of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) make Meyer's (2014) TRU dimension debatable. Above citation clearly puts the concept of trust into the center. Meyer goes further by dedicating a distinctive dimension to the different ways trust is built. Consistently, the challenge arises to examine whether there are valuable components added by Meyer. Both come to very similar conclusions, but Meyer adds more emphasis on the strategies of how to actually best come to trustworthy relationships. In particular, she illustrates

how trust is built in individualist societies, a point which is unattended by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010). It is suggested to retain Meyer's TRU dimension on the evaluation list, because, for the purpose of that list, completeness prevails over avoidance of partial redundancies. Another reason for this recommendation might be based on the suggestion that trust is a fundamental concept, probably even more fundamental than the concept of relationships or that of individualism versus collectivism.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) further describe the differences between individualism and collectivism in more detail:

> In a situation of intense and continuous social contact, the maintenance of harmony with one's social environment becomes a key virtue that extends to other spheres beyond the family. In most collectivist cultures, direct confrontation of another person is considered rude and undesirable. The word *no* is seldom used, because saying "no" *is* a confrontation; "you may be right" and "we will think about it" are examples of polite ways of turning down a request. In the same vein, the word *yes* should not necessarily be inferred as an approval, since it is used to maintain the line of communication: "yes, I heard you" is the meaning it has in Japan.
>
> In individualist cultures, on the other hand, speaking one's mind is a virtue. Telling the truth about how one feels is a characteristic of a sincere and honest person. Confrontation can be salutary; a clash of opinion is believed to lead to a higher truth. The effect of communications on other people should be taken into account, but it does not, as a rule, justify changing the facts. Adult individuals should be able to take direct feedback constructively. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 107)

Each single point of this comprehensive description is supported by the field study. The existence and effectiveness of the IDV dimension is beyond doubt. But what is remarkable is that Meyer (2014) refines the IDV dimension by decomposing it into finer parts. Meyer (2014)

does not postulate a separate dimension, which might be competing with the IDV dimension, but introduces her dimensions COM, EVA, DEC, TRU, and DIS. Each of these dimensions adds its particular perspective to the above description of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) whereas not all survive the redundancy check. Meyer's dimensions offer valuable refinements, for example, by pointing at her observation that societies may be high-context (and therefore basically collectivistic), but nevertheless do not hesitate to provide direct negative feed-back, which is an observation where Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) are vague and undifferentiated in offering explanations and context ("In most collectivistic cultures…" as stated in above citation).

A response of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) to such refinements can only be assumed, but most probably they would insist on the overall validity, genuineness and all-explaining capacity of their IDV dimension which makes all other dimensions completely redundant. In their eyes, any suggestion to widen the base of dimensions requires inductive and quantitative, purely data-based reasoning which is not provided by Meyer who purely reasons quality-wise and based on experience. Similarly, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) also attack the appropriateness and rigor of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) database.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) also value Hall's (1989) LHC dimension, but interpret it fully compliant to their IDV dimension (p.109). In the section on Meyer's (2014) COM dimension (5.4.1 COM: Communicating: Low-Context vs. High-Context) it is suggested to apply the COM dimension to the set of evaluation criteria instead of Hall's LHC dimension. This section also encompasses a discussion of the COM versus the IDV dimension. One item of that discussion is to be mentioned here: all writers, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), and Meyer (2014) and Hall (1989) provide symptoms that cannot be confirmed from the field study: it appears too far a generalization to suggest that high-context collectivistic cultures refrain from intense, wordy communication. In stark contrast to that, Indians (and other high-context

collectivistic cultures such as those of Colombia), heavily and emotionally use explicit means of communication if circumstances, in particular PDI, permit. Only Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) offer the NVA dimension to add to the explanation of this phenomenon.

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) also explain the often-reported phenomena of *shame and guilt* as well as the concept of *face* with the IDV dimension:

> Individualist societies have been described as *guilt* cultures; persons who infringe on the rules of society will often feel guilty, ridden by an individually developed conscience that functions as an inner pilot. Collectivist societies, on the contrary, are *shame* cultures: persons belonging to a group from which a member has infringed on the rules of society will feel ashamed, based on a sense of collective obligation. Shame is social in nature, whereas guilt is individual; whether shame is felt depends on whether the infringement has become known by others. This becoming known is more of a source of shame than the infringement itself. Such is not the case for guilt, which is felt whether or not the misdeed is known by others… The importance of *face* is the consequence of living in a society that is very conscious of social context. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.110)

The concept of face is discussed by Meyer (2014) (DIS) as well as by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) (SVD). Its potential to harm collaboration is acknowledged by all authors and actually confirmed by the field study (refer to e.g. section 4.16 Sustainably ruined Relationships).

- Applicability: the IDV dimension comes to surface in the field study in many various ways. In contrast, its impact on the different approaches towards decision-making provides a most illustrating example of severe cultural conflict and misunderstanding (refer to e.g. section 4.7 Of Architects and Humans – Quality Prescriptions). Individuals in a highly collectivistic

environment such as India are less free to make their own immediate decisions in contrast to Germans. Therefore, the validity of the IDV dimension is underlined. In regard to redundancy, its genuine nature is not under debate and supersedes all potential other dimensions in case of conflict.

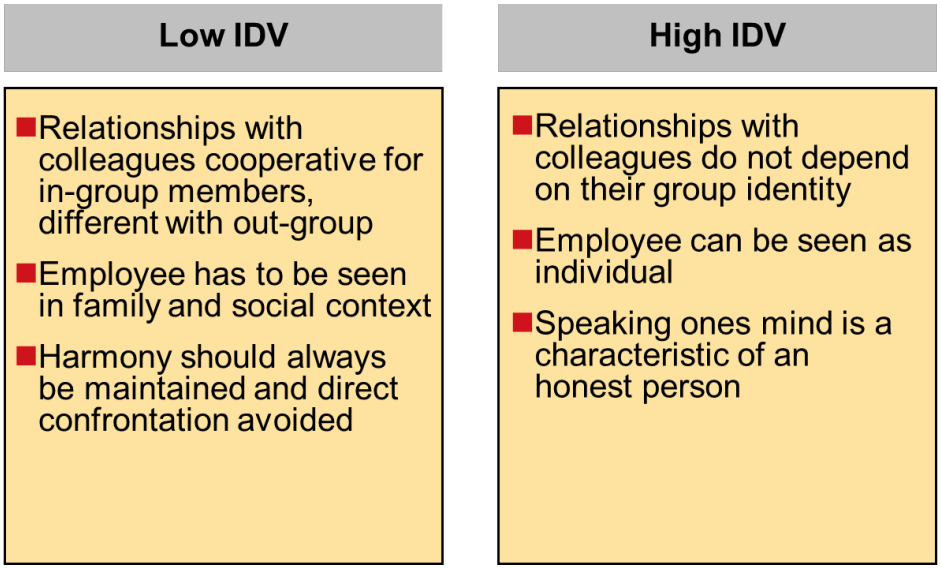


***Figure 12*: Individualism vs. Collectivism Cornerstones.**

Characteristics of the IDV dimension (source: presentation Tuba Khesraui)

5.1.3 MAS: Masculinity vs. Feminity

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) provide the following definition:

> A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.
>
> A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.140)

Further attributes associated strongly to the masculine pole are: earnings, recognition, advancement, and challenge. The matter of political correctness in naming is of no relevance in

this dissertation. It is supposed to follow Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) when they explain:

> This is a matter not only of labelling (users are free to adapt labels to their taste – for instance, *performance-oriented versus cooperation-oriented*)… Of note is that the dimension is politically incorrect mainly in masculine cultures… but not in feminine cultures. (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010, p.144)

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) of course, recognize the emotional attachment assigned to terms like 'masculinity' and 'feminity', and actually it might be seductive to oversimplify and reduce the MAS dimension to whatever kind of "machismo". Consistently, the recommendation is to avoid the discussion of labelling and to concentrate on the attributes as provided in the definition in absence of a better name for the MAS dimension.

The validity of the MAS dimension is confirmed by the field study, wherein it mostly materialized in differences regarding the desire and impatience to achieve and deliver results. However, such differences did rarely surface massively with a strong negative impact on collaboration, suggesting that the MAS dimension is of rather low relevance for Indian/German collaboration. This observation is supported by the figures provided by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010): India shows an index value of 56, while Germany scores at 66 (p.141 ff.), indicating not that large a difference as in regard to other dimensions.

In regard to other writers on cultural dimensions it is remarkable that none invest much effort on distinctive aspects or components of the MAS dimension as such. Consistently, the MAS dimension does not show any substantial relationships in the strength and reference matrices (section 6.3.1 Graphical Presentation of Results: Matrices).

- Applicability: the relevance of the MAS dimension can be confirmed from the field study, whereas its impacts are comparatively low. This is in conjunction with the index values

provided by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010): the figures of both cultures differ only to a comparatively small extent. Consequences for collaboration deriving from different attitudes that can be derived back to the MAS dimension remain of comparatively little effect. If at all, they materialized by differing urges to achieve results, whereas it is difficult to make a clear distinction towards the IDV dimension in reality. Concerning redundancies with the dimensions of other authors, its genuine nature is not under debate and supersedes all potential other dimensions in case of conflict.

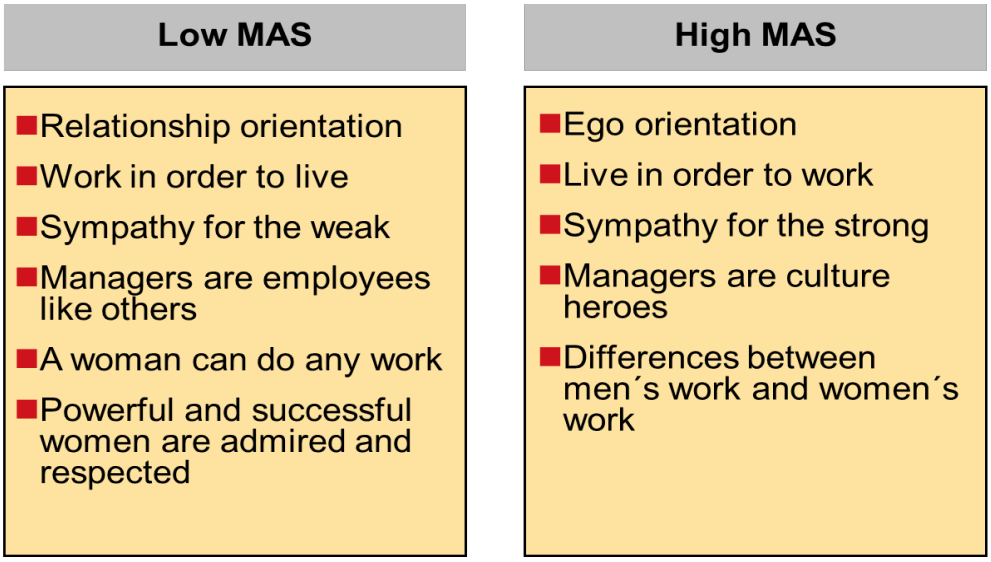


***Figure 13*: Masculinity Cornerstones.**

Characteristics of the MAS dimension (source: presentation Tuba Khesraui)

5.1.4 UAI: Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) provide the following helpful explaining and illustrating explanations:

> …countries differ in their tolerance of the ambiguous and the unpredictable… Extreme ambiguity creates excessive anxiety. Every human society has developed ways to alleviate this anxiety. The essence of uncertainty is that it is a subjective experience, a feeling. They lead to collective patterns of behavior in one society that may seem

> aberrant and incomprehensible to members of other societies. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.189)

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) continue to provide the following definition of uncertainty avoidance (UAI):

> Uncertainty avoidance can, therefore, be defined as *the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations*. This feeling is, among other manifestations, expressed through nervous stress and in need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.191)

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) further refer to the following definitions to illustrate the difference between *anxiety* and *fear*:

> *Anxiety* is a term taken from psychology and psychiatry that expresses a diffuse "state of being uneasy or worried about what might happen. It should not be confused with *fear*, which has an object. We are afraid of something, but anxiety has no purpose. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.195)

To summarize, uncertainty avoidance is about underlying non-specific emotions and feelings in a culture that determine individual attitudes towards unexpected changes and sudden new developments that challenge the existing rules. Consistently, cultures reply to such changes and challenges in different ways. Low-uncertainty cultures are supposed to be more adaptive to sudden changes, while high-uncertainty cultures perceive such disturbances as emotionally negative. In other words, some cultures appear to be more open to adapt to change, while others show an emotional inclination to preserve the existing, which proved to be beneficial in the past. For obvious reasons, the speed with which such changes appear will have an impact on their acceptance. Fast transitions to the circumstances are perceived as being inconvenient and leave the individual without the orientation provided by rules.

Observations from the field study support this suggestion. The typically high-UAI Germans adapted to fast-changing circumstances much more reluctantly and slower than the Indians, who proved to be more robust and flexible. Without the availability of navigational aid and a well-thought-out and experience-based frame of reference, the Germans tended to be in danger of being paralyzed.

It is worth pointing at the difference between uncertainty avoidance and *risk* avoidance. Both are too easily confused at first sight in daily use, and this confusion might directly impact situational analysis. According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010),

> Uncertainty avoidance should not be confused with risk avoidance. Uncertainty is to risk as anxiety is to fear. Fear and risk both focus on something specific: an object for fear, and an event for risk. Risk is often expressed as a percentage of probability that a particular event will happen. Anxiety and uncertainty are both *diffuse feelings*. Anxiety, it was argued earlier, has no object. Uncertainty has no probability attached to it. It is a situation in which anything can happen, and we have no idea what. As soon as doubt is expressed as risk, it ceases to be a source of anxiety. It may become a source of fear, but it may also be accepted as routine, like the risks of driving a car or practicing a sport.
>
> Rather than leading to reducing risk, uncertainty avoidance leads to a reduction of ambiguity. Uncertainty-avoiding cultures shun ambiguous situations. People in such cultures look for structure in their organizations, institutions, and relationships that make events interpretable and predictable. Paradoxically, they are often prepared to engage in risky behavior to reduce ambiguities. Their emotionality provides them with a sense of stress, of urgency… (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, pp.197-198)

In brief, while uncertainty is diffuse by nature, risk is open to evaluation, distinct counter-strategies, and contingency plans. It is good practice in project management to continuously manage risks by analyzing their probability, their damage potential, and their time horizon of appearance. Some even go so far to state that "risk management is project management for adults" (Tom di Marco). Consistently, risk might be inconvenient, but there are concrete strategies to deal with it. Such systematic and structured approaches do not apply to uncertainty because of its diffuse nature. From this perspective, the uncertainty avoidance index does not provide many insights to what extent culture is willing to take the risk.

The explanations of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) provide clear reasoning on why particular cultures strive to compensate for uncertainty by focusing on rules, adherence to processes, and methods once they are agreed. Additionally, another strategy to avoid ambiguity might be to invest more efforts in structure, planning, and organization *beforehand*, as opposed to unfolding measures only in case of need. It is seductive to apply the differences in UAI values between India (low) and Germany (medium to high) to explain why the German part emphasizes pre-emptying planning and structuring beforehand in contrast to the more pragmatic attitudes of Indians. This sounds consistent and provides reasonable explanations, and might partly be correct, but fails to deliver a complete and coherent picture. Such one-dimensional, mono-causal reasoning is incomplete, misleading, and even dangerous, as a visit to the UAI score ranking shows. In essence, high UAI values might correlate with the need for rules. However, on top of the ranking are many countries that haven't attracted attention for their fondness of accurate planning and organization so far (the first four ranks are occupied by Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, and Uruguay). Again, over-simplifications and mono-causal reasoning are misleading. Instead, the entirety of cultural characteristics in its complexity applies. The common denominator, which remains is that different cultures compensate for uncertainty by various means. However, there seems to exist a still to be investigated covered

reason behind which explains why some cultures compensate by employing structuring while others do not.

Just to remain with the danger of oversimplification, the following statement appears to be debatable. This applies the more as the entire section on uncertainty avoidance is subtitled by it:

> The strong uncertainty-avoidance sentiment can be summarized by the credo of *xenophobia*: 'What is different is dangerous.' The weak uncertainty-avoidance sentiment, on the contrary, is: 'What is different is curious.'
>
> Family life in high-UAI societies is inherently more stressful than where UAI is low. Feelings are more intense, and both parents and children express their positive sentiments more emotionally. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, pp. 201-202)

The above statement appears debatable in several regards. First, and most apparent, there is no evidence of any correlation between xenophobia and UAI provided. Second, the first six countries rating high on UAI (Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, Uruguay, Belgium, and Malta) are not known for intense outbreaks of xenophobia. Third, such a simple relationship can't be confirmed from the field study wherein xenophobia could not be observed at all. What can be established is that higher-UAI Germans need more time to get used to new or disruptive changes, or perceive any kind of change as inconvenient and somehow disturbing, and have difficulties in navigating in chaotic environments. In contrast, Indians have lesser concerns and are, by nature, much more curious and open to new ideas. In total, advising Indians on multicultural issues is invariably more fruitful than advising Germans who, by nature, know it all already and have problems in changing their course, not to speak about their underdeveloped ability for self-reflection and self-irony.

Regarding the relationship between power distance (PDI) and uncertainty avoidance (UAI), the authors state:

> Where power distances are large, the exercise of discretionary power by superiors replaces to some extent the need for internal rules. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 209)

The above statement is extremely pertinent, but it requires further discussion and adaption: Indian culture exposes high power distance (PDI), but comparatively low uncertainty avoidance (UAI). Both dimensions have an impact on organizational rules but in opposite ways. High PDI in India supports unquestioned hierarchical structures, while low Indian UAI reduces the need for rules at all. However, Indian culture is plastered with unwritten rules, making navigation cumbersome for foreigners. In any case, the essence of the citation applies for India: when in doubt, power distance supersedes everything else, including rules.

What can be observed in India is a flexible way of applying and using rules as an opportunistic tool, very much depending on the situation and agenda of the superior. Rules do not apply universally, but again in context particularly and to the discretion of the superior. They are easily used as a defensive measure as long as they comply with the agenda of the superior. In essence, contrary attempts are blocked by referring to explicit or implicit diffuse rules, such as the infringement of protocol. For Indian managers, this is an elegant and effective way of blocking undesirable attempts. At least, it increases the complexity and uncertainty level on the receiver's side.

While rules may conveniently be applied for defensive reasons, their importance and position mysteriously melt as soon as an attempt to circumvent them fits with the agenda of the superior. In such a case, all formerly stated barriers are suddenly overcome with the active support of the superior, who then freely and voluntarily uses both his/her formal power to make decisions as well as his informal network.

The above interpretation is illustrated by the re-citation of Philippe d'Iribarne:

> Une règle rigide, une pratique molle. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 210)

The first part of this sentence represents the potentially restrictive or defensive nature of rules and their use as a tool; the second part offers the backdoor for the superior in case of compliance with his/her agenda. In both countries, India and France, formerly unheard rules and obscure diffuse hints towards the unwillingness of undefined others suddenly materialize whenever useful, just to vanish as suddenly as soon as the attempt turns out to be beneficial for the superior.

Another useful function of the flexible and opportunistic application of rules is to convey negative messages. As Meyer (2014) points out in her elaborations on negative messages in the discussion of her EVA dimension (section 5.4.2 EVA: Evaluating: Direct Negative Feedback vs. Indirect Negative Feedback), some cultures, such as India, avoid using direct negative feedback. Instead, they apply other, more subtle ways to reject attempts, which is often difficult to detect for Westerners.

The elaborations of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) in the section on uncertainty avoidance not only discuss the context to their other dimensions but also suggest much more context to the dimensions of other authors. Without claiming for completeness, more obvious similarities are listed in the below side remarks. It should be kept in mind that the research of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) is considered to be genuine in this dissertation. Therefore linkages to the dimensions of other authors might be uncovered although those dimensions are declared redundant and rejected after careful analysis performed in the respective sections of this dissertation.

Side remark 1: The similarity to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) UVP (Universalism versus Particularism) dimension is obvious: in a particularist culture such as India, rules do not apply universally but based on context and personal relationship, while universalists strive for a global validity of regulations. This context becomes transparent by the following citation, which applies to high-UAI cultures:

> The idea of breaking a company rule, for whatever good reason, is rejected by more people, because it introduces ambiguity: what if all employees would just start doing as they pleased? (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.191)

Side remark 2: Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) further connect the concept of punctuality in an example (p. 188) to uncertainty avoidance (UAI). High uncertainty avoidance comes with an inclination to punctuality, which is presented as a means to reduce ambiguity. Now, the attitudes towards time are discussed in very great detail by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) and their ART dimension (section 5.2.6 ART: Attitudes with Regard to Time). The discreteness of the ART dimension is discussed in its separate section with the result that it stands for its own. However, a more detailed and accurate examination of the relatedness of the UAI and the ART dimension might be potentially worth further detailed research (potential research question). The question that arises is obvious: do high UAI scores correspond to how punctuality is considered important? Again, the first six countries rating high on UAI are Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, Uruguay, Belgium, and Malta. Quite obviously, the UAI dimension does not *exclusively* explain punctuality.

Side remark 3: Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) construe a link between the UAI dimension and the appropriateness of showing emotions:

> Anxious cultures tend to be expressive cultures. They are the places where people talk with their hands and where it is socially acceptable to raise one's voice, to show one's emotions, and to pound the table. Japan may seem to be an exception in this respect… (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.196)

Looking at the UAI scores provided by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) such a general statement remains debatable. There actually are cultures, which rate low on UAI and show emotions at the same time (e.g. India and Colombia, if PDI permits). Also, the high-UAI Germans are not exactly known for showing emotions. But in any case, the citation reminds

strongly to the NVA (section 5.2.3 NVA: Neutral vs. Affective) dimension of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). However, the context of uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and the expression of emotions may be subject to further research (potential research question).

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) continue explaining the characteristics of uncertainty avoidance (UAI):

> The need for rules in a society with a strong uncertainty-avoidance culture is *emotional*. People… have been programmed since early childhood to feel comfortable in structured environments. Matters that can be structured should not be left to chance.
>
> The emotional need for laws and regulations in a strong uncertainty-avoidance society can lead to rules or rule-oriented behaviors that are purely ritual, inconsistent, or even dysfunctional. People from countries with weaker uncertainty avoidance often do not realize that ineffective rules can also satisfy people's emotional need for formal structure. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.209)

To summarize this section, it is important to keep in mind that uncertainty avoidance is emotion-based, but brings up rational behavior as well: as for the German part, many Germans will complain about the abundance of rules, being well aware that rules not only address uncertainty but come at the expense of agility, flexibility, openness, and changeability. However, at the same time, the German ideal is the picture of the "well-oiled machine", which inherently requires precision, and rules. This means, rules have to be justified and have to serve a purpose. Germans obviously compensate for uncertainty by accurate planning and organization, and preciseness.

The Indian perspective is fundamentally different: first, as formerly shown, above rules can be overcome by the authority of superiors – which is an attitude that would raise severe concerns in a German environment. Second, Indians are less concerned about the future and fundamentally optimistic about it, not being disturbed by what other cultures would perceive as chaotic. They are confident to solve any kind of problem by pragmatism: they walk over the bridge when they come to it. Germans start making contingency plans five years before as soon as they realize there *might* be a river. It cannot come as a surprise that such fundamentally different attitudes cause conflicts in projects, as the analysis of the field study uncovers.

Regarding the field study it is interesting to observe what happens in case a culture, which appreciates rules, structure, and quality and is reluctant to changes, meets a culture that is not concerned about the future at all — and consistently does not recognize the need to accurately prepare for it. The result is expected to be of mutual frustration on both sides: the Indians being challenged with extended planning and contingency scenarios and the Germans being annoyed by confident indifference.

- Applicability: the UAI dimension is both genuine and valid due to the vast research of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) supported by sound peer-review. The parts that were identified as debatable do not change this evaluation. They offer powerful explanations why some cultures focus on *beforehand* structuring. At the same time, a warning towards mono-causal over-simplification arises. Some cultures compensate high uncertainty by beforehand structuring while others do not. In addition, some inconsistencies were detected which provide impetus for Research Question 1 (is Hofstede's toolset sufficient to provide complete reasoning?). Insofar, it might be an option to fill gaps in reasoning with the support of other dimensions. Consistently, some new research questions arose. Former analysis uncovered context towards the dimensions UVP, ART, and NVA of

Trompenaars and Hamden-Turner (2012) and Meyer's (2014) EVA whereas not all of them survive the acid tests.

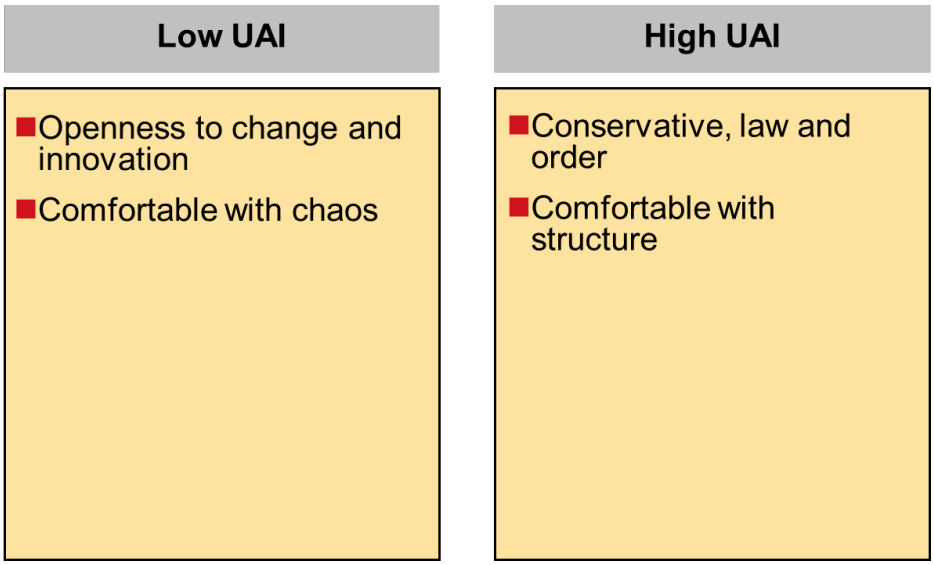


Figure 14: **Uncertainty Avoidance Cornerstones.**

Characteristics of the UAI dimension (source: presentation Tuba Khesraui)

5.1.5 LTO: Long-term Orientation

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) define their LTO dimension (Long-Term Orientation versus short-term orientation) as follows:

> Long-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards — in particular, perseverance and thrift. Its opposite pole, short-term orientation, stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present — in particular, respect for tradition, perseveration of "face", and fulfilling social obligations. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.239)

Because this definition may partly contradict what the stereotypes of Westerners might suggest, e.g. they might be inclined to attribute the concept of "face" or "tradition" to long-term oriented cultures such as China (assuming that long-term orientation comes with an inability or reluctance to adapt to change), it is important to take a careful and accurate look at the attributes

which were subject to the definition of this dimension. In addition, the analyst must also keep awareness of the observation that LTO does not directly translate into the misleading question how far individuals of a culture consciously look ahead. Such immediate context is debatable; instead the attitudes towards time horizons materialize indirectly to the extent that the following virtues are *valued*:

> The fourth CVS (Chinese Value System) dimension combined on the one side these values:
>
> 1. Persistence (perseverance)
> 2. Thrift
> 3. Ordering relationships by status and observing this order
> 4. Having a sense of shame
>
> And on the opposite side:
>
> 5. Reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts
> 6. Respect for tradition
> 7. Protecting one's "face"
> 8. Personal steadiness and stability
>
> (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, pp. 236-237)

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) continue by examining in detail the linkage of the values with Confucian philosophy and come to the following result:

> So from the eight values found related to the fourth CVS dimension, the first four, all on one side, directly resonate with Confucius's principles. Values five to eight include…, behaviors well recognizable in a Chinese environment, but not specifically Confucian. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.238)

In sum, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) elaborate on the linkage between the typically Confucian values and time-orientation, culminating in the following result:

> As persistence and thrift reflect an orientation toward the future, whereas personal stability and tradition can be seen as a static orientation toward the present and the past… (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.239)

Any Western reader is well advised to strictly stay with these explanations and above definition of the LTO dimension. Too easily, Western stereotypes supersede the accurate definition and its interpretation. The concept of "face", or a strong orientation towards tradition, might appear to be representative for the Chinese culture (and others) in Western eyes, but both do not stand for long-term orientation (LTO). To be concise, the LTO dimension is strictly limited to representing *values* that are either past-and present-oriented, or future-oriented, on the other side. Insofar as the term "long-term orientation" itself is a little misleading, it is less about how far you think ahead, it is more about whether the *values* behind are backwards or future oriented.

The difficulty for Westerners to grasp the LTO dimension is supported by the remark of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) why its identification came up very late, and not already during IBM research in the 1980ies:

> The reason the dimension had not been found in the IBM research was that the relevant questions had not been asked. The Western designers of the IBM questionnaire had not considered them relevant. However, because the dimension correlated with economic growth, Geert considered it an essential addition for a global instrument. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.239)

In regard to social relations and education, Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) state the following. For obvious reasons it is suggested to assume that such values transfer to behavior in corporate life:

> The children learn thrift, not to expect immediate gratification of their desires, tenacity in the pursuit of their goals, and humility. Self-assertion is not encouraged.

> Children growing up in a low-LTO culture experience two sets of norms. One is towards respecting 'musts': tradition, face-saving, being seen as a stable individual, respecting the social codes of marriage even if love has gone, and reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts as a social ritual. The other is toward immediate need gratification, spending, and sensitivity to social trends in consumption. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.242)

Remark 1: The citation suggests a link between the IDV, MAS and the LTO dimension by using terms such as "humility" and "self-assertion", "stable individual". Any such correlation, presumably negative, could be subject to further research (potential research question).

Remark 2: Once more coming back to the subject of stereotypes, there is, albeit not supported by scientific reasoning, some irony to observe. From a Westerner's spontaneous and subjective impression, one would rather assign attributes such as the "concept of face" and "adherence to tradition" to Far-Eastern cultures, including that of India. In total, the warning has to be repeated to strictly remain with the exact definition of the LTO dimension.

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) state that some short-term values (such as face) are "well recognizable in a Chinese environment." (p. 238). Consistent with this, they continue:

> … even if there is in fact a lot of *face-saving* going on in East Asia, the scores show that at the conscious level, the student respondents wanted to de-emphasize it. No reference is made to *respect for tradition*; part of the secret of the Dragons' economic success is the ease with which these countries have accepted Western technological innovations. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.244)

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) continue by referencing to another of Confucius's disciples:

> The superior man goes through his life without anyone preconceived action or any taboo. He merely decides for the moment what is the right thing to do. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.244)

The LTO dimension strongly is reminiscent of the elaborations of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) in regard to their ART dimension wherein the authors refer to backward and forward-oriented cultures.

- Applicability: As all of Hofstede's dimensions, the LTO dimension is considered both genuine and valid due to the vast research of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) supported by sound peer-review. Considering the substantial score value difference of 32 between Germany (83) and India (51), it is remarkable that the influence of values such as thrift and persistence did not materialize in the field study to a substantial extent, if at all. A favor for ordering relationships by status and obeying this order materialized in two partly confusing ways: Germans favor structure (which is consistent with both their high UAI and LTO scores) while the Indian respect for obeying order can also be seen in context to their high PDI scores.

5.1.6 IVR: Indulgence versus Restraint

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) propose the following definition of the Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR) dimension:

> *Indulgence* stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, *restraint*, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.281)

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) further explain that the IVR dimension "rests on clearly defined research items that measure very specific phenomena." The fundamental items are happiness, life control, and importance of leisure:

> It follows that one of the two poles of this dimension is characterized by a perception that one can act as one pleases, spend money, and indulge in leisurely and fun-related activities with friends or alone. All this predicts relatively high happiness. At the opposite pole we find a perception that one's actions are restrained by various social norms and prohibitions and a feeling that enjoyment of leisurely activities, spending, and other similar types of indulgence are somewhat wrong. (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.281)

The further explanations provided in regard to this dimension differ significantly in detail, the inclination to derive pragmatic advice and volume from those provided for the other dimensions. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) themselves state that:

> This is a truly new dimension that has not been reported so far in the academic literature; it deserves more study." (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p.281)

Not only that the IVR dimension is comparatively new, its section in Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) is relatively thin and lacks the strength and deepness assigned to the sections of the other dimensions. Especially the sub section on IVR in the workplace (p.294) does not provide much of such substance the reader of this publication is normally used to — and spoiled with.

- Applicability: Field study analysis will show whether this dimension substantially materializes in Indo-German cooperation. This will require sensitive examination, as its impacts are not visible at first sight. This does not come as a surprise as both cultures do not differ much regarding the scores provided. Consistently, this justifies the assumption

that the IVR dimension will hardly come into effect regarding both impact and frequency during the analysis of the field study. One of the possible materializations of the IVR dimension in close cooperation might be that the high-IVR partner lacks seriousness in the perception of the low-IVR partner. Germans can be very serious when it comes to discuss challenges (high UAI) and might misunderstand the perceived lack of seriousness on the other part. Fun, humor, and self-irony are not particularly German strengths. It might be assumed that Indians can easier bridge this gap by becoming more serious, than Germans becoming more humorous. But again, the data provided does not suggest substantial differences between both cultures.

5.2 Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012)

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) offer a set of seven cultural dimensions. The particular challenge to be solved in this section is to determine whether their dimensions are redundant in part or in total to the genuine dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010).

5.2.1 UVP: Universalism vs. Particularism

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) this dimension "…defines how we judge other people's behavior." (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.41)

The text continues by describing the characteristics of *universalism* and *particularism*:

> At one extreme we encounter an obligation to adhere to standards that are universally agreed… *Universalist, or rule-based*, behavior tends to be abstract…It also tends to imply *equality* in the sense that all persons falling under the rule should be treated the same… Finally, rule-based conduct has a tendency to resist exceptions that might weaken that rule. There is a fear that once you start to make exceptions for illegal conduct, the system will collapse…

> *Particularist* judgements focus on the exceptional nature of *present circumstances*. This person… is my friend, my brother, my husband, my child, or a person of unique importance to me, with special claims… I must therefore sustain, protect, or discount this person *no matter what the rules say*. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, pp.41-42)

This citation directly refers to the dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). First, it stresses the concept of *equality*, which is a major component of the PDI dimension. It is justified to assume a correlation between low-PDI and universalistic cultures. Second, the importance of relationships and affiliation to in-groups is a central component of collectivism (IDV). A strong correlation between low-IDV and particularist cultures might be expected. Third, even elements of the MAS dimension could be detected. In the field study, the desire to achieve results surfaces on the universalistic side, conflicting with the particularist inclination to protect team members.

In addition, the UVP dimension exhibits overlaps with other dimensions. For example, a substantial part of the reasoning provided by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) regarding contracts (p.51 ff.) may be alternatively enriched by applying the UAI dimension for the explanation of attitudes, by Hall's (1989) LHC dimension, and by Meyer's (2014) COM dimension.

Finally, a methodology issue arises: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) also point out that both extremes are not mutually exclusive or pure, "depending on what the rules are about." This means that the further appliance of this dimension requires considering the circumstances in each case. This situation-dependent evaluation, of course, brings a tendency to dilute the accuracy of this dimension. This concern is also supported by the fact that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) provide three surveys, each referring to a particular question. Unfortunately, the rankings in each survey actually *vary* in detail. It would be valuable to

consider ways to merge all three surveys into a consistent one, but this would go beyond the scope of this dissertation.

This analysis suggests that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) UVP dimension can be interpreted as a combination of several dimensions, with particular weight of PDI and IDV, and to some lesser extent, UAI, MAS, LHC, and COM. This appears to be reasonable in regard to qualitative considerations. In regard to quantitative reasoning, a deeper analysis of empirical data to confirm these correlations is suggested, but again is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

On the other hand, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's explanations are in great congruence with observations of the field study:

> In fact, the universalist position is encouraging opposition from the particularist position. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.57)
>
> and
>
> What frequently occurs is that foreign-based subsidiaries will *pretend* with head office directives, which leads to a kind of ritualistic 'corporate rain dance'. (p.54)

During the field study, conflicts were invariably observed whenever the universalistic part (Germany) was trying to establish prescriptions to the particularist part (India), as the case discussion (e.g. section 4.7 Of Architects and Humans – Quality Prescriptions) makes transparent in greater detail. It cannot be confirmed that such outside universalistic prescriptions were fully 'inhaled', enthusiastically implemented and defended by the particularist part. However, such conflicts may very well be explained by differences in UAI and other dimensions (PER) and do not require an explaining UVP dimension.

The relevant question at the end is: does the UVP dimension form a distinctive dimension that stands for its own, although it can be widely decomposed into other components? Such derived dimensions may have their own "raison d'etre" in case they more transparently or more

immediately explain symptoms, or in case they form a consistent new set that applies all together. Unfortunately, the analysis must come to the conclusion that this is not the case here. In addition, Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) explicitly and deliberately incorporate the UVP dimension (without referring to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), but to other research) fully in their IDV dimension and thus cannibalize its discreteness.

For the purpose of completeness, it must be expressed that the above considerations apply for particularism. In regard to universalism, the reasoning of deriving the UVP dimension back to other dimensions does not lead to clear results. The inclination of the German part to establish project-wide rules without allowing situation-based exceptions *may* potentially be interpreted as a genuine universalistic attitude, but finds its roots more plausibly in high UAI. However, generally explaining the UVP dimension exclusively by the UAI dimension must fail to provide consistent results because of the existence of cultures which are *both* highly universalist, as well as low-UAI (USA, for example). While these qualitative considerations cannot provide a complete picture, little impact of German universalism beyond UAI can be reported from the field study. Any further investigation in this regard is therefore obsolete. However, the UVP dimension might find its justification under other cultural circumstances, e.g., when highly universalistic cultures encounter highly particularist cultures. This might be amplified in business contexts where business entities seek to implement globally standardized processes. However, the suggestion arises that the UVP actually is not one, but two dimensions, because particularism can be derived back to other dimensions than universalism as the above analysis has shown.

- Applicability: Regarding redundancy, particularism is covered by the IDV dimension to an extent sufficiently large enough to declare it redundant. In addition, particularism also strongly incorporates components of the PDI dimension, and, to a lesser extent, UAI and MAS as well as LHC and COM. Regarding universalism, it can plausibly be explained by

UAI. The elaborations and hints of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) are beyond doubt valuable for any discussion; alone they lack a genuine nature and discreteness. Paradoxically, UVP passes the test for validity (but not for consistency).

5.2.2 IVC: Individualism vs. Communitarism

Examination and evaluation of the relevance of his dimensions lead to the result *not* to add the IVC component to the set of dimensions, which is built to evaluate the field study. This exclusion does not suggest any comment on the quality of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) sayings and conclusions. It is solely based on the observation that there are no considerations and explanations that go beyond those of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) regarding their IDV dimension. Consistently, adding IVC to the evaluation set would create redundancies. However, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) provide valuable hints on pp. 85-86.

- Applicability: The IVC dimension is valid because its effects are confirmed by the field study. But these effects are entirely explainable by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) and therefore redundant. No relevant insights, which would go beyond the IDV dimension, could be detected. The pragmatic hints for operational use are of value, but this does not justify the addition of the IVC dimension to the set of evaluation criteria.

5.2.3 NVA: Neutral vs. Affective

Unfortunately, the explanations in this section of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) remain a little weak, diffuse, and debatable. Definitions and structure are hardly given. Instead, the authors provide a collection of considerations, anecdotes and examples and finally leave it widely up to the reader to assume and define what this dimension is exactly about. Therefore, herewith an attempt to provide a definition: the NVA dimension describes to which extent emotions are acceptable in negotiations or cultural encounters. While neutral cultures argue

facts-based by deliberately trying to exclude emotion, affective cultures argue emotion-based, whereas the latter unconsciously or deliberately mix and sum up both facts and empathy for others to an emotionally intertwined whole.

This definition is supported by the following citation:

> Should the nature of our interactions be *objective and detached*, or is expressing emotion acceptable? In North America and northwest Europe business relationships are typically *instrumental* and all about *achieving objectives*. The brain checks emotions because these are believed to confuse the issues. The assumption is that we should resemble our machines in order to make them more efficiently. But farther south and in many other cultures, business is a *human affair* and the whole gamut of emotions is deemed appropriate. Loud laughter, banging your fist on the table, or leaving a conference room in anger during a negotiation is all part of business. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, pp.11-12)

However, excellent pragmatic hints are given at the end of the chapter p.98-99.

Unfortunately, there is little empirical evidence provided for this dimension. Only one survey is made available, based on the question to which extent "exhibiting emotion is acceptable." India rates with a value of 51 and Germany with a value of 35 (p.88), suggesting that Germans allow exhibiting emotions more than Indians in *relative* terms. In *absolute* terms (overall positioning on the scale) it furthermore suggests that showing emotion is not accepted in India and that Indians argue basically facts-based. Both, the relative and the absolute suggestions are in stark contrast to the observations made during the field study. Indians can become very loud and passionate in negotiations and meetings, provided that power distance and protocol (PDI) (IDV), as well as in/out group dynamics in a particular situation allow. And Germans typically tend to ignore the human factor and argue purely facts-based.

The term 'in-/out group dynamics' deserves some more explanation: Indians tend to exhibit controlled behavior when faced with people they do not know and as long as no mature or trusted relationship has been established. According to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), in/out group dynamics come to surface with the IDV dimension, meaning that highly collectivistic cultures tend to relationship-based, high-context and implicit behavior. As the field study illustrates, whenever trusted partners with established mature relationships negotiate, arguing can be accompanied by showing emotions, or by even deliberately demonstrating and utilizing them in order to achieve results. This applies not only to established traditional groups, such as work teams or family, but also to external business partners, with whom a longer-lasting relationship already exists: they become "in-group" over time.

The observations in the field study support the notion of actual prevalence of emotions on the Indian side (e.g. section 4.9 Change Management and Belly-Dancers). It is herein not suggested to relativize the explanations of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) in regard to the NVA dimension (as well as those of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), but its undifferentiated validity in regard to India appears to be debatable at least. Under other circumstances, when PDI and protocol as well as group pressure (IDV) dominate, it might also be observed that Indians keep calm, disciplined and swallow much emotion that otherwise might surface.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) not only link gestures, smiling, laughing, grimacing to this dimension, but also the tone of voice, the space normally kept between people, and even touching people. Actual observations during field study regarding these characteristics do not support the low Indian value of the NVA dimension and therefore compromise its validity. There seems to be something missing when it comes to explaining Indian behavior based on the NVA dimension.

- Applicability: The NVA dimension raises severe concerns regarding quality criteria. First, the empirical database is limited to only one question and therefore debatable. Second, its

predictions are partly in direct stark contrast to the observations made during the field study. Third, it appears to be incomplete or inconsistent in itself because it ignores observed contextual and situational behavior. Context-based and situational underlying factors (e.g. by in-group affiliation and power distance) dilute its application. Consistently, this dimension has to be seen in close context with other dimensions (PDI and IDV, in particular) and the specific given circumstances. Its strong situational dependency is challenging its discreteness as a stand-alone dimension. In spite of these severe concerns it is suggested to add it to the evaluation scheme because it explains observations, which can hardly be explained by other dimensions. It therefore passes the consistency check with concerns. Its exclusion would be a pity as it lacks a dimension, which sufficiently explains Indian emotion and negotiation folklore. For example, it can be reported that Indian managers deliberately apply measures such as e.g. getting loud and returning to business afterwards with an unharmed relationship as if nothing had happened. IDV fails to provide good reasoning for such observations as it would suggest the Indian part be calm and without showing emotion.

Remark 1: It was also analyzed whether the NVA dimension possibly overlaps with Meyer's DIS dimension. The result was that it does not. Meyer (2014) does not go so far to recognize emotional expressiveness as a separate cultural dimension.

Remark 2: It is worth pointing at the section on IDV (5.1.2 IDV: Individualism vs. Collectivism), where the elaborations of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) on the intensity of communication are challenged.

5.2.4 SVD: Specific vs. Diffuse

Consistent with above section on NVA, the chapter of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) on SVD remains itself a little 'diffuse'. It is again left to the reader to extract the essence,

and no concise definition of the dimension is provided, but some story telling. However, its pragmatic hints provide valuable information.

As it is made transparent in the field study and its discussion, Indians require relationships to a much greater extent than Westerners do. Simply speaking, they deal with personalities while Westerners deal with roles. While a Westerner may take over several roles and change his behavior accordingly depending on context and situation, and allow access to his personality in distinct ways, the Indian personality remains the same and uninfluenced by the specific circumstances. Personality counts in its consistent entirety. A superior will always be a superior independent of the situation in which his subordinates encounter him. Doing business without having established a personal relationship among such consistent characters is a strange concept for Indians. Businesses are best closed where trust prevails, which requires knowledge of the entirety of the involved characters and established relationships.

An explanation of this dimension, or attempt to define it, is best achieved by the following citations:

> When the whole person is involved in a business relationship, there is a real and personal contact, instead of the *specific* relationship prescribed by a contract. In many countries a *diffuse* relationship is not only preferred but also necessary before business can proceed. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.12) also,
>
> How far we get involved…the degree to which we engage others in *specific* areas of life and single levels of personality, versus *diffusely* in multiple areas of our lives and at several levels of personality at the same time. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.101) further,
>
> In specific-oriented cultures a manager *segregates out* the task relationship he or she has with a subordinate and insulates this relationship from other dealings…Each

> area in which the two encounter one other is considered apart from the other, a *specific* case. However, in some countries every life space and every level of personality tends to permeate all others…Of course, reputation always leaks to some extent into other areas of life. This extent is what we measure for *specificity* (small) and *diffuseness* (large). (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.101-102)

Quite obviously, this dimension strongly correlates with Hofstede's power distance (PDI) and individualism (IDV) at first look. In high power-distanced environments it is unthinkable that a subordinate naturally and un-challengingly follows the direction of his superior, just to teach him right afterwards how to play golf, advise him on foreign languages, have a greater car than him, and coming to work in better clothing. This would not only contradict the rules of protocol and hierarchy but also the relationship-based rules of collectivism. In a highly collectivistic environment (IDV) everyone is supposed to know where his position is and which unspoken rules to obey.

This strong proximity of the SVD dimension towards the dimensions PDI and IDV challenges its independency as a self-standing dimension, of course. Therefore, additional factors and observations have to be considered as well in order to justify, or reject, its presence on the evaluation list.

Therefore, a detailed analysis was conducted for the sake of comprehensiveness and accuracy – and to confirm its validity and check for redundancy. It provided explanations for some observations of the field study that were difficult to explain by other dimensions (e.g. in section 4.16 Sustainably ruined Relationships).

To give one example: Germans may openly confront, attack, challenge, and criticize the subject of the discussion (also refer to Meyer's dimensions EVA and DIS), but will never attack the person. Such personal attacks are considered inappropriate and impolite. The distinction

between attacks on the subject and on a person is difficult to understand and accept by Indians who don't make such a distinction and consistently feel personally attacked when their work outcomes are subject to criticism. This is, on the other hand, not at all the intention of their German counterparts. Too easily, such facts-oriented attacks by specific-oriented individuals, even soft ones, are interpreted as an attack on the diffuse person and his personality, putting him in danger of losing face with all negative consequences. The consequences are severe and difficult to heal because they directly damage the basis of the social positioning of the diffuse individual in his collectivistic environment (IDV). The usually specific-oriented Germans are strongly advised to use statements such as 'do not take this personally' very carefully and conservatively. *Everything* is 'personal' in a diffuse environment. There is obviously some irony in the fact that a 'harmless' statement occasionally made includes the potential to amplify unintended damage. The ignorant German may find himself with a severely and sustainably hurt relationship without having the slightest idea of what has happened. Again, sensitivity is not a German strength. "What is a friendship worth compared to placing a good joke?" as a German saying goes.

Another valuable consequence of the SVD dimension is that it highlights the impact on the speed of negotiations: high diffuseness slows down the process and increases its complexity:

> The importance of avoiding loss of face is why in diffuse cultures so much more time is taken to get to the point; it is necessary to avoid private confrontation because it is impossible for participants not to take things personally. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.107)

This citation not only points at high PDI (obeying protocol), but also at the complex relationships individuals are embedded in (IDV).

Another reason for justifying the SVD dimension to remain on the evaluation list is the observation of the 'two faces' phenomenon in the field study although it is closely related to

the former discussion (wherein Germans attack the subject, but not the person). Indian individuals will always exhibit the same consistent personality regardless of the circumstances. The concept of acting differently depending on the role prescribed by circumstances appears strange to them. In contrast to that, Germans make a sharp distinction between professional and private attitudes, while an Indian always remains the same person.

To the great surprise of Indians, the same German individual who during business negotiations exhibited low power distance (PDI) by ignoring protocol and formal positions, high individualism (IDV) by ignoring the constraints of collective decision-making, high masculinity (MAS) by pushing for results, high uncertainty avoidance (UAI) by insisting on sticking to the methodology, and exhibited low indulgence (IVR) by seriously avoiding any signs of humor and irony, and sticking to the linear agenda (ART), may be another person at dinner after work.

Suddenly, the same person who formerly met all stereotypes over the day exhibits close but appropriate, respectful and charming behavior towards all counterparts (PDI), expresses his well-being as a part of the group (IDV), shows no inclination to seriously talk about business issues but to socialize (MAS), and has little inclination to reconfirm his philosophy on methodologies (UAI), but shares his optimistic vision to invest in future cooperation (LTO), and is open for indulgence (IVR), provided that sufficient beverages are provided.

Such a change in personality can hardly be described with Hofstede's dimensions, but directs towards accepting the SVD dimension as a self-standing entity. Casually said, Hofstede's dimensions fail to explain the frequently stated *and practiced* German motto "Schnaps ist Schnaps — und Arbeit ist Arbeit" ("Schnaps is Schnaps — and work is work"), describing the sharp distinction between two separate spheres. From an Indian perspective, such context-dependent behavior comes with the skepticism of observing inconsistent characters, which hinders the fundamental need for relationship building (IDV, TRU).

Briefly, while Indians basically remain the same independent of context, German characters may change based on role and context, which may confuse relationship building on the Indian side. Above extreme example between private and professional life was chosen for illustration purposes. However, the behavioral differences may be observed in purely professional environments as well. For example, the same German manager who formerly was open-minded for free discussion may substantially change his style and attitude as soon as pressure of senior management regarding results and deadlines increase. Suddenly, he might focus and insist to a much greater extent on meeting the goals and agreements (MAS) and become more authoritarian as an individual (PDI), (IDV). Personal consistency rates different in both cultures.

It is suggested to assume that external pressure *principally* drives changes in behavior in all cultures, but, maybe, *gradually* differently. This assumption would suggest that the impact of external pressure materializes more directly and to a larger scale in specific cultures than it does in diffuse cultures. However, such considerations go beyond the scope of this dissertation and may be subject to future research (potential research question).

Concerning the scope of this dissertation, the relevant question is whether context-based changes in behavior influence the cooperation between the parties and whether such effects could be observed in the field study. The answer to both questions is ‘yes’. Indian counterparts may be confused, or even irritated, by such behavioral changes. From their perception, the changes might appear opportunistic and inconsistent with the formerly perceived character and are eligible to devaluate the personality of the German counterpart, and at best be confusing. On the other side, the German part may perceive the continued consistency of his/her Indian counterpart as inflexible and non-reactive to changed circumstances by ignoring messages of urgency.

Coming back to Karel's quote in the field study that Indians are "very proud, but have no shame" when asked to describe Indian mentality, in brief: Indian managers are used to act on a sound fundamental basis of reputation that permeates through all other spheres of life. As a result, they tend to naturally use resources and means for purposes they were not initially dedicated to — or they ask for favors in ways, which would be considered inappropriate in other cultural environments. One is expected to fulfill such desires, and usually subordinates will behave accordingly. However, if rejected, for example because it is considered inappropriate from a specific-oriented perspective, such reluctance may severely hurt the pride and self-understanding because it directly damages the foundations of authority.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), p.108 provide an example for such a source of cultural incomprehension by rendering the survey results to the question:

> A boss asks a subordinate to help him paint his house…

Interestingly, 83% of German respondents would not paint the house while 66% of the Indian respondents would.

The strong relationship-orientation in diffuse cultures also influences the differing attitudes towards agreements, regardless whether they are written or verbal: things may constantly change; from a diffuse perspective, consistently there is no use to put it on paper just to meet formalism.

> Both approaches claim to save time. In the diffuse approach you do not get trapped in an eight-year relationship with a dishonest partner, because you detect any unsavory aspects early on. In the specific approach you do not waste time winning and dining a person who is not fully committed to the specifics of the deal. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.111)

These generally differing attitudes have dramatic and effective consequences not only in contract negotiation but also in daily operative collaboration, often leading to conflict and frustration (e.g. 4.7 Of Architects and Humans – Quality Prescriptions). During contract preparation and negotiation, the specific part will insist on defining all the potentially relevant details beforehand in endless discussions and often under involvement of the legal department. Such long-lasting previous discussions come very much to the frustration of the diffuse counterparts who inwardly follow the conviction that all actual, as opposed to theoretical, issues will be solved by good mutual consent in the future by using established trustworthy relationships. This attitude might be amplified by low concerns about the future (UAI) and assumed future access to management on the same eye-level (PDI) (IDV). Simply speaking, whenever there is a problem in the future, the specific-oriented manager will look at the contract first, while the diffuse-oriented manager will make a phone call first instead. It is needless to say that the continuously prescribing insistence on and reference to fixed agreements is appropriate to harm the self-estimation of the latter.

Both the UAI and ART dimensions come into effect in this regard as well. According to Indian perception things continuously change over time. Consistently, there is no point in preparing detailed agreements, which are outdated as soon as they come out of the printer. Not sticking to agreements is, of course, upsetting for Germans who insist that agreements be valid until revised by common decision (UAI), whereas the Indian part implicitly (LHC) (IDV) (ART) assumes that Germans share this perception and anything can be arranged by mutual consent whenever needed.

On the operational working level such cultural incomprehension materializes less in contracts but does so in daily informal and formal agreements. Again, in the self-perception of diffuse individuals there is no point in sticking to agreements as soon as the underlying circumstances change. Such agreements then simply become obsolete and it’s not even worth a notice to the

specific counterparts because it is so obvious from their perspective. The perception of the specific counterparts might be fundamentally different, and at least they would require an updated and revised agreement, at least verbally. Consistently, they perceive the Indian part as uncontrolled, disorganized and chaotic (UAI), and pragmatic at best, while the Indian part perceives the specific-oriented attitude as unnecessarily stiff, redundant, and formal beyond the necessary. In total, good collaboration is easily and often damaged on both sides.

- Applicability: the SVD dimension stands on its own and as a separate entity, although it is strongly embedded with, and related to, other dimensions. Many of its components may be explained by referring to other dimensions, in particular to the power distance (PDI) and the individualism vs. collectivism dimension (IDV). At the same time, the SVD dimension is applicable for the explanation of behavior where other dimensions fail, or it offers more immediate explanations for following issues, observations and situations. It

  1. explains personality-hurting criticism and massive reaction
  2. adds its particular flavor to explanation to the speed of negotiation
  3. adds to the explanation of irrational (albeit seldom) behavior when pride was hurt
  4. explains context-depending behavior of Germans and its perception by Indians
  5. enlightens role-based behavior vs. relationship-based behavior
  6. explains “inappropriate” approaches by Indians
  7. highlights the differing perspectives on agreements (both formal and informal)

  The SVD dimension passes the test for redundancy. It also passes the test for validity as its effectiveness in the field study has been verified.

5.2.5 AVA: Achievement vs. Ascription

According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), achievement and ascription are described as:

> While some societies accord status to people on the basis of their achievements, others ascribe it to them by virtue of age, class, gender, education, and so on. The first kind of status is called *achieved* and the second *ascribed* status. While achieved status refers to *doing*, ascribed status refers to *being*. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.125)

A seductive conclusion to be drawn from this description is that in cultures wherein ascription prevails, other factors rather than personal performance may dominate and consistently, positions may be occupied by tenants not always blinded by expertise and results. However, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) contradict this basically achievement-oriented Western perception by pointing at the fact that other models and paradigms exist and give the example of two nations, which show substantial parts of ascription:

> The interweaving of ascribing and achieving orientation is a feature of the world's leading economies, Japan and Germany. Both cultures tend to confine achieving as *individuals* to school. Thereafter, managers are supposed to cooperate. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.131)

The authors doubt that the Western achievement philosophy, widely based on Protestantism, is exclusively linked to economic success:

> A second glance at the scores shows that there are growing difficulties with the thesis that an achievement orientation is the key to economic success… In short, there is no evidence that either orientation belongs to a "higher" level of development, as

> modernization theorists used to claim." (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, pp.128-129)

In the former the authors describe other models and dynamics than those of the Western achievement-oriented models:

> Notice, though, the effect that ascription has on performance. The… are determined to live up to their ascribed status, which, in turn, can lead to higher performance. Hence, it can be a self-fulfilling prophecy: through living up to the status ascribed to them, they 'deserve' the status that was given to them before they actually earn it. In practice, then, achieving status and ascribing status can be finely interwoven. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.131)

The field study delivers few examples for ascription (e.g. section 4.4 Structuring Meetings). It may sometimes not be that clear what people did to climb to that position, but they are without doubt adding value: they "grew up to that position", they solve problems, they provide solutions and results, they smoothen the path, they build up and maintain relationships — and all this by means not that transparent for individuals from an achievement-based environment. As the field study confirms, the existence of such individuals that act on an ascription basis and demonstrate according attitudes can actually be demonstrated.

For obvious reasons, it is appropriate to assume a correlation between the power distance (PDI) dimension and the achievement vs. ascription (AVA) dimension. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) themselves point at such power distance and protocol observations, among other examples (on p.133 ff.):

> It can be extremely irritating to managers from achieving cultures when an ascriptive team of negotiators has some "éminence grise" hovering in the background to whom they have to submit any proposals or changes. It is even not clear what this person

> does. Such people will not say what they want, but simply expect deference not just from you but also from their own team members, who are forever watching for faint signs of assent or dissent. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.132)

A too strong correlation between the PDI and AVA dimension would compromise the independency of the latter. However, there are low and medium power distance nations, which show a momentum of ascription, for example Germany. As a result, PDI alone might not fully explain AVA. It is therefore suggested to add the AVA dimension to the evaluation list because it passes the check for redundancy.

In addition, there is good reasoning to assume that high ascription scores reinforce high power distance, which would reverse the root-cause relationship between both. Ascriptive managers would find themselves, at least at the beginning, in the position to apply formal means to justify their role.

Additional context between the AVA dimension and others, namely IDV, MAS, LHC, and SVD are documented in the reference and strength matrices (9 Appendix A: Reference Matrix and 10 Appendix B: Strength Matrix (raw)).

- Applicability: the AVA dimension stands for itself and as a separate entity, although it is strongly embedded with other dimensions, in particular with the PDI and the IDV dimension. It offers explanations for observations where other dimensions provide incomplete reasoning. It therefore passes the test for redundancy. It also passes the test for validity because its effectiveness in the field study has been verified.

5.2.6 ART: Attitudes with Regard to Time

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) discuss the role of time in two regards. First, they bring up the role of time in regard to the importance of the past and the future. Some context to the AVA and LTO dimensions becomes slightly visible:

> In some societies what somebody has achieved in the past is not that important. It is more important to know what plan the person has developed for the future. In other societies you can make more of an impression with your past accomplishments than those of today…Americans generally start from zero, and what matters is their present performance and their plan to 'make it' in the future… for the French…they have enormous sense of the past and relatively less focus on the present and future than the Americans. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.13)

Second, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) point at the distinctive ways in which time is perceived:

> In certain cultures, such as the American…time is perceived as passing in a straight line, a sequence of disparate events. Other cultures think of time more as moving in a circle, the past and present together with future possibilities. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.13)

And, more concisely:

> Time can be legitimately conceived as a line of sequential events passing us at regular intervals. It can also be conceived of as cyclical and repetitive, compressing past, present, and future by what they have in common: *seasons and rhythms*. At one extreme, then, is the person who conceives of time as a dotted line with regular spacing. Events are organized by the number of intervals before or after their occurrence. Everything has its time and place as far as the sequential thinker is concerned. Any change or turbulence in this sequence will make the sequential person more uncertain. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.151)

The first perspective on time, backward and future orientation, may suggest some proximity to the LTO dimension of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010). However, both are distinct and

should be kept apart. LTO concentrates on values according to which a culture behaves and then concludes whether deriving attitudes are more or less future-oriented. In contrast to that, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) associate the characterization with the distinction of past achievements and future plans.

The former citations bring up the question whether Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) are not actually discussing *two* distinct dimensions, the one of future or past orientation, and the other one that concentrates on the perception of time. However, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) introduce both concepts in *regard to time*, but leave the aspect of future and past orientation completely unrefined in the remainder while exclusively concentrating on the aspect how time is conceived.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) then continue describing the advantages and disadvantages of both kinds of time perception:

> Going from A to B in a straight line with minimal effort and maximum effect is known as *efficiency*. This principle has a major influence on the conduct of business in northwestern Europe and North America. The flaw in this thinking is that straight lines may not always be the best way of doing something; it is blind to the *effectiveness* of shared activities and cross-connections… The synchronic method, however, requires that people track various activities in parallel… not easy for cultures that are not used to it… In contrast, the sequential person has a 'crucial path' worked out *in advance* with times for completion of each stage. The person hates to be thrown off this schedule or agenda by unanticipated events. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p.152)

It is of worth to highlight some aspects of the above citation: first, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) attribute advantages to monocronic cultures when it comes to matters of *efficiency*, and advantages to polycronic cultures when it comes to matters of *effectiveness*. This

is reminiscent of Peter Druckers' famous statement that "effectiveness is doing the right things, while efficiency is doing things right."

Second, polychronic cultures appear to be more robust in chaotic environments, while monochronic cultures require stability and adherence to plans; they tend to reject disturbances or updates to the plan whenever the circumstances change. And third, monochronic cultures tend to make decisions, or at least prepare the grounds for such, *beforehand*. There obviously is a strong context to Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension (UAI). It appears fair to assume that in particular monochronic cultures with a high inclination towards uncertainty avoidance might compensate for uncertainty by increased efforts for pre-emptying and accurate planning, or at least, by focusing on rules. Anyway, all of the former elaborations of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) in regard to effectiveness and efficiency, robustness, and decision-making are actually supported by observations made in the field study.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) openly refer to Edward T. Hall (1959; 1983; 1989). The merits and credits for first uncovering this terra incognita as early as 1959 definitely go to Hall, but further refinement and operationalization were undertaken by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). The latter would favor the option to add the ART dimension to the evaluation list and skip Hall's MVP (Monochronic vs. Polychronic) dimension. One more reason to apply Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) is that Hall, as a tribute to the time when publishing his initial ideas and observations in 1959, was inherently, but remarkably, embedded in a polarizing thinking by dividing the world into the US and the remainder, while Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) favor a more generic approach, often in opposition to Western-centric thinking. To be fair, a Western-centric approach was for sure not the intention of Hall, but seems to be rooted in that of the "zeitgeist" six decades ago. This remark should not compromise the merits and value of Hall's insights at all and only serves the purpose to decide whether his MVP dimension *or* the ART dimension of Trompenaars and Hampden-

Turner (2012) should be applied to the evaluation list. The existence of both on the list would cause a redundancy. Because the intention of this dissertation is not to judge merits, but to provide a consistent, relevant and comprehensive set of evaluation criteria, it is suggested to apply Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) ART dimension.

To summarize, the perception of time and the advantages and disadvantages of both attitudes (monocronic and polycronic) enlightens the picture and is confirmed by the field study. Observed behavior and attitudes actually may be explained by the ART dimension, e.g. the attitude towards deadlines and agreed dates, the seriousness with which such dates are pursued and prepared for, and the observation that Indians tend to work on different issues at the same time in parallel, which invariably comes to the confusion of linear-timers, i.e. monochronic Westerners.

Another conclusion that might be drawn from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) and is also confirmed by field study observation is that synchronic or polychronic patterns equip their owners with more robustness and flexibility. Particularly in chaotic situations, monochronic people are easily overwhelmed by disorder, complexity, and unforeseeable consequences of required short-term decisions. Their assumed advantage of analytical accuracy and deepness melts away because it requires a stable and well-organized environment.

To summarize these considerations, it appears to be appropriate to assume that polychronic minds enjoy an advantage in regard to effectiveness ("doing the right things"), in particular under chaotic circumstances, while monochronic minds have an advantage in regard to efficiency ("doing things right"), in particular in organized, stable, and disturbance-free environments.

The particular value of the ART dimension lays in the fact that Hofstede's traditional four dimensions PDI, IDV, MAS, and UAI offer little explanation support of certain observations during the field study. These four dimensions provide no strong, consistent, and direct reasoning

when it comes to explaining the (a) seriousness or latitude of how dates are followed up (only UAI might partly, but incompletely explain), and (b) the ability to work on separate issues at the same time.

- PDI: time-related observations of the field study are hardly explainable by huge power distance differences. High PDI might even favor discipline in regard to timeliness and dedicated attention towards the Western partner, a complaint of Westerners invariably observable. High PDI values would even offer a contradictory explanation.
- IDV: some indirect and weak context might apply in regard to IDV. High collectivism creates an environment where things do not frequently have to be explicitly expressed (LHC) (COM) and work follows patterns often difficult to identify by Westerners. Common sense among Indians might be that circumstances permanently change, causing deadlines to vary consistently and naturally, not even worth mentioning explicitly. And because everything is connected to everything in a high context environment, there is no point in sticking to isolated issues. However, these assumptions are more fundamentally rooted in a perception of time and reality than they are in collectivism as such.
- MAS: some weak context might be construed to masculinity, respectively its low index values in India as striving for achievements is necessarily connected to dates. Whenever a culture acts in a low-masculinity environment, the ambition to provide outcomes and to comply with dates is supposed to be less distinctive. In regard to parallel mental processing, high feminity values might construe the basis for balancing out issues.
- UAI: Finally, low uncertainty avoidance might *partly* offer explanations for an unstressed attitude towards deadlines, but it fails to sufficiently explain the ability to work on different issues in parallel. To position the last thought, it is important to keep in mind that the idea

of concentrating on one, and only one, issue at any time is a Western, and linear one. It is not a value in itself and does not apply globally.

The above attempt for explanations shows how difficult it is to draw a line of reasoning between observed behavior (discipline regarding time and parallel mental processing) and Hofstede's traditional dimensions. Such an attempt is in danger to remain pure theory, and forces the analyst to construe indirect and circumventing arguing, which is another strong indicator towards the originality of the ART dimension.

In this context it is important to point at the obvious fact that both the perception of time and that of reality are closely related. However, the ART dimension tends to become oversimplified (or too general) by merging several distinct components into one: the aspect of timeliness, the aspect of future and backwards orientation, and the aspect of parallel mental processing. It almost looks as if the naming of "attitudes with regard to time" was deliberately chosen to create a rather generic entity to collect a variety of attitudes. This lack of differentiation comes at the expense of accuracy.

And finally, any attempt to explain ART exclusively by UAI faces the problem that there is obviously little correlation between timeliness and uncertainty avoidance. There are many cultures which exhibit strict adherence to dates (and insist on timeliness), but show varying low-UAI scores. Examples for this are the USA, The Netherlands, Scandinavia, to state just a few.

- Applicability: The ART dimension passes both the validity and redundancy check. In regard to the question whether the ART dimension *or* Hall's MVP dimension should be added to the evaluation list, good reasoning to use the ART dimension is provided. In regard to the relevance and validity of the ART dimension it can be confirmed that its prevalence causes frequent and actual disturbances of collaboration between monochronic and polychronic cultures. It is a severe and often observed source of mutual frustration. In

regard to the redundancy check with other dimensions it can be concluded that the ART dimension stands on its own. It proposes explanations where other dimensions fail, namely Hofstede's traditional four dimensions PDI, IDV, MAS, and UAI. In particular, the attempt to explain ART exclusively by UAI remains debatable. However, the ART dimension is intertwined with many other dimensions, but the dependencies appear to be weak and indirect. In any case, it cannot come as a surprise that a dimension that describes a fundamental concept such as time is intertwined with many other dimensions. The ART dimension actually deals with distinct subjects: (a) back and forward orientation, (b) perception of time and reality, and (c) timeliness — which comes at the expense of compromising its accuracy.

5.2.7 ARE: Attitudes with Regard to Environment

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) state the following regarding the ARE dimension:

> Societies that conduct business have developed two major orientations toward nature. They either believe that they can and should *control* nature by imposing their will on it, as in the ancient biblical injunction "multiply and subdue the earth," or they believe that humans are part of nature and must *go along* with its laws, directions and forces. The first of these orientations we shall describe as *inner-directed*. This kind of culture tends to identify with mechanisms; that is, the organization is conceived of as a machine that obeys the will of its operators. The second, the *outer-directed*, tends to see an organization as itself a product of nature, owing its development to the nutrients in its environment and to a favorable ecological balance. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, pp.173-174)

Once more, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) do not provide a further, more exact definition of this dimension and leave it widely up to the reader to understand what the ARE dimension exactly is about. Nevertheless, the pragmatic hints appear to be valuable, but insofar

difficult to apply as the definition remains vague, of course. Wide parts of the text remain arbitrarily applicable to any kind of context.

One might be seduced to conclude that *inner-directed* cultures will demonstrate a more active, interfering attitude in general, while *outer-directed* cultures will show a more passive style by complying with destiny and external circumstances. But in the context of this dissertation such potentially valuable considerations became obsolete, because, after careful review of the section on ARE, no relevance for the field study could be detected. To be concise, the former does not mean such cultural differences would not exist at all; they simply cannot be confirmed by the field study.

Although the context brings to mind Max Weber and his thoughts about active/passive and rational/irrational behavior and therefore it might be valuable to have a closer look at it, such a suggested *active* role of the Germans in contrast to the more *passive* Indians could hardly be detected (and still might be explained by MAS, for example). Without doubt, the danger of stereotypes not supported by evidence too easily might supersede facts. One observation from the field study is that Indians may stay observing and rather inactive under certain circumstances, while being very active, even pro-active, in other situations. The underlying reasons could hardly be identified and would require further research. In any case, if a passive attitude of Indians actually existed, explanations could be derived from other dimensions as well.

This critique does not include any evaluation of the general applicability of this dimension in another context. It simply suggests that the ARE dimension is of no or little relevance regarding the scope of this dissertation, which is the influence of cultural factors on the process of systems development applied to cooperation between Germany and India.

Because the relevance of this dimension for the field study cannot be confirmed, any further effort for a detailed checking for redundancies or context with other dimensions becomes

obsolete. Some weak hints and context, if any, can be detected towards Hofstede's IDV and MAS dimensions, Hall's LHC dimension and Meyer's elaborations. Unfortunately, this context is exclusively concluded from an analysis of the *section on hints* of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). In other words, the text itself does not provide any obvious relationships to other dimensions, but the recommendations at the end of the section do so.

Again, other dimensions might contribute to passive and rather observing attitudes, such as high power distance (PDI), low individualism (IDV), low masculinity (MAS), potentially causing the redundancy of the ARE dimension. In total, it would potentially come as an oversimplification to reduce actual or perceived passiveness exclusively to the ARE dimension.

Finally, both cultures, India and Germany, rate similarly on the scales provided by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012, pp.175-176) and therefore few insights might be expected from a discussion of cultural differences between both.

- Applicability: the ARE dimension fails to pass the validity check. While its general applicability may not be neglected, no evidence for its effectiveness could be identified within the field study. This result makes a deeper check for redundancy obsolete. However, only, if at all, very weak and indirect conclusions regarding the relationship with other dimensions can be drawn by backward analysis from the hints section. Additionally, the index values offered do not indicate a substantial difference between both cultures suggesting that there is little potential for further exploration.

5.3 E.T. Hall (1989)

Hall hardly makes attempts to define exactly his cultural dimensions. Instead, he provides descriptions of idiosyncratic behavior and examples. Besides this observation, his explanations focus on a discussion that centers on US versus other perspectives. Little further analysis or

differentiation among other cultures is provided. Paying tribute to his times, his elaborations are centered at a contemporary 'weltanschauung' such as 'we and them'.

5.3.1 LHC: Low and High Context

Hall (1989) evaluates the differing attitudes regarding context, which relates closely to *how information is processed.* The vast amount of information needs to be managed. One way of doing so is to apply the high-context rule:

> That is, the only way to increase information-handling capacity without increasing the mass and complexity of the system is to program the memory of the system so that less information is required… context as a way of handling information overload… Therefore what one pays attention to, context, and information overload are all functionally related (Hall, 1989, pp.85-86).

According to Hall, high-context communication consistently comes at the advantage of being, economical, fast, efficient, and satisfying. Issues that appear to be part of common values, rules, and culture do not have to be expressed repeatedly. They become an inherent, mostly unconscious, part of how individuals collaborate and form a system of unspoken rules. This causes them to be "long-lived and slow to change." (Hall, 1989, p.101)

In contrast to high-context cultures, things have to be expressed clearly and repeatedly in low-context cultures. Repetition of transferred information, explicit and isolated formulation of what is considered facts is the rule rather than the exception. Hall even links to the positivistic philosophy in Western research:

> Western science, striving for replicability and rigor in methods is conducted with a view to eliminating context. (Hall, 1989, p.125)

As Meyer (2014) makes transparent in her description of the COM dimension, such a decomposition and isolation of issues appears strange in many cultures, in particular in the holistic philosophies of Far-Eastern ones.

Considering the differences and sources of conflicts between low and high-context cultures, Hall reports that low-context individuals are easily "headed for trouble" because they have little sensitivity for the underlying rules and assumptions of their counterparts. This is a notion supported by the field study.

Without referencing to other cultural dimensions, for obvious reasons (they were hardly known by then), Hall describes differences between the two poles, which links to the many dimensions of other authors. For example, elements of PDI, IDV, UVP, LEA, EVA, COM, and DIS can be detected in following citation, making the composite nature of the LHC dimension obvious:

> It is easier to foresee trouble or coming confrontations in low-context cultures than high-context cultures, because in the low-context culture the bonds that tie people together are somewhat fragile, so that people move away or withdraw if things are not going well. In the high-context culture… because the bonds between people are so strong, there is a tendency to allow for considerable bending of the system. (Hall, 1989, p.127)

PDI comes into effect, because people can freely move away based on their own decision (IDV) without being embedded in in a social system (IDV again). UVP becomes visible because such phenomena as dealing individually with people depending on personal bonds are described by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). LEA plays a role, but is hardly worth mentioning as a result of its redundancy with PDI. EVA surfaces weakly, but is worth mentioning because of the context of negative feedback and confrontation. And DIS comes into effect because of its focus on different styles of disagreeing.

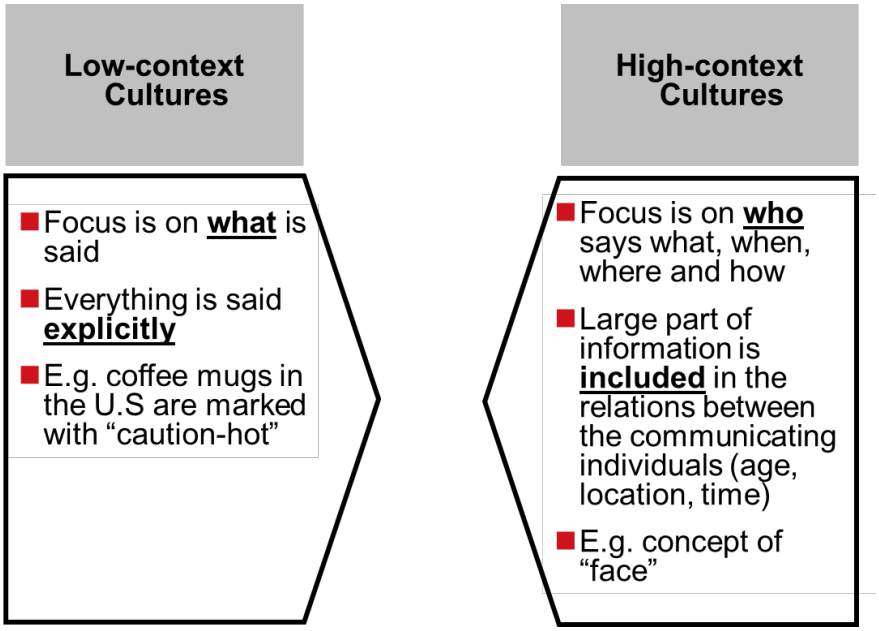


***Figure 15*: Low-Context vs. High-Context Cornerstones.**

(Source: presentation Tuba Khesraui)

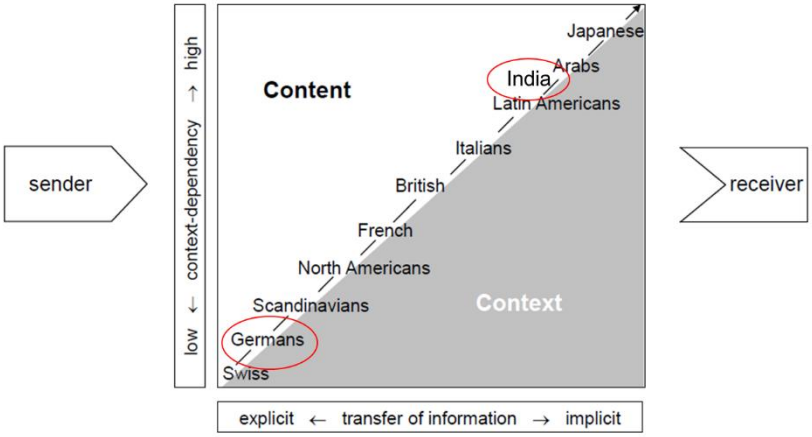


***Figure 16*: Positions along the Low-Context vs. High-Context Scale.**

(Source: presentation Tuba Khesraui)

- Applicability: Applying the LHC dimension offers substantial sources for the identification of cultural conflicts. The differences between India and Germany are large, as the above figure indicates. Low-context individuals are "headed for trouble" in a high-context

environment. Not surprisingly, the field study brings to surface many such conflicts. However, it is not added to the set of evaluation criteria not only because of its composite nature (it can be decomposed into many underlying dimensions) but because of more refined elaborations on the same issue provided by Meyer (2014). Although the LHC dimension is genuine and valid without doubt, the appliance of Meyer's (2014) COM dimension comes at the benefit of enabling a deeper and more accurate analysis and discussion of observations.

5.3.2 MVP: Monochronic Time vs. Polychronic Time

Hall describes the different perceptions of time and space, which comes closest to a definition of this dimension:

> .., Americans, when they are serious, usually prefer to do one thing at a time, and this requires some kind of scheduling… Monochronic time (M-time) and polychronic time (P-time) represent variant solutions to the use of both time and space as organizing frames for activities. Space is included because the two systems are interrelated. M-time emphasizes schedules, segmentation and promptness. P-time systems are characterized by several things happening at once. They stress involvement of people and completion of transactions rather than adherence to preset schedules. P-time is treated as much less tangible than M-time. P-time is apt to be considered a point rather than a ribbon or a road, and that point is sacred. (Hall, 1989, p.17)

Hall continues to describe the consequences which materialize according to his experience: that in polychronic environments appointments do not carry the same weight as in monochronic ones; that agendas might constantly be shifted around, that little serious planning happens (UAI), that changes up to the very last minute are the norm and not the exception; that there is no purpose-oriented compartmentalization of time (and instead parallel agendas are pursued);

that letting others wait is not considered impolite; and that not full and exclusive dedication is given to single items which are considered urgent or important.

The potential for irritation and conflict from a monochronic perspective is obvious: Westerners are easily off-balanced when exposed to such a dynamic environment, which they consider chaotic. They are used to following pre-dominantly cemented plans with an inherent inner resistance to randomly changing plans and agreements; they are overwhelmed by many things suddenly happening in parallel without each item being brought to an end with discipline and structure; and they strongly disapprove last minute changes which lead to their uneasy impression of not being in control of the process. This desire to proceed step-by-step in linear and highly structured and controllable ways is strongly reminiscent of high-UAI cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). However, such an analogy bears the danger of over-simplification because monochronic cultures include both low and high-UAI cultures. Very similar considerations apply to the ART dimension of Trompenaars and Hampden-Tuner (2012), who additionally provide examples when either style might be advantageous or disadvantageous in a given context. Hall addresses this point as well, by pointing at the ability of Westerners to concentrate on one thing at a time, "but it denies us context." Further,

> Since scheduling by its very nature selects what will and will not be perceived and attended and permits only a limited number of events in a given period, what gets scheduled in or out constitutes a system for setting priorities… (Hall, 1989, p.18)

Interestingly, Hall bridges his MVP dimension to what later will be named the PDI dimension by explaining that polychronic environments "demand a much greater centralization of control" due to an increased need of synchronization by a central manager (p.22). Without explicitly mentioning it, Hall refers to the concept of 'span of control' and concludes that: "Organizations run on the polychronic model are limited in size." (p.23).

In addition to PDI, similar references to the dimensions IDV, MAS, UAI, UVP, and IVC appear in this context as well (p.23 and p.150). Briefly, the impression arises that Hall might have felt that there are more detailed components in his MVP dimension to discover; he makes an attempt to attribute observations to his MVP dimensions that might have been assigned to PDI, IDV, MAS, and UAI (UVP and IVC will not be found on the consolidated evaluation list) from a today's perspective. In regard to correlation between his two dimensions, Hall himself states that: "High-context people also tend to be polychronic." (p.150)

The MVP dimension offers explanations to observations of the field study. Ground truths, values, facts, time, and closely related to time, reality, are often perceived in fundamentally different ways. While Germans perceive time as one, and only one, line of reality and space, Indians perceive time as happening in multiple, parallel intertwined bubbles. While Germans focus with a high concentration on particular isolated issues at hand and exhibit the desire to bring them to an end before moving on to the next (experiencing confusion when their counterpart does not). Indians process facts and reality in a multi-tasking way in parallel. While Germans tend to easily get confused when inundated with fast changing information and when they have to leave their pre-defined agenda, Indians remain calm and in control of the situation. While Germans accept only one reality and consistently assume there is a chain of strict root-cause relationships and only one truth (a thought also mentioned by Hofstede in regard to high-UAI cultures), Indians simply accept multiple perceptions of reality and do not show any ambition to elaborate further on defining a superior truth. In brief, Germans are "specific" while Indians are "diffuse" according to Trompenaars SVD dimension.

The consequences of parallel reality and time processing also materialize in context to the adherence to agreements. In case there is no strict linear link of root-cause relationships and no one single factual truth, any agreement has to be seen in another light: the reasons that led to that agreements constantly change. This leads to the perception that agreements are time-bound,

limiting their validity to the point in time when closed and making them obsolete as soon as circumstances change. This effect is potentially multiplied by high pragmatism on the low-UAI Indian, side. Indians will assume that Germans are implicitly aware of this vague valuation of agreements, but unfortunately they are not. Germans expect any agreement *explicitly* revised which surfaces to be a frequent conflict in daily operations. The context in reference to other cultural dimensions becomes evident, e.g. to Hall's LHC, Hofstede`s IDV, Trompenaars's SVD, and Meyer's COM, to state just a few.

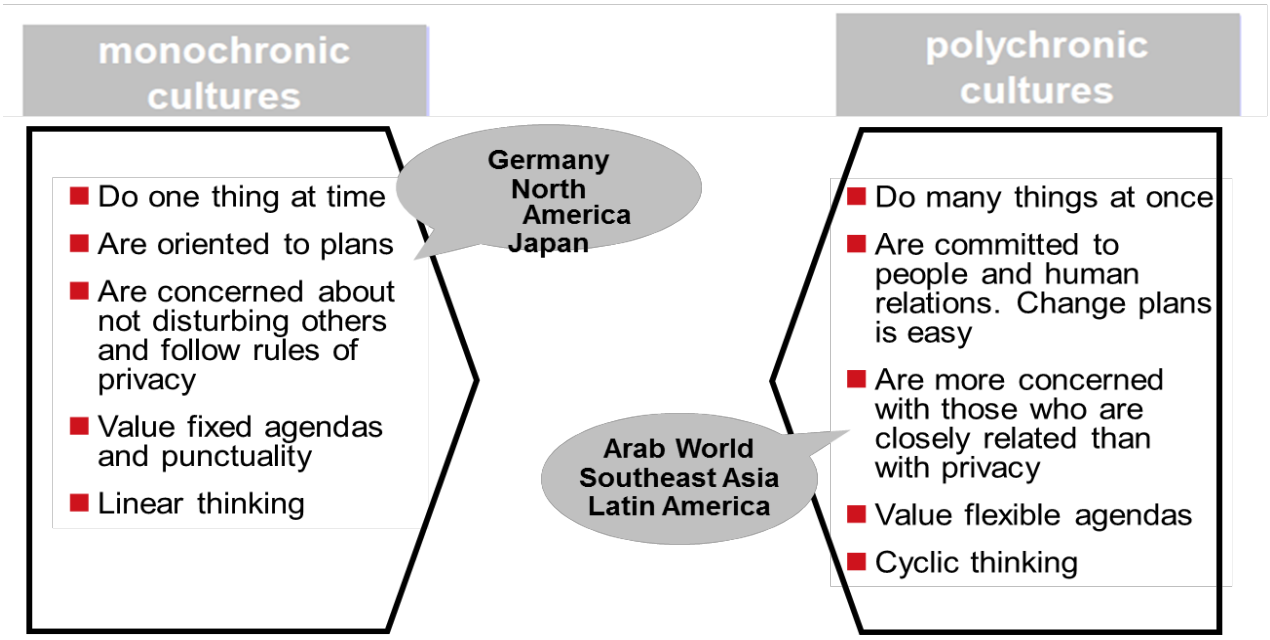


***Figure 17*: Monochronic vs. polychronic Dimension Cornerstones.**

Characteristics of the MVP dimension (source: presentation Tuba Khesraui)

- Applicability: Judged by chronology and exploration, Hall's (1989) MVP dimension, is genuine. It explains observations, which are challenging to deliver based exclusively on Hofstede. With Hofstede, it is not easy to explain (a) the existence of parallel realities and action items, or the ability and preference to operate in such, and (b) the differing perceptions of time among cultures. It might be assumed that Hofstede would suggest a

composition of his dimensions for an explanation, with emphasis on his UAI dimension. A relative attempt for an example might be that high-UAI cultures tend to reduce uncertainty by an increased focus on structure and time organization. Such an explanation would come with at least two concerns: on the one hand, there are low-UAI cultures that emphasize punctuality; on the other hand, a composition of Hofstede's dimensions delivers only far-fetching non-direct explanations. And finally, the discussion of discrete dimensions adds much value to the analysis. Although the merits for discovering the MVP dimension without a doubt belong to Hall, it is suggested to replace it by the ART dimension of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), who refined and enriched Hall's work. The ART dimension fully covers the MVP dimension.

5.4 Erin Meyer (2014)

5.4.1 COM: Communicating: Low-Context vs. High-Context

5.4.1.1 Discussion of Context with other Dimensions

Before discussing the positioning, validity, and potential redundancy of the COM dimension, it is essential to recall the intention of the evaluation list. It should provide a comprehensive, meaningful, and consistent, i.e., redundancy-free, set of dimensions that lay the grounds for the analyses and interpretation of the observations of the field study. The intention to create the set of evaluation criteria is less to judge in detail which author came first, and who contributed the most to the elaboration of particular dimensions. However, whenever *no* new insights or impetus can be gained from an author's presentation of a specific dimension, it should be eliminated from the evaluation list to reduce complexity. This does by no means include an implicit statement on the quality of an author's contribution. In brief, the overall goal is to consolidate the variety of dimensions to a meaningful, comprehensive set of significant criteria.

The above clarification is of particular relevance when discussing the COM dimension because all authors acknowledge its significance in total or in part, and all authors refer to Hall and his explanations of the high- and low-context dimension (LHC). Consistently, a decision has to be made to avoid redundant aspects of the evaluation criteria list. This decision has to happen based on sound reasoning but will remain partly vulnerable to the allegation of being arbitrary at the end.

First of all, the credits for the discovery and description of high- and low context cultures (LHC) go to Hall (1959). Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) and Meyer (2014) freely and repeatedly refer to Hall and acknowledge his foundation-building work.

The analysis of Hall's LHC dimension concluded that its characteristics could be described by other more refined or more fundamental dimensions, namely IDV, PDI, UVP, LEA, EVA, COM, and DIS. It, therefore, passes the redundancy check with slight concerns.

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), however, acknowledge the relevance of Hall's elaborations. However, they would most probably question the independency and discreteness of Hall's LHC dimension. It may be assumed that Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) would strongly contradict the notion of an independent LHC dimension; from their perspective, it would be mostly covered by their IDV dimension.

However, there is an acid test to decide whether the IDV dimension can sufficiently explain the LHC dimension, or whether such reasoning neglects discrete attributes of the LHC dimension. That is to say, are there cultures, which demonstrate high collectivism (i.e. low IDV), but extensively use *explicit* means of communication — which is a fundamental attribute of low-context cultures? The answer to that question is "yes." The author spends one-third of the year in Colombia, which is a highly collectivistic culture, but far from being a calm place where little explicit conversation happens, judged by the sheer number of words exchanged per day,

by repitition and by their volume. Much is discussed by verbal means and intense wordy discussion.

Interestingly, the same applies to Indian environments: discussions can be loud and emotional as long as circumstances, in particular PDI, permit. Consistently, it would be an oversimplification to state that collectivistic (low-IDV) cultures do not communicate intensely by verbal means — and the opposite, i.e., that high-IDV cultures are noisy. There seems to be a component missing in the explanation offered by Hofstede, who claims that collectivistic cultures do not require the intense exchange of words because unspoken relationship-based rules make such explicit communication obsolete.

To summarize, there obviously exist cultures which demonstrate both high-collectivism (low IDV) *and* elements of low-context (LHC) attitudes, a phenomenon difficult to explain if both dimensions would be merged into one. To conclude, the analysis mentioned above and examples provide reasoning for the distinctive character of both the IDV and LHC dimension and, finally, the COM dimension. Hofstede's proposal does not pass this acid test. Merging both dimensions (IDV and LHC) into one would come at the cost of accuracy by ignoring valuable differentiating aspects.

The close context of Meyer's COM dimension to her EVA dimension becomes obvious: because India demonstrates elements of high-context attitudes at the same time, much is signalized by the framework and unspoken rules. In particular, it is very challenging for Indians, or even located somewhere between disturbing and annoying, to convey bad news. Instead, Indians often tend to send indirect and partly hidden signs of refusal or concern too weak to detect for non-sensitive listeners from low-LHC cultures.

As also explained in the discussion of the NVA dimension, it can be reported that Indians, if circumstances permit, can be very emotional and affective. Again, this fact contradicts the interpretation that collectivistic and high-context cultures are calm and neutral by nature. There

seems to be a separate factor missing, explaining such situation-based behavior. The COM dimension potentially helps to fill this gap.

5.4.1.2 Characteristics of the COM Dimension

It still has to be examined is whether Meyer's (2014) COM dimension adds new perspectives beyond Hall's LHC to the set of valuation criteria. Simply speaking, Hall is the originator, but Meyer (2014) contributed to making it applicable and operational for practice. Admittedly, this decision remains with a momentum of arbitrary flavor, unfortunately, as it is purely based on Meyer's (2014) refinements and not on the substance of the LHC dimension as such.

Like Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), Meyer (2014) sets the primary focus on providing pragmatic advice. Her origin from consultancy is obvious, and she does not claim to comply with the requirements of positivistic scientific rigor. When it comes to the question to decide for rigor or relevance, she invariably votes for the latter. Her richness derives from sound experience, and it would be negligent to ignore the insights of such an expert. Her proclamations are less based on quantitative research, but experience, observation, and qualitative considerations. Her pragmatic approach comes at the cost of the lack of definitions, and consistently it is once more, as already witnessed with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), left to the reader to condense and extract the meaning and content of the COM dimension, which are widely presented by examples and anecdotes. The following citations serve the purpose to illustrate the scope of the COM dimension:

> …the skills involved in being an *effective communicator* vary dramatically from one culture to another. In the United States and other Anglo-Saxon cultures, people are trained (mostly subconsciously) to communicate as *literally* and *explicitly* as possible. Good communication is all about *clarity* and *explicitness*, and accountability for accurate transmission of the message is placed firmly on the communicator: 'If you don't understand, it's my fault.'

> (In other cultures) By contrast, messages are often conveyed *implicitly*, requiring the listener to read between the lines. Excellent communication is *subtle*, layered, and may depend on copious subtext, with responsibility for transmission of the message shared between the one sending the message and the one receiving it being a good listener is just as crucial for effective communication as being a good speaker. And both of these essential skills are equally variable from one culture to another." (Meyer, 2014, p.31)

> Communicating messages without saying them directly is a deep part of our culture, so deep that we do it without even realizing it… *kuuki yomenai*, which means 'one who cannot read the air' — in other words, a person sorely lacking the ability to read between the lines. In Japan if you can't read the air, you are not a good listener… and if one person is implicitly communicating disagreement or discomfort, we should be able to pick up on that discomfort. (Meyer, 2014, p.33)

> …low-context communication. People from such cultures are conditioned from childhood to assume a low level of shared context – that is, few shared reference points and comparatively little knowledge linking speaker and listener… In low context cultures, effective communication must be simple, clear, and explicit in order to effectively pass the message… (Meyer, 2014, p.34)

Meyer finally summarizes the "philosophy of low-context communication in a nutshell":

> Tell them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you've told them. (Meyer, 2014, p.35)

She also offers the following ranking:



***Figure 18*: Positions on Meyer's COM Scale.**

In international collaboration, frustration might potentially arise on both sides the low-context, and the high-context part. The high-context sending part might be astonished that the low-context listener does not detect messages clearly and repeatedly sent, at least in the perception of the sender. It forces the sender to re-send repeatedly with increasing intensity and explicit (possibly) negative content, which is very much against their cultural nature and comes to their discomfort. But also when listening, a person from a high-context culture will spend much attention for scanning for indirect messages that do not exist, resulting in the danger of misconceiving or overvaluing the unintended messages read between the lines. At least, he/she will waste energy and time on detecting something that is overrated.

The low-context sender is potentially frustrated by the reaction to his messages, which often will be close to nil. Assuming that they were not clear or explicit enough, they will repeat. Repeating messages is a frequent pattern for low-context senders and comes at little discomfort for them. But they will be confused by not receiving an explicit acknowledgement of receipt. His/her listeners will not explicitly repeat his/her message, as low-context listeners often do. In particular, the listeners will not challenge the message or openly state criticism (EVA), leaving the sender alone with some uncertainty whether she/he had been heard and understood. Not only is this a pattern deriving from different communication styles (COM), but also other

cultural dimensions contribute to this lack of responsiveness of the high-context side, namely high power distance (PDI), high collectivism (IDV), low masculinity (MAS), and high pragmatism (UAI). Several of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) dimensions come into effect as well. Affective communication styles (NVA) apply situation-based and explain outbreaks of emotion, diffuse personalities require established and relationship-based (and therefore inherent and unspoken) communication styles (SVD), and ascription types demand respect without explicit renewed discussion (AVA).

In this profile, Western low-context business professionals but also lecturers invariably report an, for them, astonishing lack of immediate responsiveness just to learn later they have been fully understood and had the full attention of their counterparts.

Another source of conflict is that low-context listeners are used to receiving clear responses to clear questions. Their vocabulary contains only a very limited set of words: 'yes', 'no', 'maybe', and 'not now, but by/when'. Caused by the lack of such clear statements, they return confused from negotiations and have problems in summarizing the status as soon as they are asked by their management to present the progress and achievement of their interaction. To repeat, the high-context part may have sent messages, even negative ones, which were overheard by the insensitive low-context receiver. The logical consequence must be to encourage high-context people to overcome inner barriers to explicit communication, even in case this might be perceived as being redundant or primitive.

For Germans there is a situation even worse than receiving unclear responses, which is receiving *no answer* at all. This is a state of uncertainty and discomfort, which is particularly disturbing when the essentially low-context Germans interact with other low-context nations. An example occurs frequently when addressing US Americans by email with a direct question and receiving no response at all. In US self-understanding, this often means "no", in German self-understanding it reveals an offense, at least disrespect. German self-understanding is that

the world is not perfect, and they want to learn about problems and negative developments in order to develop counter strategies early. Invariably reported good news makes them nervous and raises their skepticism level. These remarks again point at another close and potentially effective dimension: the role of negative feedback (Meyer's EVA dimension) and the reasonable assumption that conveying negative messages is not exclusively a problem between low- and high-context cultures. Ironically, the way in which people deal with negative messages and problems, evaluate the options and scan for solutions can increase their reputation in a German environment. Germans will not shoot the messenger for the message, but value those who work on solutions even under difficult circumstances (e.g. 4.6 The Irony of Crisis Resolution).

However, it is supposed to be an effective strategy for low-context people in a high-context environment to scan for issues that are obvious (and should be on the agenda from their perspective) but are *not* explicitly said. Whenever there are four obvious items on the list, but only three appraisals are delivered by the high-context part, this supposes a severe area of concern regarding the fourth. In addition, low-context people are then well advised to address this fourth item with care and diplomacy, and to apply non-direct means of communication.

As Meyer (2014) confirms:

> In a high-context culture…it's not necessary — indeed, it's often inappropriate – to spell out certain messages too explicitly. (Meyer, 2014, p.36)

To conclude, the implicit (and often heard) assumption that Indians have a hard time in conveying bad messages is *not correct*. They actually do, but are not understood. This lack of perception is caused by Western low-context constraints. Westerners frequently lack the sensors and the mindset to recognize indirectly mentioned concerns as such. Please note again the close proximity to the EVA dimension.

For obvious reasons, the differences in communication styles result in mutual misunderstandings:

> If you are from a low-context culture, you may perceive a high-context communicator as secretive, lacking transparency, or unable to communicate effectively… On the other hand, if you are from a high-context culture, you might perceive a low-context communicator as inappropriately stating the obvious, or even condescending and patronizing. (Meyer, 2014, p.42)

When working across cultures, it is a generally appropriate strategy to look for means to increase the mutual understanding with the other side, and to finally adapt to it to the best of one's ability. In regard to the COM dimension, the question arises for which part such an adaption is easier to achieve. For the high-context part, it appears to be *inconvenient* to repeatedly express messages towards insensitive listeners, and comes very much to their potential frustration. For the low-context part, it appears to be *impossible*, because they have no access to the universe of fine nuances of a high-context environment, and they would need many years of learning. Similar problems might surface between two high-context parts coming from fundamentally different cultures. Consistently, Meyer (2014) concludes:

> There is just one easy strategy to remember: multicultural teams need low-context processes. (Meyer, 2014, p.55)

Meyer (2014) also repeatedly applies the number of words verbally exchanged (and the language) for the distinction of low-context and high-context cultures:

> Low-context: good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face value. *Repetition* is appreciated if it helps clarifying the communication.

> High-context: Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed. (Meyer, 2014, p.39)

As Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) also do, Meyer (2014) misses to describe obvious observations in cultures like India, France, Italy, and Colombia: although these cultures may reasonably be described as collectivistic (IDV) or high-context (COM), discussions in these environments in parallel exhibit strong characteristics of low-context communication. They are far from being calm and inherently self-explaining, frequent *repetition* is the norm and not the exception, and clear directions may be explicitly and repeatedly given to subordinates.

- Applicability: The COM dimension passes the validity test. Researchers and practitioners have described its appearance by using other names for it for decades. Not surprisingly, it materializes in the field study repeatedly as well. Much analysis effort had to be spent on the check for redundancy because all authors on cross-cultural management highly value their set of similar dimensions and the ground-laying work of Hall. At the end, it is supposed to apply Meyer's COM dimension to the set of evaluation criteria. This decision was made after careful analysis and for the good reason of Meyer refining and operationalizing Hall' LHC dimension. However, there are arbitrary elements in this decision. These arbitrary elements are expected to be of little relevance because, targeting at the goal of the evaluation criteria, completeness ranks higher than partial redundancies. Hall's LHC dimension is taken off the evaluation list, but elements of his insights might apply.

5.4.2 EVA: Evaluating: Direct Negative Feedback vs. Indirect Negative Feedback

This dimension is about "The Many Faces of Polite — Evaluating Performance and Providing Negative Feedback." (p.61). Although it is closely related to the COM dimension, Meyer (2014) points out the distinctiveness of the EVA dimension, justifying its discreteness:

> Some cultures that are low-context and explicit may be cryptically indirect with negative criticism, while other cultures that speak between the lines may be explicit, straight talkers when telling you what you did wrong… The evaluating scale will provide you with important insights into how to give effective performance appraisals and negative feedback in different parts of the world. People from all cultures believe in 'constructive criticism'. Yet what is considered constructive in one culture may be viewed as destructive in another. (Meyer, 2014, p.62)

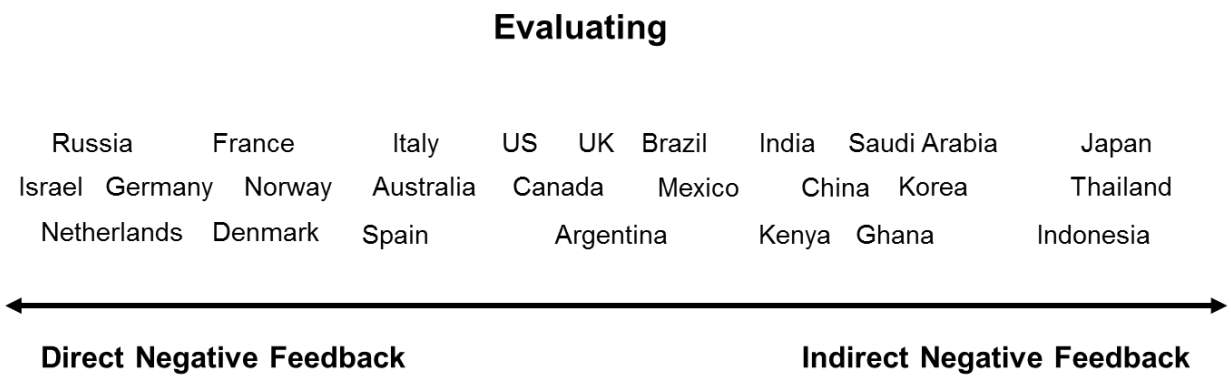


***Figure 19*: Positions on Meyer's EVA Scale.**

Meyer summarizes the relevant attributes as follows:

> Direct negative feedback: Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones. Absolute descriptors are often used ("totally inappropriate", "completely unprofessional") when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.
>
> Indirect negative feedback: Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying

> descriptors are often used (“sort of inappropriate”, “slightly unprofessional”) when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private. (Meyer, 2014, p.69)

The explanations given by Meyer (2014) support the observations regarding the Indian hesitance to deliver negative messages. To be concise, it was concluded that Indians are able to convey negative messages, but do so in a high-context format, which is difficult to decode by low-context listeners. By introducing the EVA dimension, Meyer (2014) decomposes and differentiates into more detail. This happens by the reasonable arguing that distinct cultures may take distinct positions on each scale.

The distinctiveness of the EVA dimension is supported by the evaluation that negative feedback cannot be directly explained by other dimensions. There actually exist cultures with a high PDI and low IDV that at the same time provide direct negative feedback when the opposite might be expected. Obviously, there is no clear correlation between PDI and EVA. The same applies for the individualism dimension (IDV). High collectivism would suggest rather relationship-based, harmony-oriented attitudes, in particular when it comes to effect with high femininity and balancing-out values (MAS). Further, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s (2012) UVP and SVD dimension, whose components show stark similarities with the PDI and IDV dimension, do not provide plausible explanations as to why negative feedback may be freely practiced in some particularist and diffuse environments.

To summarize, the EVA dimension widely stands alone as a discrete entity, but shows strong context when compared to the COM dimension, and varies when looking at the expectations the PDI and IDV dimensions would deliver. These considerations suggest that the EVA dimension is discrete. It offers explanations difficult to come to by the application of other dimensions. It therefore adds new nuances and contributes to a differentiating evaluation scheme.

By adding the EVA dimension and clarifying its discreteness, Meyer (2014) adds an important perspective to a comprehensive evaluation basis. Direct, explicit, low-context communication is easily confused with honestly and directly transferring messages at face value; but actually it is not the same. Actually, politeness reasons apply: a culture may be low-context, but resistant to providing direct negative feedback. The opposite may apply as well: high-context cultures openly providing direct negative feedback. However, in regard to the high-context Indian culture, negative messages are carried by indirect, polite means in general — which is a frequent source of mutual misunderstanding and conflict.

In Germany it is considered to be a trait (maybe not always a convenient one) to mention negative feedback — and to withstand to it. A reviewed approach that has passed through challenging severe criticism rates higher than harmony. Excellent results can only be achieved by passing through criticism process. It not only forms sustainable results, but also sharpens the personality of the defender. People who have the means and can bring solutions through such a challenging process are highly respected. During this process, Germans will analyze and attack the venture, but not the person. This is to be seen in remarkable context to the dimensions SVD (role-based and facts-oriented criticism by the German part which conflicts with the unprotected personality of the Indian part) and AVA (Germans questioning ascription-based partners, resulting in an uncomfortable pressure for justification on the Indians) and UVP (Germans challenging in any case, caused by a universalist conviction, often inappropriately ignoring the particularities of the Indian part).

Again, in Germany honest criticism is valued highly and offers the chance to constructively improve the subject or person. There is no point in hiding weaknesses, it helps no one, in particular not the person who still has potential for improvement. It should help him/her in shaping his/her personality. Being criticized almost is an honor, because it expresses the value of the person by dedicating time to him/her. Or, explained in the opposite way: if your thoughts

do not raise an eyebrow you have probably lost effectiveness, your ideas are irrelevant, or ugly said: your ideas are not worth discussing them.

Regarding the difference between Germany and India it should be remarked that, while all cultures "appreciate constructive feedback", it has to be presented by direct and explicit means in Germany in order to become effective. In India, it has to happen carefully and politely, as the elaborations in the section on the SVD dimension have brought to surface. It is not only important what is said, but also what is *not* said.

- Applicability: the EVA dimension passes both the validity and the redundancy test. It does not only clarify the presumed, embedded, high-context behavior, but details the differentiation between high-context attitudes and the prevalent source of misconception that derives from different means of conveying negative messages, including the detection of concerns and discomfort. Therefore, it is considered a valuable addition to the evaluation list.

The following table might enlighten by examples how negative messages are transferred in high-context cultures.

Ways to say ‚no'	Examples
Giving a 'no-response' response	Not answering emails Ignoring the question
Avoiding the question or changing the subject	„What is about the new…?"
Postponing the response	"Can I get back to you?" "Let me ask my team" "Let me follow up on that" "I´ll make some inquiries"
A unclear answer	"We are almost nearby"
Repeating the question	"Well, that´s an interesting question"
Responding with a question	"Do you think that´s possible?"
A very loud silence	"Oh, yes, I remember"

***Figure 20*: Examples for High-Context 'NO'.**

(Source: unknown)

5.4.3 PER: Persuading: Principles-First vs. Applications-First

This dimension is about "Why versus How — The Art of Persuasion in a Multicultural World."

> …the ways you seek to persuade others and the kinds of arguments you find persuasive are deeply rooted in your culture's philosophical, religious, and educational assumptions and attitudes. Far from being universal, then, the art of persuasion is one that is profoundly culture-based. (Meyer, 2014, p.89)
>
> …our ability to persuade others depends not simply on the strength of our message but on how we build our arguments and the persuasive techniques we employ." (Meyer, 2014, p.91)

Meyer continues by pointing at and describing the two fundamentally different styles of reasoning:

> *Principles-first reasoning* (sometimes referred to as *deductive* reasoning) derives conclusions or facts from general principles or concepts… with *applications-first reasoning* (sometimes called *inductive* reasoning), general conclusions are reached based on a pattern of factual observations from the real world… based on empirical observations, you draw broader conclusions. (Meyer, 2014, p.93)
>
> …people from principles-first cultures generally want to understand the *why* behind…before they move to action. Meanwhile, application-first learners tend to focus less on the why and more on the *how*." (Meyer, 2014, p.95)



***Figure 21*: Positions on Meyer's PER Scale.**

Please note that there are no Asian countries due to their fundamentally different holistic philosophy.

Germans, traditionally strongly embedded in (and limited to) deductive thinking, tend to become paralyzed and lose orientation in a crisis as soon as their referential methodological system fails to deliver reasoning. Their thinking requires a sound understanding of all facts and their consistent embedment in a theoretical framework before going into action. They are reluctant to make decisions in case not all details and consequences are known and analyzed (UAI). In stormy and unknown waters, the Indian attitude comes at the advantage of still being able to make decisions in chaos. There appears to be a strong context to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) ART dimension. The difference is that Indian robustness and flexibility are based on the different perceptions of time, while Meyer's (2014) PER dimension offers reasoning based on deeply rooted philosophical convictions. However, both ways of reasoning are not contradictory and offer complementary explanations for similar symptoms.

Meyer (2014) then continues by mentioning the different ways in which directions are given by upper management:

> One of the most common frustrations among French employees with American bosses is that the American tells them what to do without explaining *why* they need to do it. From the French perspective, this can feel demotivating, even disrespectful. By contrast, American bosses may feel that French workers are uncooperative

> because, instead of acting quickly, they always ask "*Why*?" and are not ready to act until they have received a suitable response. (Meyer, 2014, p.95)

This example is of particular interest insofar as its analysis by applying the PDI dimension would suggest other outcomes. Low power distance (PDI) management styles favor a *goal-oriented* and participative kind of leadership. The 'fire-and-forget-principle' applies: goals are discussed and agreed with subordinates, and then it is widely left to them how achieve these goals. Management will only interfere in case of reason, or whenever problems are escalated to them. Low power subordinates will not appreciate being 'micro-managed' by receiving daily orders but enjoy the latitude of being self-directed and responsible for achieving results. Managers *not* providing reasoning but just giving orders are in danger of being rejected by the team in a low power distance environment.

In contrast to goal-orientation, *task-orientation* is assumed to prevail in high-power cultures. Management constantly gives direction and orientation even in regard to singular detailed tasks. Both sides, the manager and the subordinate, appreciate this kind of leadership style. The first fulfils his/her own hierarchical understanding of his position ("je délègue, donc je suis"), the latter profits from being released from immediate and overall responsibility.

Applied to the example, a solely PDI-driven analysis would suggest that the low power distance manager (USA) acts goal-oriented, participative, and based on shared reasoning. The receiving high power distance employee (France) would be used to accepting directions. For obvious reasons, this is in stark contrast to the example offered by Meyer (2014), who offers the explanation that the American manager is driven by pragmatism rooting back to application-first attitudes. Simultaneously the French subordinate remains uncomfortable as long as no embedment in an overall context is presented to him/her.

It can be concluded from this contradiction that both dimensions (PDI and PER) offer competing explanations and, more confusing, competing prescriptions. With this contradiction

in mind, nothing is left but to apply *both* carefully to the field study discussion. However, this tension might add to enriching the different angles of the evaluation scheme.

It should be noted that low-PDI people might follow orders without challenging them according to the motto “united we stand, divided we fall” (USA) whereas some higher-PDI people require knowing the reasoning for decisions (France). This might actually find its roots in their deductive philosophy — and affirms the discreteness of the PER dimension.

To summarize, the PER dimension adds to more differentiated perspectives of the field study. In case the PDI dimension would have been applied exclusively, the arguing would have been consistent in itself but would not fully describe the symptoms and their causes. It would have delivered constricted or even misleading insights, not covering the entire picture. In total, this example is another warning against mono-causal reasoning. Actually, a mix of different dimensions applies to any particular situation. In this case, the PER and the PDI dimension rather appear to be competing for explanations instead of being complementary to each other. In regard to the field study analysis this requires careful consideration and the balancing out of both dimensions.

High application-first inherently comes with pragmatism, which, on the other hand, is associated with uncertainty avoidance (UAI). Supposedly, Germans try to reduce uncertainty by using the navigational aids of a reference system, allowing them to interpret context and to introduce structure. In contrast, Indians are supposed to be less concerned about structure and methodology by nature and less inclined to address problems which exist only in theory before such problems actually surface, resulting in pragmatic attitudes. To conclude, there seems to exist a strong context between the PER and the UAI dimension.

The above-mentioned issues bring up the question of whether there exist redundancies between both dimensions. From a qualitative perspective, both concentrate on related and partly overlapping observations, but offer differing explanations. The UAI dimension focuses on the

inherent need for rules in a culture, while the PER dimension derives its reasoning from fundamentally different perceptions rooted in the history of philosophy. From a quantitative perspective (in absence of empirical means) the acid test again would be whether cultures literally exist which are embedded in a tradition of deductive paradigms, while exposing the pragmatic inclination towards application-first approaches (and vice versa). Unfortunately, Meyer does not provide much data (only 15 nations are mentioned), in contrast to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). A first analysis of the ranking of cultures along the PER dimension (p.96) actually suggests a correlation of PER and UAI. In any case, a detailed correlation analysis would go beyond the scope of this dissertation and would need to be subject to further research.

To summarize for the time being, there is no convincing evidence to doubt the discreteness of the PER dimension. It adds value to the set of evaluation criteria by offering additional aspects. When in doubt, completeness rates higher than partial inconsistencies. The inherent congruence of the application-first driven, pragmatism offers immediate complementary explanations for observations otherwise difficult to achieve.

For example, different presentation styles can be explained more directly by the PER dimension: the principles-first Germans unfolding the drama by finely analyzing all "conceptual data before coming to a conclusion" (p.92) are invariably in danger of losing the attention of application-first listeners. In contrast to that, application-first presenters start with the conclusion and explain later how they came to it — and only in case of need and to the extent required by the audience.

The relevance of the PER dimension can be confirmed from the field study. Pragmatic-oriented and application-first Indian listeners, amplified by low uncertainty avoidance (UAI), are invariably challenged by lengthy theory-based and foundations-laying elaborations of principles-first German presenters before coming to the essence of the message.

Meyer (2014) describes the different persuasion styles by the following attributes:

> Applications-first: individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment.
>
> Principles-first: individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued. (Meyer, 2014, p.96)

From observations in the field study it is sometimes difficult to judge in which category Indians fall while Germans are definitely in that of principles-first. Again, it's literally very challenging for Indians to stay tuned when attending lengthy German deductive reasoning. On the other side, it is difficult to assign the attributes of application-first to Indians. It often appears to the observer that in Indian mentality everything seems to be connected to everything, making it difficult for Indians, from a Western perspective, to maintain focus and direction. First explanations for these observations were provided by applying the lens of dimensions such as low uncertainty avoidance (UAI) fostering an inclination towards pragmatism, and the Indian attitudes with regard to time (ART) and its close context to the perception of reality. However, Meyer adds a new flavor by now introducing a new perspective on this categorization problem by stating that Asian cultures do not fit into the PER scale at all:

> Actually, the view of the world most common in Asian cultures is so different from that of European-influenced cultures that an entirely different *frame of reference*, unrelated to the Persuading scale, comes into play. (Meyer, 2014, p.96)

To explain Asian persuasion styles, Meyer refers in the remainder to the distinction between *holistic* (Asian) and *specific* (other) thought patterns. As the analysis of the field study shows, such holistic thought patterns actually come to effect. From a German perception, and very much to their confusion, Indian nature is not to stay with a strict linear agenda. Indian participants actually freely jump from one issue to another, making it difficult for German moderators to pursue a systematic goal and to come to results. Meyer (2014) describes such observations consistent with the above. She describes a typical Asian response style wherein her focused questions were responded by answers that, in her perspective, had little in common with her question. From the Asian perspective, however, the answers were correct, of course. Meyer (2014) continues:

> After taking several minutes to discuss peripheral information, during which they would *leap back to topics we had already discussed*, they would then get to their point and come to a conclusion… (Meyer, 2014, p.107)

In brief, Asian people recognize context, embedment, interdependencies, background, and relationships where Westerners don't. Obviously, this all-embedding context supersedes the *specific*, isolated, singular perspectives a non-Asian person might have had. To summarize, non-Asians focus on (specific) particularities while Asians perceive the picture in its entirety holistically. By referring to research (Nisbett and Masuda, 2003) Meyer (2014) continues to report:

> The Americans focus on individual figures separate from their environment, while the Asians give more attention to the background and to the links between these backgrounds and the central figures. (Meyer, 2014, p.109)

> A common tenet of Western philosophies and religions is that you can remove an item from its environment and analyze it separately… Cultural theorists call this *specific* thinking.

> Chinese religions and philosophies, by contrast, have traditionally emphasized interdependencies and interconnectedness. Ancient Chinese thought was *holistic*, meaning that the Chinese attended to the field in which an object was located, believing that action always occurs in a field of forces that influence the action. (Meyer, 2014, p.110)

Also, to make the sources of conflict transparent:

> …Westerners may think that the Chinese are going all around the key points without addressing them deliberately, while East Asians may experience Westerners as trying to make a decision by isolating a single factor and ignoring significant interdependencies... without taking much time to consider the broader implications of their actions. (Meyer, 2014, pp.111-112)

These insights finally lead Meyer (2014) to the following conclusions:

> In a *specific* culture when managing a supplier or team member, people usually respond well to receiving very detailed and segmented information about what you expect of each of them. If you need to give instructions to a team member from a specific culture, focus on what the person needs to accomplish when… In *holistic* cultures, if you need to motivate, manage, or persuade someone, you will be more influential if you take the time to explain the big picture and show how the pieces fit together...if they don't understand what others are working on and how the pieces fit together, they don't feel comfortable or persuaded to move to action. (Meyer, 2014, pp.112-113)

In regard to this dissertation the question arises whether Meyer's (2014) general explanations for Far Eastern countries apply to India at all. Judged by the observations of the field study, their validity can be confirmed, at least on the *symptoms* level. Indians actually show the

properties described for far Eastern cultures. To examine the differences between Far Eastern cultures in general, and the Indian culture in particular, for *causing* reasons would go beyond the scope of the dissertation.

While the PER dimension transparently explains the differences between inductive applications-first and deductive principles-first cultures, the distinction between deductive German and holistic Indian thinking is not that obvious to describe. However, the PER dimension offers an alternate explanation for the inner barriers Indian attendees have to overcome when listening to lengthy German top-down deductive explanations. Until now, this inner hesitation was explained by an inclination towards pragmatism, which is driven by low uncertainty avoidance (UAI).

- Applicability: The PER dimension is embedded with many other dimensions. This requires the questioning of its discreteness. First, its validity may be confirmed from the field study. Second, it enriches the analysis tool set by offering alternate, additional explanations for observations obtained by uncertainty avoidance (UAI). Beyond that, it offers contradictory explanations, as the discussion on the contrast to the power distance dimension (PDI) has shown. Finally, it offers insights regarding the fundamentally different Asian philosophies. Therefore, it is added to the set of evaluation criteria. Otherwise, if it would be decomposed into separate components, the danger of loss of insight power might arise. It is fair to assume that too wide of a decomposition might come with the tendency of mono-causal oversimplification. Instead, with the PER dimension, Meyer (2014) describes a common set of characteristics that in their entirety stand discretely on their own.

5.4.4 LEA: Leading: Egalitarian vs. Hierarchical

It must be stated right from the beginning: Meyer (2014) tries to add her own flavor, but fails to provide evidence for another discrete dimension which would go beyond the power dimension (PDI) of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). Meyer (2014) herself starts

explaining her leadership dimension (LEA) by varying instances of equality and inequality, which is the fundamental characteristic of the PDI dimension. The scanning of her section on LEA with particularly this fact in mind leads to the result that Meyer without doubt provides additional and valuable insights, meaningful examples and pragmatic hints. However she provides little evidence which might be considered sufficient to constitute another dimension beyond PDI. Moreover, Meyer (2014) freely and repeatedly refers to the ground-laying work of Hofstede. Instead of using the terms of low and high power distance, she introduces the terms *egalitarian* and *hierarchical*.

In regard to expected leadership styles, the competing relationship between the PER and the PDI dimensions apply also for the LEA dimension. According to the section on PER, it is suggested that low power distance (PDI, LEA) environments favor participative leadership styles, while high power distance cultures are connected to attributes like hierarchy and task-orientation. Meyer adds attributes like the use of formal titles, deference, and lack of initiative, desire of subordinates to gain constant approval, and the phenomenon that even the need to make minor decisions climbs up the hierarchy (p.117) to then describing the potential conflicts and mutual misconceptions which might arise from LEA differences. Again, there is little that cannot be rooted back to the power distance dimension (PDI). However, Meyer incorporates data from her own qualitative work to the LEA scale, which consistently but not fully complies with the scores provided by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). While Meyer (2014) positions Germany less egalitarian than Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), a substantial difference between Germany and India remains, pointing to the potential for cultural conflicts between both:

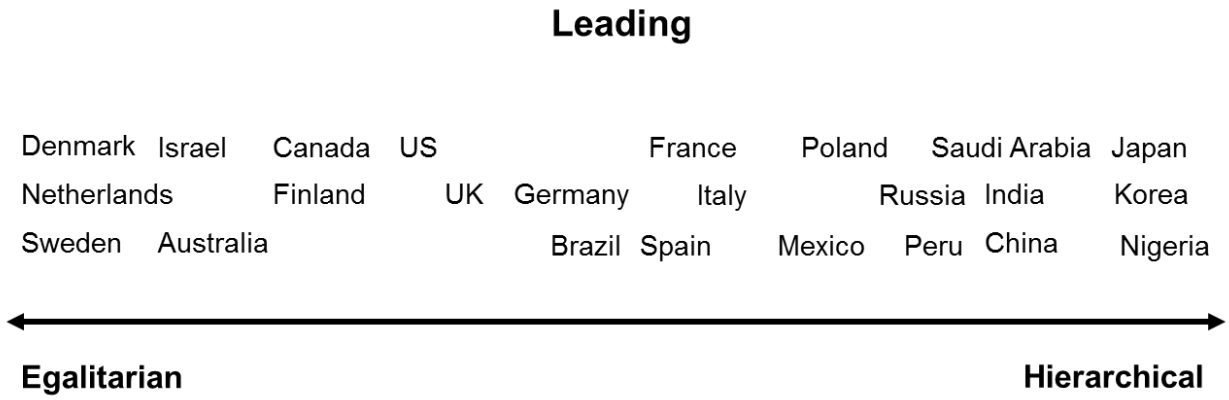


***Figure 22*: Positions on Meyer's LEA Scale.**

- Applicability: The LEA dimension might pass the validity check, but is widely redundant to the power dimension (PDI) of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). Components and hints of the LEA dimension may find their way to the set of evaluation criteria, but adding it as a distinctive dimension is not contributing to its diversity.

5.4.5 DEC: Deciding: Consensual vs. Top-down

It is seductive and appropriate to analyze Meyer's (2014) section on deciding by applying a focusing filter of selective perception: do not the dimensions power distance (PDI) and individualism (IDV) of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) already sufficiently explain decision-making dynamics as reported from the field study? Are there any other additional components that justify the introduction of this dimension? Actually, Meyer (2014) immediately refers to both dimensions PDI and IDV right from the beginning of her explanations:

> While Americans perceive German organizations as hierarchical because of the fixed nature of the hierarchical structure, the formal distance between the boss and subordinate, and the very formal titles used, Germans consider American companies hierarchical because of their *approach to decision-making*. German culture places

> higher value on building consensus as part of the decision-making process, while in the United States, decision-making is largely invested in the individual. (Meyer, 2014, p.144)

Meyer then presents the American and German particularities in decision-making:

> …disdain for group decision-making reflects a common American sentiment — and that is what the Germans find incredible. Rejecting the need for group agreement, the American boss says to the group 'This is what we are going to do,' and most members of the team fall in line, regardless of their own opinions. 'United we stand, divided we fall,' is a powerful American value, expressed in the belief that getting behind the decision as quickly as possible leads to efficiency, which in turn leads to success. (Meyer, 2014, p.145)

Meyer concentrates on the very exceptional and exclusive particularities of two cultures to explain factual observations. Her considerations are actually very enriching for explaining conflicts in American-German collaboration subjectively observed by the author as well. Insofar, there is good reasoning to state a discrete new dimension as the traditional PDI and IDV dimensions fail to provide sufficient and complete reasoning. However, the exclusive focus on the particularities of these two cultures brings up the question of whether such considerations may be generalized and if its conclusions apply to other cultures as well. Meyer herself emphasizes the very exceptional positions that both American and German culture occupy:

> Most cultures that fall as egalitarian on the Leading scale also believe in consensual decision-making… By contrast, cultures that fall as hierarchical on the Leading scale…, are also top-down decision-making cultures. In a large majority of countries, *being egalitarian correlates with valuing consensus*. The United States breaks the mold by combining an egalitarian ethos with a more *top-down* approach to decision-

> making in which one person – generally the person in charge – makes decisions quickly on behalf of the entire group. (Meyer, 2014, p.145)

Meyer then continues describing the German particularities, wherein

> …more time is spent in soliciting group feedback and coming to a group agreement, is combined with a hierarchical system. The fact that Germany and the United States are both exceptions to the global pattern – but in opposite directions – helps to explain the consternation among managers from these two cultures when they are thrown together in a decision-making situation. (Meyer, 2014, p.146)

It is remarkable that Meyer introduces the differentiating term "top-down" to make a distinction with that of "hierarchical". This potentially makes a difference and offers alternate explanations. However, and until now, the validity of the DEC dimension appears to remain restricted to only two cultures.

In this context it must be stated that there is a contradiction between Meyer (2014) and Hofstede's scores on the PDI scale. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), based on comprehensive empirical data, provide a low PDI value for Germany (index value: 35), which is even lower than that of the United States (index value: 40). Meyer (2014), in contrast, positions Germany higher than the United States on her leading (LEA) scale (p.125), based on experience and qualitative measures. In total, these are qualitative considerations, which are not supported by data.

One attempt for an explanation of this contradiction might be that the generally perceived hierarchical German attitudes (not only by Americans) are not caused by high power distance, but by a mix of other factors and dimensions. Maybe, what Americans perceive as German hierarchical thinking derives from symptoms caused by other components and dimensions: a certain stiffness and inflexibility, an unwillingness to change plans, a hesitation to move into

action without deep former analysis, the concentration on organization and structure, an uncompromised orientation on quality and the resulting conviction that all has to be done right and from the beginning, and finally a desire for rules and discipline (not because Germans like them as such, but because they follow the ideal of a "well-oiled machine" (Hofstede)). These symptoms may be rooted in, and explained by, high uncertainty avoidance (UAI). In addition, IDV and MAS contribute to this very particular mix of German attitudes, which is, on the surface level, easily confused with high power distance or the belief in hierarchies per se.

The above-mentioned interpretation is supported by other dimensions as well. As discussed in the section on persuading (PER), German managers have to provide a minimum of reasoning for decisions and have to apply rather participative and explaining leadership styles. It is important to understand that the application of participative leadership styles is not only related to giving orientation in a German deductive, principles-first environment, but also that direct authoritative orders to subordinates, as they are acceptable in high power distance cultures, are perceived as an expression of disrespect with direct implications on motivation and morale.

In total, concerns regarding the applicability of the DEC dimension to the set of evaluation criteria arise from the contradictory results of both Meyer (qualitative and experience-based) and Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) (empirical). Above review of Meyer's conclusions adds to these concerns. As a result, Meyer's reasoning erodes.

Nevertheless, Meyer (2014) provides valuable insights in regard to the different ways time is distributed in the decision-making process (p.149): while some cultures make fast and revisable decisions at the beginning, requiring an extended implementation phase to recalibrate, other cultures prepare for these decisions extensively by collectivistic means beforehand and harvest the fruits of this investment in the form of a shortened implementation phase. Once again however, these observations supposedly find their justifications in other more fundamental

dimensions, in particular collectivism (IDV) and uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and do not justify the introduction of the DEC dimension.

Another merit of Meyer (2014) is to point at the tension that potentially exists in a high power distance (PDI) and collectivistic environment (IDV): how does it fit together that a group contributes to decision-making on one hand while a superior individual is empowered and expected to make decisions on the other hand? This situation actually frequently applies in India. Meyer's (2014) example about Japan's *ringi* system (p.156) illustrates such mechanisms. But it might be worth examining whether high Indian pragmatism would not cannibalize or supersede such a DEC process (UAI, PER, ART). In any case, *ringi* applies complex decision-making *within* large organizations, e.g. for product development, and therefore is of little relevance for the case study.

However, in regard to the field study, it is important to remember the core of the individualism dimension perspective: is the individual in the position to make immediate and independent decisions? For India, the answer is 'no'. Any commitment of an individual requires the (often afterwards) agreements of peers (IDV) *and* superiors (PDI). From this perspective, there is no contradiction or competition between both dimensions.

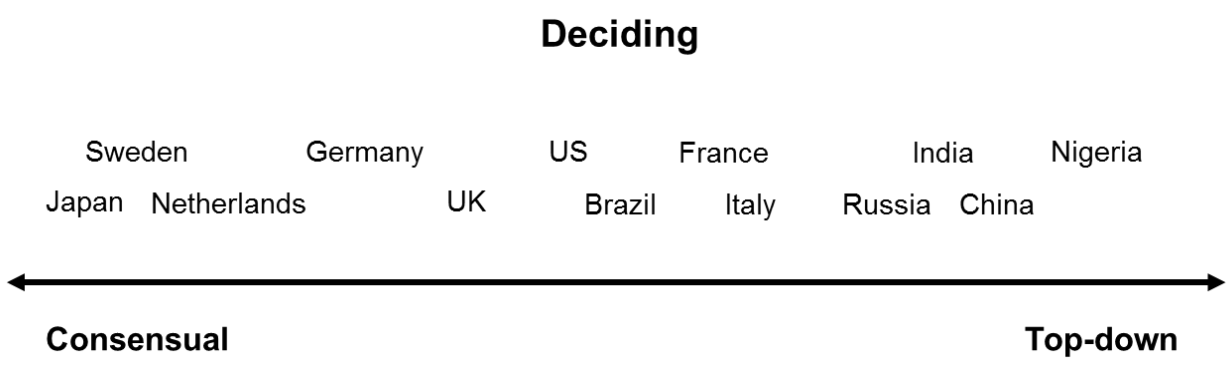


***Figure 23*: Positions on Meyer's DEC Scale.**

Regarding India, the analyses of the field study observations do not indicate any applicable occurrence of the DEC dimension. Unfortunately, Meyer contributes to the difficulty of identifying its effects by merging two dimensions (PDI and IDV) into one. This comes at the cost of accuracy. For example, she asks "Consensual or top-down?" (p.150). When looking at the provided scale, India is located on the top-down side. This might be applicable in regard to power distance (PDI), but it fails to represent collectivistic behavior in India (IDV). From the field study it can be concluded that Indian management can give strong direction at the beginning and make the decision at the end, but there always is a surprising openness and latitude for collectivistic discussion in between. Regardless of whether this discussion happens openly or not, an Indian individual still has to consider the opinion of peers and management. Insofar, the provided scale presents an oversimplification of Indian culture.

To summarize, the massive differences in decision-making between the German and Indian part can be sufficiently described and explained by power distance (PDI) and varying degrees of collectivism (IDV), striving for results (MAS) and differences in uncertainty avoidance (UAI). In addition, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) dimensions ART (perception of time), UVP (particularities of the situation and relationships) and SVD (particularities of the personality) might add their flavor to enrich the picture.

- Applicability: The deciding dimension (DEC) fails to pass the validity check. It might be valid in another context, such as in German vs. American collaboration, but its effectiveness cannot be confirmed from the Indian/German field study. In regard to the check for redundancy, a consistency problem with the elaborations of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) arises: both research approaches deliver contradictory results. Their further analysis suggests alternate explanations competing with Meyer's statements, leading to the suspicion that symptoms can assumingly be interpreted by other causes (UAI effectiveness instead of PDI symptoms). Observed behavior in the field study may be sufficiently explained by other

dimensions, in particular by power distance (PDI) and collectivism (IDV). This leads to the conclusion to consider the DEC dimension being redundant for the purpose of the evaluation list. Merits go to Meyer for highlighting and explaining decision-making in environments of high power distance (PDI) *and* high collectivism (IDV). However, Meyer's attempt to merge these two distinct dimensions into one comes at the expense of accuracy.

5.4.6 TRU: Trusting: Task-based vs. Relationship-based

Meyer (2014) makes a distinction between two types of trust — and how they grow: task-based trust and relationship-based trust:

> Task-based: Trust is built through business related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work, consistently you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.
>
> Relationship-based: Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at the coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level. I've shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you. (Meyer, 2014, p.171)

Trust is a fundamental prerequisite for and inseparable component of relationships. The close neighborhood to other dimensions spontaneously comes to mind, because these other dimensions are closely connected to the concept of relationships and emphasize its role and importance. These dimensions are represented in particular by collectivism where the individual is strongly embedded in a social system (IDV), the diffuseness of individuals where a person as such invariably acts in a consistent manner with little inclination to act in specific roles (SVD), the particularist perspective where an individual is open to considering the specific circumstances that cannot be untied from personal relationships (UVP), the perception and role of time where a polychronic individual scans for repeating patterns which naturally influence

the interaction and relationships with others (ART), the inclination to focus on long-term values (LTO) while balancing out for harmony instead of short-term results (MAS), and finally the varying strategies to deal with uncertainty by either informal relationship-based mechanisms or explicit agreements (UAI).

However, Meyer's (2014) elaborations deserve closer and un-prepossessed analysis, but now sharpened through the above lenses. Are there components and insights to be added to the evaluation list, which go beyond those of the above dimensions? Focus must consistently be set on the differing ways of how trust is actually built in Indian/German collaboration.

At first, it can be confirmed from the field study that trust plays a major role in collaboration. There actually are even surprising common patterns in building up trustworthy relationships. Another observation from the field study is that Indian personalities require a much deeper trust-based personal relationship than their German colleagues (IDV, SVD). For Indians it appears difficult to act purely on a role, or task-based relationship. Without mutual trust, it is difficult for them to openly discuss problems and solutions. Repeated malpractice from the German side, hurting the trust level unintentionally or carelessly, has damaged the trust level. Small errors or misbehavior ended in great effects. To summarize, the TRU dimension passes the validity test because there are de facto effects and differences between the parties.

A dilemma arises. On one hand the TRU dimension is of high and immediate relevance, as suggested by field study analysis. On the other hand, its strong neighborhood with other dimensions challenges its discreteness. Many of the TRU dimension components can actually be interpreted as deriving from other dimensions. From a formal standpoint, the TRU dimension could voluntarily be eliminated from the evaluation list, but this would come at the danger of neglecting the central, effective and confirmed role of trust and how it is built in different cultures. For the purpose of completeness and pragmatism, and the acknowledged immediate effectiveness of the (not independent but nevertheless an entirety-forming) TRU dimension, it

is therefore suggested to add the TRU dimension to the set of evaluation criteria. Examination and reasoning based on the other dimensions would be indirect, complex, cumbersome, and far-fetched.

This recommendation is also supported by the meaningful and enriching distinction between *cognitive* and *affective* trust as mentioned by Meyer (2014). Her description is not only valid but immediately applicable for pragmatic advice and therefore of high relevance:

> *Cognitive* trust is based on the confidence you feel in another person's accomplishments, skills, and reliability. This is trust that comes from the head. It is often built through business interactions: we work together, you do your work well, and you demonstrate through the work that you are reliable, pleasant, consistent, intelligent, and transparent. Result: I trust you.
>
> *Affective* trust, on the other hand, arises from feelings of emotional closeness, empathy, or friendship. This type of trust comes from the heart. We laugh together, relax together, and see each other at a personal level, so that I feel affection or empathy for you and sense that you feel the same for me. Result: I trust you. (Meyer, 2014, p.168)

The relevant point in regard to distinctive cultural attitudes is that, according to Meyer (2014), Western business philosophy tends to navigate based on cognitive trust, while Eastern expectations "*connect* the two forms of trust" (p.169). Consistently, it requires Westerners to build trust by unfamiliar affective means before making a business relationship effective. Negatively speaking, it is rather difficult for an Eastern person to negotiate without an established trustworthy relationship. Simply speaking: no affective trust — no business.

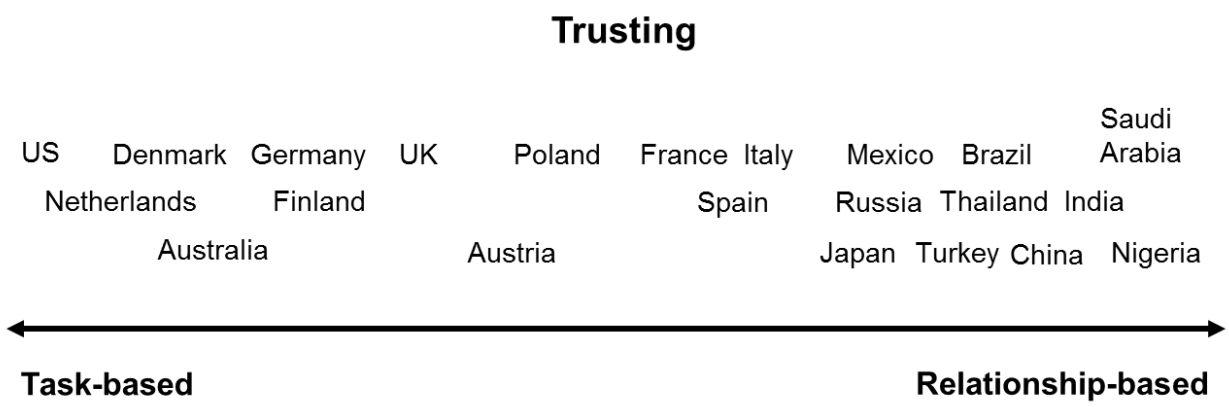


***Figure 24*: Positions on Meyer's TRU Scale.**

According to Meyer's scale, India ranks very high on the relationship-based side, while Germany ranks very low. As confirmed by the field study, Indians react with much more sensitivity to disturbances of the *affective* trust level than Germans do. Such observations can be reported from the field study, in particular when trust-hurting coincidences with pride-hurting (SVD) (e.g. 4.16 Sustainably ruined Relationships) where negative outcomes superseded any professionalism. The damage was so large that personal pride inhibited (and even foreclosed) all attempts to cure the situation. The reasons were difficult to detect at the surface and never explicitly expressed by both parties. It was even not acceptable to discuss it. Following Meyer's wording, it was a heart problem, not a head problem. At the same time, the Indian part intensified his behavioral demands in rather inappropriate ways, considered that he was representing the supplier (the very-proud-but-no-shame phenomenon). Ironically, the sensitive-wise admittedly underdeveloped German counterpart was not even aware where and when he had damaged the trust level.

The failure of Westerners to acknowledge the importance of affective trust when collaborating with Eastern companies can seriously damage the business relationship, or already prevent it from being established. As Meyer (2014) formulates:

> One consequence is that, for a Chinese manager working with Americans, the culturally based preference to separate cognitive trust and personal trust can indicate a lack of sincerity or loyalty. (Meyer, 2014, p.169)

The examples provided by Meyer (2014) underline the importance of established personal relationships in Eastern cultures: personal and trustworthy ties supersede explicit and documented agreements. The Western focus on such unintended harms burdens the trust level. The importance of written agreements is much less than that in a Western environment. In case a problem arises, it can be addressed by informal relationships instead of revisiting the contract, or, even worse, leaving such activities to the legal department. Of course, these elaborations underline the strong familiarity with other dimensions such as SVD in particular. Meyer (2014) herself references to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) (p. 175). A major difference between both is supposed to be that Meyer (2014) assigns trust a unique, explicit and central role while Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) incorporate it more inherently.

In order to make the differences between task-based and relationship-based trust transparent, Meyer (2014) summarizes:

> The further a culture falls toward the task-based end of the scale, the more people from that culture tend to separate affective and cognitive trust, and to rely mainly on cognitive trust for work relationships. The further a culture falls towards the relationship-based end of the scale, the more cognitive and affective trust are woven together in business. (Meyer, 2014, p.171),

> In task-based societies… relationships are defined by functionality and practicality. It is relatively easy to move in and out of networks, and if a business relationship proves to be unsatisfactory to either party, it's a simple matter to close the door on that relationship and move into another. By contrast… in relationship-based societies… relationships are built up slowly, founded not just on professional credibility but also on deeper emotional

> connections – and after the relationship is built, it is not dropped easily. (Meyer, 2014, pp.172-173)
>
> …in many cultures, the relationship *is* your contract. (Meyer, 2014, p.185)
>
> Trust is like insurance — it's an investment you need to make up front, before the need arises. (Meyer, 2014, p.194)

These citations may stand alone and uncommented.

An interesting realization is that trust is a more fundamental concept than relationships. The latter require the former, regardless which kind of trust applies (cognitive or affective). From this perspective, the trust dimension (TRU) is even more fundamental than Hofstede's individualism dimension (IDV), which delivers a stark reason to add the TRU dimension to the set of evaluation criteria.

- Applicability: The effectiveness of the TRU dimension is confirmed by the field study, it therefore passes the validity test. Although it is strongly embedded with other dimensions and shows close proximity to the IDV dimension, it turns out to be potentially genuine and discrete due to its fundamental nature. In addition, analysis attempts based on other dimensions, in particular IDV, SVD, and UAI would deliver similar results, but any reasoning based on these components would invariably be farfetched. In contrast, the TRU dimension offers immediate insights. It is therefore of fundamental relevance and often a prerequisite to enter in a business relationship. If not carefully obeyed, it has the potential to seriously harm collaboration.

5.4.7 DIS: Disagreeing: Confrontational vs. Avoids Confrontation

Meyer (2014) makes a distinction between two styles how disagreements materialize:

> *Confrontational*: Disagreement and debate are positive for the team or organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.

> *Avoids confrontation*: Disagreement and debate are negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship. (Meyer, 2014, p.201)

Meyer starts this section by presenting an example of a discussion in a typical French environment: discussions happen openly, emotionally, and controversial, but without harming the relationship. This reminds of the NVA dimension of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). It also reminds to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) who describe the very particular French style. It is remarkable that Hofstede Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) describe this style as exceptional without providing sound and comprehensive reasoning based on their cultural dimensions. These two points raise particular attention to the question whether the DIS dimension might help in providing new insights to fill this explanatory gap.

Some irony lies in the fact that the observations provided by Meyer (2014) can be widely explained by dimensions she has just introduced, namely the PER dimension and the EVA dimension. The dimension on persuading (PER) offers an explanation based on the desire to discuss issues deeply, and the dimension on evaluating (EVA) offers an explanation for the more or less open and direct conveyance of negative or controversial messages. It therefore remains unexplained what the DIS dimension might exactly add to completing the picture. If it targeted at affection, then it would concentrate on similar issues as the NVA dimension. Meyer (2014) herself recognizes this cloudy positioning and clarifies:

> But emotional expressiveness is not the same thing as comfort in expressing open disagreement. In some emotionally expressive cultures… people also express disagreement openly. But in other emotionally expressive cultures… people strongly avoid open disagreement since there is a good chance it will lead to a break in the relationship. (Meyer, 2014, pp.203-204)

Meyer then offers a differentiating diagram to visualize the four quadrants that derive from comparing the two components (confrontation and emotional expressiveness), but unfortunately is not consistent enough to recognize emotional expressiveness as a separate cultural dimension. This would have been enriching for the dissertation, because this would have added a competing perspective to the NVA dimension. The confusion increases when comparing the figures and positions of both authors (Meyer (2014) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012)): they actually assign contradictory positions on the emotion axis to India and Germany. Meyer classifies Germany as confrontational and emotionally un-expressive and India as confrontation-avoiding and emotionally expressive. Diametrically opposing, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012, p. 88) position Germans as being significantly less reluctant to show emotions than Indians.

To summarize, if Meyer (2014) had limited her considerations to confrontational attitudes, sufficient explanatory power would have derived from her own PER and EVA dimension. By adding the emotion axis, she evades this challenge. But the resulting positioning of Germany and India in the four quadrants contradicts not only Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), but also observations from the field study wherein Indians can be both confrontational *and* confrontation-avoiding as well as emotionally expressive and emotionally un-expressive, depending on the context. The conflicting offerings of Meyer (2014) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) cannot be solved in the absence of empirical evidence. Even Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) leave an explanatory gap by restricting themselves exclusively to their IDV dimension.

To conclude*, in general*, affection will for sure play its role in cultural relationships, but the reasoning and position basis remains vague, inconsistent and finally leads to the suggestion that this research is incomplete. To repeat, in regard to the very *specific* case of India, the picture remains unclear and does not explain observed behavior in consistent ways. As already stated

in the section on the NVA dimension, there seems to be something missing when it comes to explaining Indian behavior. Indians *can* be very emotionally expressive, but can also be the opposite, depending on the context and other factors (e.g. if PDI permits).

According Meyer (2014), the concept of face is strongly related to the DIS dimension:

> The concept that the Chinese call *mianzi*, or 'face', exists in all societies, but with varying levels of importance. When you present yourself to others, you offer a persona that reflects what you publicly claim to be. (Meyer, 2014, p.198)

Meyer (2014) then goes back to far-Eastern characteristics such as those of Confucius by reporting:

> In Confucian societies… preserving group harmony by saving face for all members of the team is of utmost importance… Under this model, group harmony exists when everyone plays his prescribed role and reinforces the roles of others. To suggest that others in the group are not living up to the expectations of their role leads to a loss of face and a disturbance of societal order… protecting another person's face is more important than stating what you believe is correct. (Meyer, 2014, pp.198-199)

Obviously, losing face is painful for every person, but in certain cultures the damage is more severe than in others. It may be concluded that individuals from more insensitive cultures unintentionally but easily harm relationships by not realizing the personal effects of their actions on particularly face-preserving people. Such observations can be confirmed from the field study. To repeat, Germans will not attack the person, but the issue at hand. As analyzed in the section on the SVD dimension, a one-faced diffuse individual will perceive such an attack as an attack on the entirety of his personality, which comes with the serious potential to sustainably harm the relationship. In total, the necessity to protect the integrity of "diffuse" personalities can be widely drawn from the SVD dimension, parts of the UVP dimension to

incorporate particularities, and is additionally supported by conclusions of Meyer's (2014) other dimensions such as COM, EVA, and PER, and a strong and fundamental influence of collectivism (IDV). The DIS dimension therefore lacks originality and consistency.

The insensitivity of Westerners, in particular Germans, can be derived back to dimensions such as low power distance (PDI), low collectivism (IDV), high masculinity (MAS) and high uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and potentially other dimensions.

In regard to validity, relevance and effectiveness of the DIS dimension can hardly be confirmed from field study observations. It partly materializes, but only in differentiated ways: on management level, conflicting perspectives were discussed explicitly in surprisingly open ways. This starkly contradicts the positioning scale provided by Meyer (2014, p.201), which puts Germany on the confrontational side and India on the opposite one. However, this unexpected observation might partly be explained by the very particular relationship between both companies, and the exceptionally strong characters involved from the Indian side. On lower management layers, more harmony-oriented and confrontation-avoiding attitudes were observable, accompanied by other elusive attitudes, which directed to a set of other effective dimensions (PDI, IDV, MAS, and UAI, to state only the most obvious ones) that sufficiently explained observed behavior. However, what materialized and actually harmed collaboration was the occasional danger of losing face and harming persons.

- Applicability: In regard to validity, no clear and generally valid and consistent picture can be drawn. The assumptions and suggestions of Meyer (2014) are not fully supported by the field study. In particular, the DIS dimension cannot sufficiently explain situation-based Indian attitudes. A substantial underlying factor appears to be missing: Indians can be both emotionally expressive as well as un-expressive — and confrontational as well as confrontation avoiding. For these reasons the DIS dimension fails to pass the validity test. In regard to the redundancy check its effects may be widely explained by other dimensions.

Qualitative-wise, and very unfortunately, the DIS dimension cannot accurately add to the challenge of explaining emotionally expressive and un-expressive styles (NVA). The contradictory elaborations and results between Meyer (2014) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) cannot be solved without further empirical investigation. In total, the diffuse picture regarding validity and effectiveness justify the exclusion of the DIS dimension from the evaluation list although it would be a highly value-adding idea to complete the set of evaluation criteria.

5.4.8 SCH: Scheduling: Linear Time vs. Flexible Time

Meyer (2014) proposes a distinction between linear and flexible time and characterizes them as follows:

> Linear-time: Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.
>
> Flexible-time: Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions are accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization. (Meyer, 2014, p.227)

Meyer (2014), according to her usual pattern, first provides an example of how differently time is perceived in different cultures. Her personal agenda, being from a Western country, is dictated by the progress of time and forcing her to stay within perceived time frames, even at the cost of content, dedication, and accuracy. It is difficult for her to adapt to changes in that time frame, even in case that her counterparts encourage her to do so. In contrast to that, other cultures will freely assign as much time to a task as required by the situation “on the fly”. Interestingly, content and quality, and the willingness to devote time as long as needed to what

is considered important supersede time restrictions. Simply speaking: devotion and interest supersede time constraints in that case, and deadlines are therefore easily and willingly shifted compromising any carefully prepared former agenda.

Meyer's (2014) explanations and examples are, without doubt, highly illustrative, but their originality has to be examined. Meyer (2014) herself does not claim originality and freely refers to Hall and to his differentiation between monochronic (M-time) and polychronic (P-time) cultures:

> M-time cultures view time a tangible and concrete. (Meyer, 2014, p.224)
>
> We speak of time as being saved, spend, wasted, lost, made up, crawling, killing and running out. These metaphors must be taken seriously. M-time scheduling is used as a classification system that orders life. These rules apply to everything except death. (Hall, 1983, p.44)
>
> By contrast, P time cultures take a flexible approach to time, involvement of people, and completion of transactions: (Meyer, 2014, p.224)
>
> Appointments are not taken seriously and, as a consequence, are frequently broken as it is more likely to be considered a point rather than a ribbon in the road… (Hall, 1983, p.44)

It is not debatable that Hall laid the grounds for the further exploration of the differing perceptions of time among cultures. Not only does Meyer refer to Hall, but also Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) clearly refer to him. In the section on ART, the decision was made to apply their ART dimension instead of Hall's MVP dimension. While the merits for discovering and describing the role of time first go to Hall (1989), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) appear to present more updated, detailed and comprehensive insights. This decision remains unrevised unless Meyer (2014) now presents additional components.

Interestingly, Meyer (2014) derives attitudes towards time back to historic reasons, as well as the latitude the environment grants to being linear-time-oriented (M-time). If the environment is not structured and subject to unforeseen changes and challenges, and therefore does not allow for reliable planning, no other option is left than to be flexible-time-oriented (P-time):

> As political systems shift and financial systems alter, as traffic surges and wanes, as monsoons or water shortages raise unforeseeable challenges, the successful managers are those who have developed the ability to ride out the changes with ease and flexibility. (Meyer, 2014, p.226)

In such an environment, timeliness obviously does not matter to the same extent as in highly organized countries. Instead:

> What matters is that your work structure is flexible enough to adapt with changes in the natural environment, and that you have invested in the critical relationships needed…In this environment, productivity and profit are directly linked to the flexibility of the relationships of the person in charge. (Meyer, 2014, pp.226-227)

It is remarkable that Meyer directly links the perception of time with Hofstede's collectivism dimension (IDV), and, less directly, with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) SVD and UVP dimensions:

> Indeed, the importance of relationships seems to be a key to understanding the Scheduling scale. It's only logical that if relationships are a priority, you will put them before the clock. (Meyer, 2014, p.227)

Meyer's elaborations are enriching and suggest that P-time flexible time managers (SCH) are better equipped to navigate in chaos and under uncertainty (UAI). This is a suggestion that the analysis of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) ART dimension has already provided — which points at the strong familiarity of both the ART and the SCH dimension. The linkage

to Hofstede's UAI dimension is insofar interesting as Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) explain punctuality in part by uncertainty avoidance and consistently do not recognize the need for a separate distinctive dimension. From the opposite view, even as interestingly, Meyer (2014) does not recognize uncertainty avoidance explicitly as a separate cultural dimension.

In regard to validity, the prevalence and effectiveness of the SCH dimension are strongly confirmed by the field study. It materialized in multiple ways in collaboration, often contributing to mutual frustration. The differing understanding of the meaning of timeliness in daily business, the seriousness with which agreed dates were pursued, the perception of which actions need to be done and by when, the differing attitudes towards action-orientation, and the differing perceived desire to address certain items with priority were a permanent source of conflict. In addition, the perception of reality (which is closely related to the perception of time for obvious reasons) contributed to mutual misconceptions. The position of Germany on Meyer's Scheduling scale at the far linear-time end and that of India at the far flexible-time end correspond with the observations of the field study.

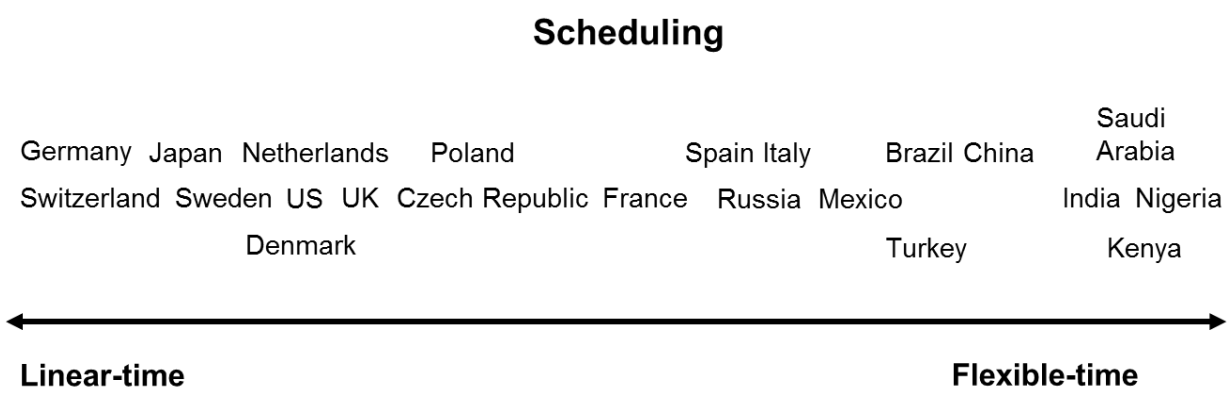


***Figure 25*: Positions on Meyer's SCH Scale.**

In regard to redundancy, Meyer (2014) offers great examples and pragmatic hints, but in substance there is little new insight uncovered and provided that might go beyond the elaborations of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). Consistently, there is no reason to

revise the decision to add Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) ART dimension to the set of evaluation criteria, making Meyer's SCH dimension redundant.

- Applicability: the SCH dimension passes the validity test, but fails to pass the redundancy test because it does not contain insights that go beyond Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) ART dimension. This decision is solely based on originality criteria and does not include any negative opinion on the quality of Meyer's enriching statements, examples, and pragmatic hints.

5.5 Summary of Qualitative Analysis

Not all of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012), Hall's (1989) and Meyer's (2014) dimensions survive the check for redundancy and validity. When analyzing the dimensions in detail, some of the dimensions turn out to widely consist of components from other dimensions, in particular from Hofstede's dimensions, as well as being redundant, or incomplete, or inconsistent, or not supported by field study observations at all. At the same time, some dimensions survive both checks and are highly valuable for field study analysis. In addition, the pragmatic hints provided by these authors invariably turn out to add value to the inquiry. All authors focus on giving pragmatic advice obviously rooted in decades of experience in cross-cultural management. Meyer (2014) does not claim to provide empirical evidence at all; her elaborations are experience-based and qualitative by nature. In regard to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), the database upon which conclusions are drawn is subject to criticism by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). Some inconsistencies could actually be detected during analysis, however. There are indicators pointing at the suggestion that the approach of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) does not follow the same strict rigor as that of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010).

Regarding Research Question 2, it can be reported that the analysis could be successfully completed through eliminating redundancies through qualitative analysis. No structural obstacles surfaced during the detailed examination, but some few questions remained unfortunately unanswered. For example, the contradictory elaborations by Meyer (2014) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) regarding the extent of emotional expression, respectively affection, remain unclear and unsolved. This, at the end, compromised the DIS dimension, and consistently it was taken off the list of evaluation criteria. This is insofar of particular relevance as emotional attitudes, as well as varying confrontational styles (Meyer) actually materialize and substantially influence collaboration. This investigation gap cannot be closed by qualitative research, but by empirical evidence, which unfortunately is not available.

The elaborations of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) invariably passed the redundancy tests. Some slight inconsistencies could be detected, which were interestingly very close to the role of affection and emotional expression as well as to varying confrontational styles. The passing of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) six dimensions through the checks cannot come as a surprise, considered the sound empirical basis and decade-lasting peer-reviews. What still remains surprising is that some fundamental concepts such as the perception of time and reality as well as that of trust building did not find their way to set of dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). Maybe, “the right questions have not been asked” (in analogy to their remarks regarding the late discovery of the LTO dimension).

Hall’s both dimensions did pass the checks. But although the merits for uncovering and describing the LHC and MVP dimension go to Hall (1989), his work is superseded by the more refined and detailed elaborations of Meyer (2012) (COM) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) (ART).

During qualitative analysis it proved to be feasible to condense the set of evaluation criteria down from initially 23 to only 14. This was achieved without any loss of analytical power and

richness by the elimination of redundancies and inconsistencies, and by the exclusion of invalid dimensions. This set of 14 consistent evaluation criteria offers a more extended array of investigation areas than the initial set of six dimensions of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) would, but is supposed to be free of the fuzziness of the unprocessed and unstructured raw collection of the dimensions of all the other authors. It therefore enables a more effective and efficient analysis as required by research questions 2, 3 and 4.

In regard to Research Question 1 (completeness of Hofstede's dimensions), many investigation areas where identified where Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) presumably deliver no, little, far-fetching, incomplete reasoning. These investigation areas are now available for further investigation and discussion when applied to the field study. Insofar, the basis for answering research question 1 is provided by qualitative and deductive means. At the same time, the verification of the effectiveness of additional components beyond Hofstede needed verification by field study analysis.

Regarding Research Question 2 (additional cultural dimensions), the cultural dimensions which survived the acid tests are now identified and available. Regarding Research Question 3 (the ranking of importance), the condensed set of 14 cultural dimensions form the basis for the quantitative examination of the frequency and severity with which each dimension comes into effect in the field study.

In regard to Research Question 4 (context to development stages), the condensed set of 14 cultural dimensions is now available for application to the field study to analyze in which phase of systems development each dimension materialized with which frequency and severity. This will provide refining insights regarding the relevance of each dimension for each stage in IT system development with consequences for project planning and management.

A summarizing table which lists the results of the qualitative analysis and field study analysis for validity is provided in section 7.1 Discussion and Implications by Research Questions.

6 Findings

The purpose of this qualitative extensive case study is to explore how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative. The information gathered in previous sections has now to be clearly referenced respectively rendered now for the purpose of transparency and replicability.

6.1 Results

6.2 Research Question 1: Completeness of Hofstede's Dimensions

> "To which extent do the cultural dimensions offered by Hofstede provide a sufficient framework in order to comprehensively describe observations in large-scale international projects?"

The remainder of this subsection focuses on identifying, analyzing and summarizing those situations wherein Hofstede's findings leave explanatory gaps or exhibit other weaknesses in providing immediate consistent reasoning. These findings came up either by qualitative analysis or by direct observations in the field study.

6.2.1 PDI: Power Distance

The PDI dimension invariably materialized throughout the entire field study with very direct and transparent effects. However, there is a dynamic component in it: its effects diminished over time when trustworthy (TRU) relationships (IDV) could increasingly be established. Additionally, it could be observed that constraints deriving from high power distance do not apply to all management layers with the same intensity: as a rule of thumb, its constraining effects surface less, the higher the individuals reside in the hierarchy.

6.2.2 IDV: Individualism vs. Collectivism

The IDV dimension invariably materialized in the field study, sometimes through indirect ways. However, when applied to field observations, there seems to be a component missing in the explanation offered by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) who claim that collectivistic cultures do not require an intense exchange of words because unspoken relationship-based rules make such explicit communication widely obsolete. As the field study shows, highly collectivistic cultures can be noisy, emotional and affective as well. In addition, the varying occurrences of emotions in India are situation-based and depend on other factors, in particular on PDI and whether the relationship has matured. Obviously, NVA, COM and EVA can help to fill this gap. The conclusion from the field study is that there are highly collectivistic cultures that exhibit affection, direct communication, and even transfer negative messages if circumstances permit. This observation forms a strong argument for the discreteness and distinctiveness of NVA, COM and EVA. It is also worth pointing at the TRU dimension in section 6.2.14 TRU: Trusting: Task-based vs. Relationship-based which is more fundamental than IDV.

6.2.3 MAS: Masculinity vs. Feminity

The MAS dimension came to effect to a remarkably lesser extent than PDI, IDV and UAI. This is not to come as a surprise as the score values of both cultures do not differ substantially. While qualitative analysis supported its discreteness and independency, it usually materialized in the field study in close linkage with other dimensions (e.g. when the high-UAI party pressed for results).

6.2.4 UAI: Uncertainty Avoidance

It is seductive to apply the UAI dimension to explain the affinity of certain cultures for strict planning and organization as well as punctuality. However, this approach comes with some concerns. The first four ranks on Hofstede's UAI-scale are occupied by Greece, Portugal,

Guatemala, and Uruguay, which are countries not easily associated with a passion for planning and punctuality. Quite obviously, the UAI dimension does not *exclusively* explain punctuality and the desire for vast planning. Consistently, mono-causal reasoning is misleading and any direct application of the UAI dimension must happen with care and skepticism. The scale suggests the existence of other additional unknown factors which add to the explanation of the German inclination towards structure, rules, organization, and quality.

Concerning punctuality, this explanatory gap may partly be filled by suggestions of the ART dimension. A more detailed and accurate examination of the relatedness of the UAI and the ART dimension might be worth undertaking more detailed research. The question that arises is obvious: do high UAI values correspond to the extent punctuality is considered important (potential research question)?

In regard to affection Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) suggest that, “anxious cultures tend to be expressive cultures”. Visiting again the UAI scores provided by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), such a general statement remains debatable. There actually are cultures which rate low on UAI and show emotions at the same time (e.g. India and Colombia, if PDI, IDV and TRU permit). Also, the high-UAI Germans are not exactly known for expressively showing emotions. These considerations form a strong argument for the discreteness of the NVA dimension.

6.2.5 LTO: Long-Term Orientation

The LTO dimension hardly surfaced in the field study, if at all. This is surprising because score values of both cultures differ substantially. However, the underlying values according to which people acted in the field study overlapped to a wide extent and formed a sustainable basis for collaboration. Both cultures strongly value intellectual power, for example.

6.2.6 IVR: Indulgence vs. Restraint

The IVR dimension also hardly materialized despite the differences in score values. When it came to surface, it did not substantially influence collaboration. This is in conjunction to the sayings of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) who assign comparatively little relevance to their "new" dimension.

6.2.7 NVA: Neutral vs. Affective

The intensity of exhibited emotions observed remained hardly explainable by other dimensions. Hofstede's dimensions, in particular IDV, hardly explain field observation. There remains something missing in Hofstede's dimensions (refer to the above on IDV). Therefore, the NVA dimension enriches the evaluation scheme. However, it exhibits a strong situational context and surfaces only if circumstances permit.

6.2.8 SVD: Specific vs. Diffuse

Its proximity to IDV is obvious — but misleading, as it explains more immediately observed attitudes than IDV in certain parts of the field study. In some parts of the field study (e.g. in section 4.16 Sustainably ruined Relationships), the IDV dimension even fails to suggest an appropriate explanation. The SVD dimension enriches the evaluation scheme by highlighting the focus of diffuse cultures on invariably consistent personalities. Its presence in the set of effective evaluation criteria is also justified by its high damage potential.

Another shallow and stereotype approach would suggest that high-PDI Indians change their behavior to a wide extent whenever authorities or superiors are present. Instead, the often-observed consistency in character becomes transparent (SVD), independent of any situation or time-based context. In sum, such observations cannot be explained by any other dimension than SVD.

6.2.9 AVA: Achievement vs. Ascription

As with SVD, one might be inclined to link the AVA dimension closely with IDV. However, this would neglect its distinctive nature which explains not only consequences of the caste system, but also it explains more concisely why some individuals are assigned to certain positions and consistently "grow up to the challenges." Anyway, judged by impact and frequency, AVA hardly materialized in the field study.

6.2.10 ART: Attitudes with Regard to Time

The particular value of the ART dimension lays in the fact that Hofstede's (1984) traditional four dimensions PDI, IDV, MAS, and UAI offer little explanatory support for certain observations during the field study. These four dimensions provide no strong, consistent, and direct reasoning when it comes to explaining the (a) seriousness or latitude how dates are followed up (only UAI might partly, but incompletely explain), and (b) the ability to work on separate issues at the same time (realizing that the perception of time and reality are closely related, but still two different things).

The differences in varying perceptions of time and reality invariably and continuously caused substantial cultural conflicts throughout the field study. Having acknowledged the importance and damage potential of both components (time and reality), and the fact that both were described by Hall as early as 1959, it is quite surprising that Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) did not identify any explicit importance of the role of time. One would expect that such a *fundamental* concept as time exhibits a strict influence on other dimensions or forms a discrete entity.

The reasons can only be assumed. Maybe it is because "the right questions" simply have not been asked, in analogy to the note Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) provide regarding the discovery of the LTO dimension. It might be justified to further investigate whether this is

a weakness of a strictly inductive and numerical research approach (potential research question).

Maybe, the conviction prevailed that the perception of time and reality can be rooted back to others of their dimensions. However, this does not provide consistent reasoning. For example, one might be inclined to derive the phenomenon of punctuality back to UAI, and to understand it as a means to reduce uncertainty.

But then, the reasoning would still leave questions open, such as why there still exist cultures with low UAI scores which act on linear time and insist on punctuality at the same time?

6.2.11 COM: Communicating — Low Context vs. High Context

The COM dimension surfaced constantly throughout the field study. Again, its proximity to IDV is obvious, but it offers additional insights, because highly collectivistic cultures can be low-context and vice versa. The insights gained from this differentiation add to the comprehensives of the evaluation scheme. However, the field study shows that much mutual frustration can be caused when low and high context cultures interact.

6.2.12 EVA: Evaluating — Direct Negative Feedback vs. Indirect Negative Feedback

In analogy to the above, the justification of the EVA dimension resides in the fact that even high-context cultures can exhibit the direct transfer of negative messages — and vice versa. Regarding the field study much conflict derived from the inconvenience the transfer of negative messages causes for ‘polite’ Indians. On the other hand, Germans often were incapable to detect nuances. This occasionally summed up to mutual frustration: the Indians perceiving the Germans as being blunt and ignorant, the Germans perceiving the Indians as resisting to make clear statements and being evasive. However, there again is a dynamic component in the application of this dimension and conflicts declined with maturing relationships. In addition, it

could be observed that the resistance to make clear negative statements also tends to correlate negatively to the position in the hierarchy.

6.2.13 PER: Persuading – Principles-first vs. Applications-first

The often extensive deductive reasoning which is deeply rooted in German philosophy often came to the discomfort of Indian partners, in particular when it materialized in close conjunction with German high uncertainty avoidance and Indian pragmatism. It often stressed the attentiveness and patience of Indians to listen to complex long-lasting and fine-grained reasoning before coming to the conclusion. On the other side, the Indian nature to jump right at the problem and solve it was perceived as chaotic by Germans as long as it was not embedded in an orientation-providing framework. The absence of other cultural dimensions to comprehensively explain this phenomenon justifies adding the PER dimension to the set of evaluation criteria, despite the fact that some proximity to the UAI dimension exists.

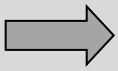
6.2.14 TRU: Trusting: Task-based vs. Relationship-based

The TRU dimension deserves being added to the evaluation scheme for several reasons: (a) it actually came to substantial effect in the field study, (b) it provides reasoning that trust evolves by different means in different cultures, and (c) although the proximity to IDV is evident, the TRU dimension is *more fundamental* than just focusing on relationships.

6.2.15 Completeness of Hofstede's Dimensions: Summary and Conclusion

Although Hofstede's dimensions dominate throughout the field study, their appliance in order to analyze and explain observations leaves gaps. In particular cases, arguing exclusively based on Hofstede actually requires far-fetching reasoning or even delivers misleading results. In some few cases, Hofstede's dimensions do not offer a reasonable explanation at all. Other dimensions might actually compensate for this disadvantage or offer more direct explanations (Occam's razor). Anyway, each of the dimensions beyond Hofstede offers alternative

perspectives or is refining Hofstede's dimensions, partly by deriving back to more fundamental considerations. The 14 dimensions offer in total a more comprehensive set of evaluation criteria than Hofstede's six dimensions would and are highlighting the analysis by offering different angles.



The *extent* to which Hofstede's dimensions are complete (again, in regard to analysis and evaluation purposes) turns out to be difficult to infer with mathematical precision. All that can seriously be concluded is that there are gaps and inconsistencies as listed above. Some of the gaps can be filled by applying the dimensions of other authors. It was initially guessed that approximately 60-70% of observations could be explained appropriately by Hofstede. After having conducted a deeper analysis, it appears fair to assume that this rate is slightly higher, but still far from 100%. Additional insights regarding this rate might be gained from the discussion of Research Questions 2 and 3, which focus on the process of adding appropriate dimensions and the ranking of their effectiveness.

An interesting accompanying figure in this context might be that Hofstede's dimensions gain 279 of 520 (54%) score points in section 6.4 Research Question 3: Ranking of Effectiveness and clearly occupy the first three ranks. However, the investigation therein is designed to define a ranking and not to determine a share. Therefore, immediate conclusions regarding completeness are problematic to draw.

6.3 Research Question 2: Validity of other Cultural Dimensions

> "Which cultural dimensions of other researchers may be added to the set of cultural dimensions in order to create a consistent and more comprehensive evaluation framework?"

Again, only Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) provide strict empirically evidence-based reasoning according to positivistic standards of scientific rigor. In order to ensure minimum scientific standards, it is therefore required that the dimensions of other authors pass two distinct tests: (a) a qualitative acid test 1 for consistency as performed in section 5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions to prove they are not redundant with other dimensions, and (b) an acid test 2 for validity as performed in section 4 Field Study: The GLOBE Project to prove that their effects actually materialized in the field study (and not only in theory).

6.3.1 Graphical Presentation of Results: Matrices

Often applied in system analysis, the benefit of using matrices and diagrams is to visualize and make context and embedment transparent to better understand the system as a whole. Due to the interrelatedness and complexity of the dimensions, it is not possible to identify and discuss all relations among them in detail, given the time frame and the scope of this dissertation. Such a complete attempt is not even desirable, as it would focus on details at the expense of context. It would mean to evaluate 506 (23 x 22) relationships among the dimensions in great detail in the raw matrix and 182 (14 x 13) relationships in the consolidated matrix.

However, targeting at providing the grounds for the evaluation of the system as a whole, it was considered being more important to be complete and comprehensive during qualitative analysis rather than being absolutely free of redundancies to the last detail. Therefore, redundancies were excluded only when they became obvious by analytical reasoning or in case they were explicitly mentioned by the respective authors. This approach enabled a substantial reduction of

complexity by condensing from 23 dimensions to only 14 and thus comes to the benefit of elimination of redundancies and increased relevance and transparency. The difference in complexity between the raw matrix and the condensed matrix immediately becomes transparent in the following strength matrices.

The suggestion to apply diagrams and matrices arose during pre-studies caused by the supposition that not all observations could be sufficiently explained by Hofstede's dimensions. Again, in some cases these dimensions failed to provide consistent reasoning, or required cumbersome arguing. When initially analyzing the cultural dimensions of other authors for filling this gap, the suspicion arose that some can be understood as a composition of various other, more fundamental dimensions. And finally, the insight arose that mono-causal reasoning based on applying dimensions in isolated ways provided insufficient or inconsistent results. These observations suggested the application of appropriate analysis tools such as matrices and diagrams in order to make context and dependencies transparent. Another obvious reason to perform this 'housekeeping' work was the desire to bring clarity to a confusing question: how do all these writers on cultural management relate?

To summarize, the purpose and benefit of the matrix are: to better understand: (a) the context, (b) to identify the dependencies among the dimensions, (c) to give pragmatic hints to researchers where to look for context and to provide navigational assistance, (d) to advise practitioners about the embedment of each dimension and finally, (e) to assist in the procedure towards a consistent set of dimensions with minimized overlaps.

Some constraints regarding the matrices arise: in case there is no value filled in a given cell this does not necessarily mean that there is no relationship at all. It means that no relationship could be identified or suggested. Partly, the authors themselves point at dependencies among their own dimensions (e.g. Hofstede on correlations of his own dimensions). Partly, they refer to dimensions of other researchers (e.g. all authors refer to Hall (1989)). However, in such a

complex and intertwined system, as a cross-cultural project is, it is difficult to identify each potential relationship. As mentioned before, when in doubt, comprehensiveness values higher than the elimination of partial redundancies.

The horizontal line of each matrix provides an indication of the extent of embedment of this particular dimension. The more entries in the cells, the more relationships to other dimensions were detected. It is important to understand that a high degree of embedment does not necessarily indicate dependencies, or compromises the discrete nature of a dimension. It is only an indicator for interrelatedness. This is supported by results of the field study, wherein dimensions rarely surfaced isolated, but generally in close context with others. This insight creates once again a strong warning not to apply mono-causal reasoning when analyzing cultural phenomena. However, in case qualitative investigation actually left a certain horizontal line widely unfilled with values this would deliver an indication that the dimension stands for itself right from the beginning. Interestingly, this is rather the exception than the rule: only the MAS dimension remains widely isolated.

6.3.2 The Reference Matrix

		PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MVP	LHC	UVP	IVC	NVA	SVD	AVA	ART	ARE	COM	EVA	PER	LEA	DEC	TRU	DIS	SCH
Hoftstede	PDI								DA	DA	DA		DA	DA			DA	DA		DA	DA		DA	
Hoftstede	IDV	p.102ff							p.109	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA			DA	DA			DA	DA	DA	
Hoftstede	MAS																							
Hoftstede	UAI									p.191,209		p.196			p.188		p.196	p.209, DA						
Hoftstede	LTO	p.243	p.242,244,246	p.242	p.244			p.239		p.246	p.242		p236-7		p.239				p.244	p.243				
Hoftstede	IVR	p.286	p.292			p.281, 295																		
Hall	MVP	p.22, 24	p.23	p.23	p.9, 17				p.150	p.150	DA		DA		p.9,17		p.150							p.9,17
Hall	LHC	p.127	p.127		p.9			p.150		p.127							p.125	p.127		p. 127	p.127	p.127	p.127	
Trompenaars	UVP	p.42	p.42-50		p.51-52	p.52,53		p.52			p.42-50													
Trompenaars	IVC		p.11,65ff.			p.85																		
Trompenaars	NVA	DA	p.93-96,99		DA				p.93-94														DA	
Trompenaars	SVD	p.101,107,12	12,107,111-112		DA		p.101		p.111	p.123	p. 12,111-112	p.101			DA		DA					DA	DA	
Trompenaars	AVA	p.131-136	p.135,138	p.132					p.138		p.135,138		p.138							DA				
Trompenaars	ART	DA	DA, p.161,166	DA, p.161	p.151, 152, DA	p.147,157,160,161,164		p.13,147,152		p.161			p.160	p.13,147, 154,162										
Trompenaars	ARE		p.190	p.190					p.190															
Meyer	COM	p.57	p.40,57,58	p.57	p.57,58				p.41	p.57,58	p.40,57,58	p.36	p.58	DA				DA						
Meyer	EVA	DA	DA	DA	DA				DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA			p.62,70							
Meyer	PER	p.95,106-7,113	p.105,106,112-3		p.93					p.105,113	p.105		p.105,112-3		p.105,107		p.112-3	p.105				p.106	p.105,106-7	
Meyer	LEA	p.115ff		p.116									p.123											
Meyer	DEC	p.144-6	p.144-5,149		p.147,155					DA	p.144-6		DA						p.147-9	p.144-6				
Meyer	TRU		p.170-1,173,185	p.171,188	p.171	p.171			p.185,188	p.171,173			p.171,173,182		p.171		p.185,188						p.188	
Meyer	DIS	DA, p.210-1	p.199,211	DA	DA				p.199	DA	p.199,211	DA,p.201-4	p.198,200,206-7	p.199,210-1			p.199	p.196,199,201	p.196,198,200,20	DA, p.210-1				
Meyer	SCH		p. 227		p.226,230-1,236-7			p.224		p.227			p.227		p.226-227				p.236-7					

***Figure 26*: Reference Matrix**

Remarks: The yellow color indicates those dimensions which were excluded from the set of dimensions. “p.99” refers to the referenced page number. “DA” refers to dissertation analysis and conclusions.

The above diagram exhibits all 23 cultural dimensions under investigation. A more legible table is provided in 9 Appendix A: Reference Matrix. The nine dimensions marked in yellow represent those cultural dimensions that did not survive the acid tests (qualitative test for redundancy and empirical test for validity). This leaves the analysis scheme with 14 consistent (i.e. redundancy-free) and valid dimensions applicable to evaluate the field study from different angles.

The reference matrix provides valuable navigational aid concerning cross-references. It should be read horizontally per row and indicates in the cells the page number on which the respective author implicitly or explicitly refers to other dimensions. “DA” stands for dissertation analysis and indicates that such referencing context was identified by own analysis.

For example, if the reader finds “p.42” in the row “UVP” and column “PDI” this means that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) refer explicitly or implicitly on page 42 to the PDI dimension of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). In case the cell value is “DA” (dissertation analysis) the context is construed in the respective section on the particular dimension.

In case a cell is not filled, this does not mean that there is no relationship at all. It simply means that no relationship became obvious during qualitative analysis. In other words: in case a reference is given it means there *actually* is context. In case no reference is given, there still *could* be some kind of context, but it could not be identified. The matrix therefore cannot claim to be complete, but it claims to justify statements given in the dissertation. The reader can easily reconstruct the reasoning of the dissertation by applying this tool. It also provides a valuable navigational aid to maintain overview and focus while working on the variety of cultural dimensions.

6.3.3 The Strength Matrix (raw)

		PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MVP	LHC	UVP	IVC	NVA	SVD	AVA	ART	ARE	COM	EVA	PER	LEA	DEC	TRU	DIS	SCH
Hoftstede	PDI								W	M	W		M	W			W	M		S	M		M	
Hoftstede	IDV	S							S	M	S	M	S	M			S	S			M	S	S	
Hoftstede	MAS																							
Hoftstede	UAI									S		W			S		M	W						
Hoftstede	LTO	M	W	W	M			W		M	W		W		S				W	M				
Hoftstede	IVR	W	W			M																		
Hall	MVP	S	W	W	S				S	W	W		S		S		M							S
Hall	LHC	W	S		M			M		M							S	W		W	W	W	M	
Trompenaars	UVP	S	S		S	M		M			M													
Trompenaars	IVC		S			M																		
Trompenaars	NVA	S	S		W				S														W	
Trompenaars	SVD	S	S		M		W		S	M	M	S			M		M					S	S	
Trompenaars	AVA	S	M	M					M		M									M				
Trompenaars	ART	C	W	W	S	M		S		W			W	S										
Trompenaars	ARE		W	W					W															
Meyer	COM	W	S	W	S				S	W	W	W	W	W				S						
Meyer	EVA	C	S	W	M				S	W	M	M	W	W			S							
Meyer	PER	C	W		S					M	W		M		S		M	M		C		W	W	
Meyer	LEA	S		W									M						M					
Meyer	DEC	S	S		S					W	S		W						S	S				
Meyer	TRU		S	M	M	W			M	W			S		W		M						W	
Meyer	DIS	W	S	M	M				S	M	W	M	S	S			S	S	S	W				
Meyer	SCH		S		S			S		M			M		S				M					

***Figure 27*: Strength Matrix (raw)**

Remarks: The yellow color indicates those dimensions, which were excluded from the set of dimensions. Cell values: S – Strong / M – Medium / W – Weak / C – Contradictory, or inconsistent, or subject to further research.

A more eligible table is provided in 10 Appendix B: Strength Matrix (raw). The raw strength matrix evaluates the interrelatedness by the assigning the values “S” – Strong / “M” – Medium / “W” – Weak and “C” – Contradictory (or inconsistent) to cells. This evaluation is not free of a subjective moment at the end, of course. It was prepared based on (a) authors statements, (b) obvious context, and (c) detailed analysis and reasoning.

The purpose of the strength matrix is to render an overview on the interrelatedness of cultural dimensions and to provide navigational aids. It should be read horizontally, e.g. in the case that one wants to learn about the context of the SVD dimension, the evaluated context to the dimensions PDI, IDV, UAI, IVR, LHC, UVP, IVC, NVA, ART, COM, TRU, and DIS is rendered.

The raw strength matrix contains all 23 dimensions which were subject to qualitative investigation. It illustrates the complexity of the research area. Those dimensions, which were recognized as redundant or invalid during analysis are marked in yellow. Such dimensions are excluded to form the consolidated matrix.

The strength matrix follows another intention than the reference matrix. It focuses on providing a reasoned impression of how intensely each cultural dimension is related to other dimensions. It would be misleading to describe such relationships as 'dependencies'. Such dependencies *might* actually exist, for example in case of composed dimensions. In the absence of deeper qualifying analysis it appears appropriate to use the more neutral term "relationships".

The strength matrix delivers an *indication* of the discreteness of each single dimension as a discrete singular entity. In a perfect world, each cultural dimension would stand on its own without being related to other dimensions. In quantitative terms, its correlation with all other dimensions would be *zero*. The reality is that each dimension is embedded, to a varying degree, with other dimensions. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) themselves point at such correlations, for example the one between their PDI and IDV dimensions.

The strength matrix gives an impression of the intensity and nature concerning the relationship between two cultural dimensions in particular (cell value) and the proximity of a single dimension with others in general (row values). It is important to keep in mind that the number of entries in a row provides only a first indication of the discreteness of a dimension and conclusions must be drawn carefully.

A strong embedment does not necessarily lead to the suggestion that a dimension is not justified. Detailed analysis in section 5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions also suggested that some dimensions may be decomposed and rooted back to other more fundamental dimensions, but form a distinctive, albeit derived, stand-alone entity in their entirety.

The evaluation whether the relationship between two dimension is strong (S), medium (M), or weak (W) is reasonable, but admittedly subject to a subjective interpretation as there are no objective means to determine the strength. Quantitative considerations about correlations among cultural dimensions are not in the scope of the dissertation. Such an analytical categorization into strong, weak, and medium therefore remains limited to qualitative, but

deductive and subjective reasoning. For example, if the reader finds the value "S" in the row "Trompenaars UVP" and column "PDI", it means that Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) elaborations suggest a strong context between both dimensions. In this particular case it might, for example, suggest that low power distance (PDI) *strongly* influences the perception of a universalistic person how to implement global rules.

This very particular example illustrates a dilemma between academic rigor and relevance, because by assigning a simple value to a cell of the matrix, a strongly oversimplifying statement is provided. This approach is helpful to maintain a systemic and holistic overview on the matter, but it ignores the fact that the relationship between both dimensions UVP and PDI is worth its own focused dissertation by a traditional positivistic research approach. There is much more to investigate between each pairing of dimensions in the matrix from various perspectives. It is worth reminding the reader that the initial raw matrix offers 506 cells, and the consolidated matrix below still offers 182 cells, each worth further research (potential research question).

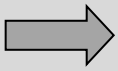
In exceptional cases, a value of "C" ("contradictory") is suggested. In such cases the reasoning and outcome of both dimensions mutually contradict each other in detail. Conclusions drawn from the application of both might differ in such a case.

6.3.4 The Strength Matrix (consolidated)

		PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	NVA	SVD	AVA	ART	COM	EVA	PER	TRU
Hoftstede	PDI								M	W		W	M		
Hoftstede	IDV	S						M	S	M		S	S		S
Hoftstede	MAS														
Hoftstede	UAI							W			S	M	W		
Hoftstede	LTO	M	W	W	M				W		S			W	
Hoftstede	IVR	W	W			M									
Trompenaar	NVA	S	S		W										
Trompenaar	SVD	S	S		M		W	S			M	M			S
Trompenaar	AVA	S	M	M											
Trompenaar	ART	C	W	W	S	M			W	S					
Meyer	COM	W	S	W	S			W	W	W			S		
Meyer	EVA	C	S	W	M			M	W	W		S			
Meyer	PER	C	W		S				M		S	M	M		W
Meyer	TRU		S	M	M	W			S		W	M			

***Figure 28*: Strength Matrix (consolidated)**

Remarks: Cell values: S – Strong / M – Medium / W – Weak / C – Contradictory, or inconsistent, or subject to further research.



The above matrix represents the answer to Research Question 2. It lists those cultural dimensions of other researchers beyond Hofstede which should be added to the set of cultural dimensions in order to create a consistent and more comprehensive evaluation framework.

The consolidated strength matrix evaluates the interrelatedness of cultural dimensions by the values "S" – Strong / "M" – Medium / "W" – Weak and "C" – Contradictory, or inconsistent. It derives directly from the raw strength matrix, but is adjusted by eliminating those cultural dimensions which did not survive the check for (a) redundancy or (b) validity (referred to as acid tests 1 and 2). In section 5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions each dimension is examined for its discreteness. Section 4 Field Study: The GLOBE Project confirms the validity from the field study: can its validity be confirmed from observation or not? To be more specific, in case the validity of a certain dimension cannot be confirmed from the field study, it is misleading to derive a generalizing conclusion regarding its overall validity. It simply means that its validity cannot be confirmed in this very particular case about Indian and German behavior. Any such generalization would be problematic as it potentially excludes insights under other cultural circumstances.

6.3.5 Interrelatedness Diagram

This diagram does not contain more information than the strength matrices, but renders the information graphically. It illustrates the complexity of the research area. Relationships among the cultural dimensions of the same authors were disregarded as this would come at the cost of transparency. There is no doubt that there is such context (e.g. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) discuss the strong ties which exist between PDI and IDV.).

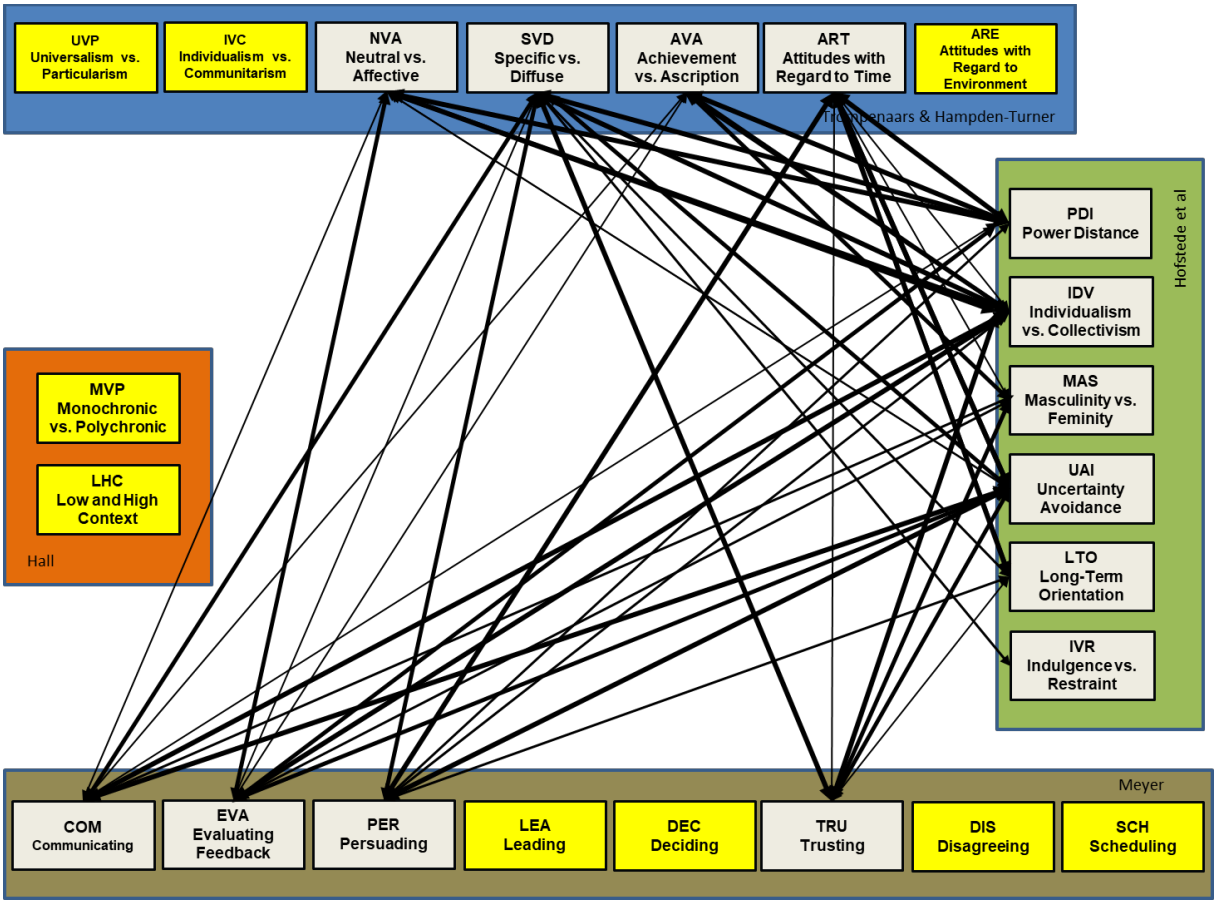


***Figure 29*: Interrelatedness Diagram.**

Remarks: (1) The yellow color indicates those dimensions, which were excluded from the set of dimensions. (2) The diagram does not indicate relationships among the dimensions of the same author. (3) The strength of the lines corresponds to the strength of the relationship.

6.4 Research Question 3: Ranking of Effectiveness

> "Which conclusions regarding a ranking of effectiveness of cultural dimensions may be drawn when applied to the field study?"

The inquiry is conducted by applying the condensed set of cultural dimensions (i.e. the *consistent* and *valid* dimensions) for the analysis of the field study and by measuring their frequency and impact, and a resulting score, in the field study.

This analysis admittedly contains subjective moments: (a) in some cases it is difficult to evaluate whether the same dimension materializes redundantly or whether its surfacing derives

from another context and reasoning. In the latter case, when the same dimension derives from a substantially different application of the same dimension, it may be counted twice; (b) the severity with which a dimension materializes is by nature subject to individual considerations. However, the dissertation does not follow the ambition to describe the ranking of dimensions with mathematical precision, but aims at unfolding a *relative* ranking of importance in the particular case Indian and German culture 'collide'.

The following overview represents the result of the analysis conducted in section 4 Field Study: The GLOBE Project. It summarizes the score results of the sub-result tables marked as "manifestations" under each part of the field study:

Ranking	Researcher	Dimension	Frequency	Score
1	Hofstede et al	PDI	38	91
2	Hofstede et al	IDV	39	86
3	Hofstede et al	UAI	29	66
4	Tromp.&H-T	ART	20	47
5	Meyer	COM	21	45
6	Meyer	TRU	20	42
7	Meyer	EVA	18	41
8	Tromp.&H-T	SVD	15	32
9	Hofstede et al	MAS	14	29
10	Meyer	PER	5	14
11	Tromp.&H-T	NVA	6	12
12	Tromp.&H-T	AVA	5	8
13	Hofstede et al	IVR	5	7
14	Hofstede et al	LTO	0	0
				520

***Figure 30*: Ranking of Manifestations of cultural Dimensions.**

Remarks: Raw data are documented in section 11 Appendix C: Raw Data Research Questions 3 and 4. Hofstede's dimensions are marked in grey.

This table represents which cultural dimensions are important in ranked order in Indian-German collaboration. This result should assist both researchers and practitioners in focusing on

relevance when analyzing this subject area – and when condensing appropriate counter strategies against cultural conflicts.

The above figure represents the answer to Research Question 3. It is remarkable that, judged by scores, three groups cluster:

(1) the group with high effectiveness: Hofstede's dimensions (PDI, IDV, UAI);

(2) the group with medium effectiveness: those dimensions of mostly other authors (ART, COM, TRU, EVA, SVD, MAS);

(3) the group with occasional effectiveness (PER, NVA, AVA, IVR)

6.4.1 Hofstede's Dimensions

Hofstede's dimensions deserve a separate section. They are the only ones which are undebatable and based on solid and peer-reviewed empirical research. Again, it is remarkable that three of them occupy the first ranks while MAS, IVR and LTO are spread across the scale. An interpretation is provided below:

- **PDI – Power Distance**

The analysis of the field study rendered the frequent and wide impact of the PDI dimension. Its materialization usually came to surface in very immediate and obvious ways. If one follows the assumption that cultural conflicts surface in particular where differences are high, its high rank cannot come as a surprise (Hofstede's index values are Germany (35) vs. India (77). Ignoring PDI-caused constraints frequently causes substantial conflict and potentially severe damage.

In addition, Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov's (2010) observation that PDI and IDV correlate can be confirmed from the field study (although not explicitly investigated therein): PDI and IDV regularly materialize in intertwined ways; they rarely come up isolated.

- **IDV – Individualism vs. Collectivism**

While PDI usually materializes in obvious and transparent ways, IDV often comes to effect more subtly, as the interpretation of the field study shows. Again, the difference in Hofstede's index values is substantial: Germany (67) vs. India (48). Not understanding IDV-caused constraints causes conflict and occasionally severe damage.

- **MAS – Masculinity vs. Feminity**

The comparatively small role of the MAS dimension corresponds to the comparatively small differences in index values: Germany (66) vs. India (56).

- **UAI – Uncertainty Avoidance**

If high power distance and high collectivism on the Indian side are dominating (and potentially restraining) characteristics, then high uncertainty avoidance characterizes the German part. The substantial difference in Hofstede's index values is Germany (65) vs. India (40) and frequently contributes to mutual frustration.

- **LTO – Long-Term Orientation**

It is quite irritating and confusing that the LTO dimension did not materialize at all. Be it that the antennas were not fine-grained enough, be it they were wrongly adjusted, or be it that LTO actually plays no substantial role in Indian-German collaboration. Its effectiveness might be totally different when examining other cultural encounters.

- **IVR – Indulgence vs. Restraint**

While Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) admit that the factual impact of this comparatively new dimension is still unforeseeable, the field study analysis uncovered its materialization in some cases after all. However, its relevance is small.

6.4.2 Dimensions beyond Hofstede

The actual manifestation of these cultural dimensions is of particular relevance as their empirical basis is not as sound and reviewed as that of Hofstede's dimensions.

- **NVA – Neutral vs. Affective**

The NVA dimension passed the qualitative acid test only with concerns. Its effectiveness turned out to be comparatively weak. However, it explains in both theory and practice observations of the field study where other dimensions, in particular IDV, would fail. Its materialization can be, for example, very transparently observed in business negotiations between the partners, as well as in internal team discussions.

- **SVD – Specific vs. Diffuse**

The SVD dimension materialized with medium effectiveness; but when it did, it came with a high damage potential. As with NVA, the SVD dimension is well-suited to explain certain observations where other dimensions would leave gaps. This applies in particular to situations where personal pride is hurt and where deficits in regard to personal consistency (both situational and in regard to time) come up.

- **AVA – Achievement vs. Ascription**

Considering the powerful tradition of the caste system, the AVA dimension hardly came to effect.

- **ART – Attitudes with Regard to Time**

It was already mentioned beforehand that it appears surprising that Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) dedicate so little attention to the perception of time and, closely related, reality. Both can be seen as fundamental concepts. The ART dimension materialized throughout the field study and caused continued severe conflicts which can best be explained by ART. In contrast the attempt to explain them by other dimensions invariably requires far-fetching reasoning, if possible at all.

- **COM – Communicating: Low Context vs. High Context**

The misunderstandings which might arise from not understanding conveyed messages materialized throughout the field study with severe implications. The attempt to exclusively apply the IDV dimension to explain such issues leaves an incomplete picture.

- **EVA – Evaluating: Direct Negative Feedback vs. Indirect Negative Feedback**

The above applies even more with similar effectiveness when it comes to negative messages. If not understood, it is a source of frustration and discomfort for the Indian side and confusion for the German part.

- **PER – Persuading: Principles-First vs. Applications-First**

The PER dimension hardly materialized — but when it did, it did so with severe impact (it materialized five times and almost caused the maximum impact score).

- **TRU – Trusting: Task-based vs. Relationship-based**

As with the ART dimension, TRU appears to be a fundamental concept. It therefore cannot come as a surprise that it very often materialized in close conjunction with the IDV dimension, whereas it enriches the perspectives offered by the latter. Simply speaking, it very often comes into effect when the highly effective IDV dimension materializes. In addition, it high-lights a dynamic component: things fundamentally change when the trust base is secured.

6.5 Research Question 4: Linkage to the IT Development Process

"Which insights may be drawn from the application of the comprehensive evaluation framework to particular stages of large-scale IT offshoring projects?"

A closely related refining sub-question to the above is whether stage-specific patterns of cultural dimensions materialize in the field study. For example, is the influence of cultural dimensions in planning different from that in analysis and architecture? In order to ask these questions, the score analysis results regarding Research Question 3 have to be broken down and assigned to particular stages of the IT development process. The result of such an attempt is documented in following table:

		Planning	Analysis	Testing & Delivery	Design/ Architecture & QA	Coding and M&S	Project & Change Management	General & Management
Hoftstede	**PDI**	15	6	25	12	./.	29	32
Hoftstede	**IDV**	15	2	19	19	./.	25	25
Hoftstede	**MAS**	6	4	5	12	./.	7	2
Hoftstede	**UAI**	8	8	18	20	./.	24	7
Hoftstede	**LTO**	0	0	0	0	./.	0	0
Hoftstede	**IVR**	0	0	1	2	./.	1	4
Trompenaar:	**NVA**	0	0	2	4	./.	4	4
Trompenaar:	**SVD**	6	2	7	8	./.	10	10
Trompenaar:	**AVA**	1	0	2	0	./.	5	3
Trompenaar:	**ART**	8	4	12	17	./.	18	4
Meyer	**COM**	4	2	13	8	./.	22	9
Meyer	**EVA**	0	3	11	8	./.	16	14
Meyer	**PER**	0	0	3	9	./.	3	2
Meyer	**TRU**	9	0	13	8	./.	16	11

***Figure 31*: Manifestations of cultural Dimensions per IT Development Stage.**

Remarks: Raw data are documented in section 11 Appendix C: Raw Data Research Questions 3 and 4. No score values are rendered for 'Coding and M&S' as they are fully redundant with those of 'Design/Architecture & QA'.

In order to gain more insights and make context and patterns transparent, the following table is prepared. This table now *ranks* the cultural dimensions per stage by effectiveness:

	Planning
PDI	15
IDV	15
TRU	9
UAI	8
ART	8
MAS	6
SVD	6
COM	4
AVA	1
LTO	0
IVR	0
NVA	0
EVA	0
PER	0

	Analysis
UAI	8
PDI	6
MAS	4
ART	4
EVA	3
IDV	2
SVD	2
COM	2
LTO	0
IVR	0
NVA	0
AVA	0
PER	0
TRU	0

	Testing & Delivery
PDI	25
IDV	19
UAI	18
COM	13
TRU	13
ART	12
EVA	11
SVD	7
MAS	5
PER	3
NVA	2
AVA	2
IVR	1
LTO	0

	Design/ Architecture & QA
UAI	20
IDV	19
ART	17
PDI	12
MAS	12
PER	9
SVD	8
COM	8
EVA	8
TRU	8
NVA	4
IVR	2
LTO	0
AVA	0

	Project & Change Managemt.
PDI	29
IDV	25
UAI	24
COM	22
ART	18
EVA	16
TRU	16
SVD	10
MAS	7
AVA	5
NVA	4
PER	3
IVR	1
LTO	0

	General & Managemt.
PDI	32
IDV	25
EVA	14
TRU	11
SVD	10
COM	9
UAI	7
IVR	4
NVA	4
ART	4
AVA	3
MAS	2
PER	2
LTO	0

***Figure 32*: Ranked manifestations of cultural dimensions per IT development stage.**

Stage-specific patterns are rendered in this presentation. It suggests that there are slightly different rankings for each stage. A closer examination suggests that the first three to five dimensions are mostly the same, which is contradicting the expectation to identify stage-specific patterns. In brief, independent of the stage, certain dimensions invariably dominate across stages: PDI, IDV and UAI, closely followed by ART and TRU:

Total of in First Three:	PDI	5
	IDV	5
	UAI	4
	ART	1
	MAS	1
	TRU	1
	EVA	1

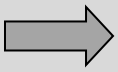
Total of in First Five	PDI	6
	IDV	5
	UAI	5
	ART	4
	TRU	3
	MAS	2
	COM	2
	EVA	2
	SVD	1

***Figure 33*: Presentation of the most important cultural Dimensions along the IT Process.**

Although the above tables provide formal answers to Research Question 4, some concerns arise as such an attempt might be in danger of providing pseudo-precision for the following reasons:

- The sample size of 40 sections of the field study turned out to be too small to draw reliable conclusions. Some stages of the IT development process could not be identified by examining the field study at all; some stages had to be merged with others to deliver sufficient data and some stages provide only few data (e.g. analysis stage). Additionally, a wide variety of observations of the field study could not be assigned to a specific development stage and were consistently collected in the column ‘General & Management.

- The danger of pseudo-precision also arises from another consideration: the consequences of materializations of cultural dimensions in particular stages, may, in particular when comparatively few data are available, potentially be superseded by other factors which were made transparent during field study analysis. Such factors are, in particular, the maturity of established relationships and the position in the hierarchy, to name those which were discussed before.



No stage-specific patterns of cultural dimensions could be identified with sufficient confidence so far. Instead, it appears that the most important cultural drivers dominate *across all stages*. Any further inquiry would require an enlarged sample size.

6.6 Evaluation of Findings

The findings suggest that any analysis of cultural encounters purely based on Hofstede's dimensions is substantial and powerful but leaves explanatory gaps. These gaps may be filled by the dimensions of other authors as long as they meet minimum scientific requirements regarding consistency and validity. However, the findings also suggest that Hofstede's dimensions represent the most effective drivers, as the inquiry turned out to deliver comparatively clear results. The challenge to rank dimensions was just technical, once the object of inquiry (the field study) was sufficiently described and the comprehensive set of evaluation criteria was identified and ready for application. Moments of subjectivity, which might lay in the evaluation of the severity of the impact with which a dimension materialized, cannot be neglected. Such concerns however diminish when regarding the unambiguity of results. Considering the huge amount of research invested by Hofstede and his disciples, the

dominance of his dimensions cannot come as a surprise, but it is of particular interest to identify how the dimensions of other writers are ranked.

In regard to stage-specific patterns of cultural dimensions the picture remains vague. At first sight it is suggested that the most effective drivers do not vary substantially across stages of the development cycle.

An interesting finding is that Hofstede's dimensions *actually* leave gaps. At the center of this question stands the claim of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) that their dimensions are complete. On the other hand, initial spontaneous observations made during the field study led to skepticism in regard to this claim and finally to the motivation to conduct detailed structured inquiry to verify it. While Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) strictly argue based on numerical data in a basically defensive, categorical and almost dogmatic way, they tend to exclude the research of other writers on cultural management – or don't take it for serious as long as the empirical evidence is debatable.

However, a personal discussion with Gert Jan Hofstede turned out to deliver a refreshingly open-minded acceptance of other approaches. The balancing formula one might agree on is that it makes a difference whether research concentrates with positivistic scientific rigor on inductively distilling valid cultural dimensions from data – or whether the idea is to enrich the set of analysis and evaluation criteria by adding other perspectives. The latter is the intention of this dissertation. Judged from this intention it would be ignorant to disregard findings of other authors who report from experience and observation, but fall short of providing numerical evidence. Gert Jan Hofstede suggested that anything that helps is welcomed in order to ask better questions. Again, throughout its inquiry this dissertation does not target at verifying or rejecting the findings of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), but at contributing to the consistent completion of perspectives. This had to happen by fulfilling minimum standards of

structured scientific inquiry, of course. In particular, any dimension beyond those of Hofstede had to pass both acid tests for consistency and validity.

6.7 Summary

The inquiry could actually identify not only blind spots when applying Hofstede's dimensions, but also expand the evaluation scheme based on scientific reasoning. The dominant role of Hofstede's dimensions remains unchallenged as the ranking of dimensions unambiguously shows. This dominance seems to invariably apply across all stages of the IT development process.

The practitioner or researcher who desires to investigate deeper is supported with valuable direction: where gaps or cumbersome observations reside, how to fill these gaps, plus what drives behavior in cross-cultural encounters judged by effectiveness considerations, and finally whether planning a venture requires the consideration of varying drivers along the IT development process.

7 Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions

According to the problem statement, the problem addressed in this study is that cross-national IT system development initiatives invariably face cross-cultural management problems, particularly in remotely managing budget, time, and quality requirements (Kidd, 2020; Koh, 2012). Characteristic soft factors, such as cultural differences, influence communication and cooperation and come at the expense of project effectiveness if they are not recognized and addressed by appropriate means. Existing theory fails to explain observations in some cases. This dissertation aims at filling these gaps by offering an extended theory via postulating appropriate research questions and unfolding an appropriate iterative-research design. The purpose of this qualitative extensive-case study is to explore how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative and targets at gaining effectiveness and efficiency.

Once again, these goals are in line with the extensive case study research approach (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016) which targets at extending theory. Again, extension studies, such as this multiple case study, provide not only replication evidence but also support extending prior research results with offering new and important theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012). This intention is followed by (a) checking existing theory for completeness, (b) by unfolding a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria, (c) the attempt to investigate the effectiveness ranking of cultural dimensions, and (d) the attempt to identify stage-specific patterns along the IT development process. Therefore, this study will contribute to improvements regarding quality, cost, and timelines of international projects, in particular for those practitioners and researchers who are concerned with the problem of setting up an appropriate project organization, or for those who wish to research the effectiveness of cultural drivers.

In addition, the findings of this study may also be carefully generalized for application in national projects whenever the need for cultural change becomes evident. Many contemporary

initiatives concentrate on digitization and recognize the need for cultural change, but do hardly provide direction how to conduct it. This is exactly where the extended set of cultural dimensions delivers valuable impetus (potential research question).

It is important that the inquiry is structured strictly in order to contribute to answering the research questions. Each single part of investigation has to be supportive. Once again: in order to obtain the appropriate answers, the right questions need to be asked (Browne and Keeley, 2014). Moreover, it becomes important to identify suitable questions for the research. As a result, and in line with the purpose of this study, one central research question (CRQ) and four sub-questions were developed:

> **CRQ:** How can managers unfold actions towards resolution of cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative?

The following research questions are investigated:

- Research Question 1: To which extent do the cultural dimensions offered by Hofstede provide a sufficient framework to comprehensively describe observations in large-scale international projects?
- Research Question 2: Which cultural dimensions of other researchers may be added to the set of cultural dimensions to create a consistent and more comprehensive evaluation framework?
- Research Question 3: Which conclusions regarding a ranking of effectiveness of cultural dimensions may be drawn when applied to the field study?
- Research Question 4: Which insights may be drawn from the application of the comprehensive evaluation framework for particular stages of large-scale IT offshoring projects?

7.1 Discussion and Implications by Research Questions

The unfolding and application of the comprehensive and consistent set of evaluation criteria for cultural encounters will be examined in greater detail in this chapter; it will focus on stringently answering the four research questions based on the findings. It will apply and condense the observations and findings formerly made and discuss them from different angles in greater detail for each research question.

For the purpose of transparency and replicability this section reports and respectively provides reference to the results made in former sections, namely, section 4 Field Study: The GLOBE Project and section 5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions. The reason to keep these sections separate resides in the iterative nature of the research approach: the section on the field study does not only describe the observations, but also immediately extracts, interprets, and evaluates them for the purpose of clarity and legibility. In addition, it confirms the validity of cultural dimensions (acid test 2) as well as documents their frequency and impact. The section on qualitative analysis of cultural dimensions focuses on ensuring the consistency of the evaluation scheme (acid test 1). It provides a redundancy-free scheme for further investigation in the field study, but (in the opposite direction) also depends on it to affirm validity.

In brief, both sections are highly intertwined as they mutually use results of the other and have laid the informational grounds for the following condensed section on findings: is Hofstede complete? Which other dimensions might be added to the evaluation scheme? How would a ranking judged by effectiveness look like, and are there patterns identifiable along the IT development process?

- **Research Question 1 (and 2):**

As a side effect, the analysis of the field study brought up some additional insights, respectively it confirmed former considerations:

1. Cultural dimensions typically materialize intertwined and very rarely isolated. Some amplify each other while others neutralize their mutual effects. Consistently, simplifying mono-causal reasoning could lead to misleading stereotypes.

2. Cultural dimensions come to effect in *dynamic* ways. They simply do not materialize in static ways over long periods of time. Not only is there a learning curve where people consciously and mutually apply insights, but also there are factors inherently rooted in the dimensions themselves. Such dynamic effects materialize, for example, along the time line when relationships mature, trust arises, or when the power distance could be decreased by various means. Interestingly, this dynamic moment is hardly discussed in the reviewed literature, if at all.

3. Some cultural dimensions are by their nature more fundamental than others. Surprisingly, this also applies to dimensions beyond Hofstede, such as TRU (which forms the basis of relationships) and ART (which originally describes the perception of time and reality). Both invariably had a sustainable impact on collaboration in the field study. Unfortunately, both dimensions, ART and TRU, are not investigated by sound empirical means.

4. The insight that cultural dimensions are inappropriate to analyze and draw conclusions regarding individuals (but apply to groups) is not new and was, for example, already discussed in Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). However, another insight of field study analysis is still widely unexplored: cultural dimensions do not have an effect on all people in the same way, but the effect depends on other factors such as former experience, education, and very particularly on the management layer in hierarchical organizations. A general rule of thumb seems to apply: the higher the position, the lesser the effect of dimensions surfaces. Additionally, the length of time in which people are exposed to cultural encounters obviously plays a role.

To sum up, cultural dimensions rarely apply in an isolated manner. In the vast majority of cases their effects materialize in close relationship with the effects of other dimensions, often amplifying each other, sometimes cushioning each other. It is therefore misleading to deduct conclusions in complex situations from only one isolated dimension. The mutual dependencies among all relevant dimensions have to be carefully considered. Mono-causal reasoning imposes the danger of oversimplification and therefore is not appropriate. Instead, the set of relevant dimensions should be applied in its entirety.

Remark: Inquiry has also shown that Research Question 1 cannot, and should not, be untied from Research Question 2. Both had to be investigated by iterative means.

- **Research Question 2:**

Each cultural dimension of the consolidated strength matrix was examined for redundancy and validity and successfully passed these both acid tests. These 14 cultural dimensions form a more comprehensive and consistent evaluation and analysis set than Hofstede's dimensions would deliver alone.

Some dimensions could easily be erased from the raw strength matrix, because they were completely covered by others. The discussion of some dimensions was hindered by inconsistencies in the elaborations of authors. Others could be decomposed into more fundamental dimensions, but were accepted on the final consolidated matrix because they offered additional insights or formed a new, albeit derived, dimension.

In this context of reviewing the condensed matrix it is worth pointing again at the observation that Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) invest much time and dedication in defending the genuineness of their cultural dimensions, including their completeness, comprehensiveness and discreteness, while attacking other authors on cross-cultural management at the same time. Such a style comes with the inclination to defend just for the purpose of defending by construing

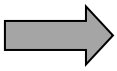
indirect, sometimes cumbersome, far-fetched reasoning, which a non-dogmatic, open-minded, unemotional and un-prepossessed reader might find difficult to follow. The intention in this dissertation is to provide a comprehensive and complete evaluation scheme, which is valuable for comprehensively analyzing cultural backgrounds and draw respective conclusions. The decision to add (or to exclude) a dimension is based on sound analysis. The reasoning of section 5 Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Dimensions is briefly summarized in this overview:

Dimension	Author(s)	Consistency Check	Validity Check	Nature	Discreteness	Evaluation Criteria	Remarks and Reasoning
PDI	Hoftstede	passed	passed	genuine	discrete	yes	Effects are transparent, distinctive and immediate.
IDV	Hoftstede	passed	passed	genuine	highly embedded	yes	More subtle and intertwined than PDI. Slight inconsistencies detected regarding intensity of communication. research question #1!: Highly collectivistic cultures can be noisy as well; there seems something missing! Plus: role and varying occurances of emotions in India are situation-based and depend on other factors. Hofstede himself provides France as an example without providing completed reasoning.
MAS	Hoftstede	passed	passed	genuine	discrete	yes	Of comparatively little impact in Indian/German collaboration. Interestingly, no close links to other dimensions were detected. It widely stands alone.
UAI	Hoftstede	passed	passed	genuine	highly embedded	yes	Effects are of fundamental importance; many links to other dimensions; some open questions; strong linkages to UVP, ART, NVA and EVA suggest impetus for research question #1!
LTO	Hoftstede	passed	passed	genuine	slightly embedded	yes	Of comparatively little impact in Indian/German collaboration, although scores on LTO differ substantially.
IVR	Hoftstede	passed	passed	genuine	discrete	yes	Relevance for business relations not immediately visible.
LHC	Hall	(passed)	passed	composed	highly embedded	no	Passes with concerns, because its characteristics can be widely described by other more refined or more fundamental dimensions: in particular IDV, with components of PDI, UVP, LEA, EVA, COM, and DIS. On the opposite side, there are collectivistic cultures (IDV) which use explicit means of communication, which suggests that Hofstede's IDV is not sufficient. However, the discussion in regard to consistency becomes obsolete because the newer COM replaces the LHC dimension because of Meier's refinements.
MVP	Hall	passed	passed	genuine	embedded	no	Although it passes both checks, it is suggested to apply the ART dimension to the set of valuation criteria because of its refined and newer results. The ART dimension fully covers the MVP dimension.
UVP	Trompenaars	failed	passed	composed	highly embedded	no	Particularism can by explained by IDV in particular, as well as by PDI. To some lesser extent by UAI and MAS. Universalism is explained by UAI, at least in context of the field study. In addition, UVP exhibits strong proximity to LHC and COM. No substantial reason for discreteness detected. Might unfold in other business contexts (e.g. USA vs. India). The suggestion arises that the UVP actually is not one, but two dimensions, because particularism can be derived back to dimensions other than universalism.
IVC	Trompenaars	failed	passed	redundant	discrete	no	Fully covered by IDV and therefore redundant.
NVA	Trompenaars	passed	passed	composed	embedded	yes	Exhibits weaknesses in regard to quality, but passes the redundancy check with severe concerns. Explains observations otherwise difficult to explain by other dimensions. Strong situational dependency (PDI, IDV, UAI) is challenging its discreteness as a stand-alone dimension. Partly contradicts field observations. Research question #1: the intensity of shown emotions remains hardly explainable by other dimensions; Hofstede's dimensions hardly explain this obervation, there remains something missing; consider context to DIS; strong situational context.
SVD	Trompenaars	passed	passed	refining and composed	highly embedded	yes	Although composed, it offers immediate explanations where other dimensions fail or require far-fetching reasoning or provide only isolated insights, e.g. in regard to role-based attitudes vs. personalities as such. Explains vulnerability to criticism.
AVA	Trompenaars	passed	passed	composed	highly embedded	yes	Although composed, it enriches the interpretation of observations. Low to moderate impact on collaboration.
ART	Trompenaars	passed	passed	genuine	embedded	yes	High impact on collaboration. Offers explanation where other dimensions fail. Actually deals with distinct subjects: (a) back- and forward orientation, (b) perception of time and reality, and (c) timeliness - which comes at the expense of compromising its accuracy. High relevance for Research question #1!
ARE	Trompenaars	passed (with concerns)	failed	composed	embedded	no	Relevance from field study not immediately visible. Similar scores for both cultures (India and Germany) suggest low relevance.
COM	Meyer	passed	passed	refining and composed	highly embedded	yes	Factually consists of elements of IDV and LHC in particular, but adds value by refining and adding perspective. Relevance for Research question #1!
EVA	Meyer	passed	passed	refining and genuine	discrete	yes	Discrete because it postulates that highly collectivistic or high-LHC cultures also might give direct negative feed-back. Therefore enriching by differentiating and refining. Relevance for Research question #1!
PER	Meyer	passed	passed	genuine in its entirety	highly embedded	yes	Enriching because it offers alternate reasoning to the PDI dimension. Stands discrete although proximity to the UAI dimension. Explains holistic (Eastern) vs. specific (Western) thinking. Explains observations otherwise difficult to explain. Relevance for Research question #1!
LEA	Meyer	failed	passed	genuine but redundant	discrete	no	Covered by PDI dimension and therefore redundant. The underlying concept is the same as PDI (equality). However insights and pragmatic hints are valuable.
DEC	Meyer	failed	failed	composed	embedded	no	Observations and suggestions of the DEC dimension are not supported by the field study both in regard to Germany and India. It rather seems to possibly apply in other contexts, such as US American/German collaboration. Its generalization is therefore debatable. Contradicts findings and positionings of Hofstede in detail (German PDI). Its fundamental composition is PDI plus IDV, which comes at the expense of accuracy respectively the risk of over-simplification. In addition, many observations might be explained by UAI instead of reasoning based on PDI.
TRU	Meyer	passed	passed	refining and genuine	highly embedded	yes	Challengable by other dimensions, in particular IDV, but refines IDV insights by illustrating how trust is built. Offers immediate insights where other dimensions require far-fetching reasoning. Addtionally addresses types of trust building in different cultures (cognitive and affective). Trust-building might potentially be more fundamental than relationschips. High damage potential if not obeyed. Relevance for Research question #1!
DIS	Meyer	failed	failed	composed	embedded	no	Its suggestions are not confirmed by field study. Leaves an incomplete picture re: situation-based Indian behavior; a factor is supposedly missing. Positionings contradictory to Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner. Can be qualitative-wise derived back to other dimensions in regard to confrontational aspects (PER, EVA). Also inconsistent in regard to role of emotion. Unfortunately does not fill the gap left by Hofstede et al re: affection. Relevance for research question #1. Refer to remarks re: NVA and IDV (France example of Hofstede)
SCH	Meyer	failed	passed	genuine but redundant	discrete	no	Fails to pass the redundancy test because it does not contain insights that go beyond Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's ART dimension. Excellent hints. In case of need: material for research question #1

***Figure 34*: Summary of Acid Tests 1 and 2.**

When comparing the raw and the condensed matrix, it immediately becomes obvious that the reduction to 14 cultural dimensions dramatically reduces complexity. At the same time, the condensed set has the same explanatory power as the raw set, but enables a more effective and efficient analysis. In addition, it adds valuable and reasonably valid evaluation criteria to the initial set of Hofstede's six dimensions, the latter coming with the benefit of providing evidence by empirical means.

In summary, the applied approach suggests and affirms an option to integrate peer-reviewed empirical results with empirically insufficiently supported dimensions while still keeping minimum standards of academic rigor. Of course, this approach remains debatable by academic standards, particularly the absence of consistent data for those dimensions beyond Hofstede, but it remains the most feasible under the given constraints. It is invariably important to remember that each cultural dimension in the condensed matrix has passed both the qualitative consistency check and the validity check. This procedure and its results invite for deeper quantitative investigation.



The consolidated matrix is an outcome of the qualitative analysis and field study analysis and forms a consistent, i.e. widely redundancy-free, set of criteria against which the field study observations can be evaluated. Its completed design therefore is an important cornerstone of this dissertation and represents the answer to Research Question 2.

It is important to recall the reasoning for this effort, which is the initial observation that the explanations offered by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) lay a powerful foundation for cross-cultural analysis, but fail to explain *all* field study observations immediately, sufficiently, and plausibly. Therefore, this serious attempt was made to build up a comprehensive set from various sources to complete the picture. The additional eight dimensions beyond Hofstede

(NVA, SVD, AVA, ART, COM, EVA, PER, and TRU) are supposed to fill the explanatory gaps left by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) and therefore provide a substantial contribution also to answering Research Question 1 and lays the grounds based on which Research Questions 3 and 4 can be answered.

- **Research Question 3:**

The formal ranking order is documented in section 6.4 Research Question 3: Ranking of Effectiveness. This is now an *informal* simplifying attempt to summarize the insights and advice gained by respecting the ranking order of importance.

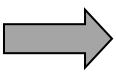
Hiker, in case you come to Delhi, consider the following: obey protocol (whatever this is); respect that your partner still has to synchronize with his peers; expect pragmatism and partly inappropriate optimism; don't expect chronology and structure; don't get annoyed by your partner not fully concentrating on you; being late is not a sign of disrespect; look out for hidden messages; if you ask a clear question and there is only a strange answer, or none at all, this probably means 'no'; be very careful with criticism of facts, it might hurt the personality of your partner; don't expect your partner to drive the venture towards results; don't bore your partner with long-lasting beforehand explanations; expect emotions breaking out, it's a good sign that a trust base has been established; mention your formal education and position; show self-irony.

Indian, in case you come to Hamburg, expect the following: don't rely on your formal position; your partner will exactly know his personal individual area of responsibility; expect stiffness, as your partner will focus on establishing procedures far ahead and leave little space for optimism; dedicate your full concentration on them and stay strictly with the agenda, even in case this ignores context; bring things to an end before moving to the next item; communicate clearly and repeat often, even if you consider this redundant; your partner will evaluate you the results you deliver, and not because he likes you personally; mention concerns freely, as this

will ironically increase your credibility; feel free to politely point at former shortcomings (such as a delivered specification) and expect invitations that would probably not happen to you at home; understand that your partner feels a pressure to proceed, even in case you feel things still have to ripen; expect long-lasting explanations and reasoning which will stress your concentration; stay cool and facts-based, even when you are feeling like blowing up, at least at the beginning of your relationship; don't rely on your reputation and your formal education too much, but mention achievements; suppress your inclination to show humor and self-irony as the right time for this possibly hasn't come yet.

- **Research Question 4:**

From a formal perspective, it is, not surprisingly, possible to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of cultural dimensions in various stages of the development cycle. The results of this empirical investigation are rendered in the tables in section 6.5 Research Question 4: Linkage to the IT Development Process. However, concerns arise regarding the small sample size as well as in regard to the scientific methodology. Future research should therefore enlarge the sample size and dedicate effort to the exclusion of other factors, in particular dynamic factors such as the maturity of relationships and the position of people in the hierarchy. The potential influence of the latter two factors came to awareness as late as during field study analysis. Unfortunately, these two factors might particularly bias research results extremely as long as the sample size is small. In continued research, which might target at identifying specific patterns for each stage, much focus should be given to the variance with which each cultural dimension materializes *within* a certain stage of the development process.



As of now, only little and debatable evidence for certain patterns for specific development stages can be provided — and the deriving conclusions do not substantially differ from the *general* ranking provided regarding Research Question 3 in 6.4 Research Question 3: Ranking of Effectiveness. The generally highly ranked

cultural dimensions seem to dominate across all stages of the IT development process. Any further research would require a substantially enlarged sample group.

7.2 Future Research Directions

Many potential research questions are marked in grey throughout the text. This section now lists them to provide an overview, including some comments. For further details and context references to the respective chapters are provided.

Research question	Reference to chapter	Comments
How do the cultural dimensions relate to team performance?	2.5.2 Koh, Joseph and Ang (2010)	Stevens and Campion (1994) identified five team competencies which are critical for performance: (1) conflict resolution, (2) collaborative problem solving, (3) communication, (4) goal setting and performance management, and (5) planning and task coordination. This is potentially a very powerful analysis approach which would be alternate to that of this dissertation.
If Hofstede claims to be complete, *why* does he fail to explain certain observations of the field study?	3.1 Research Question Details	This question has to be seen in context to Hofstede's inductive empirical research philosophy. He avoids deductive elements. A valid offset point might be the suggestion that he didn't look for additional dimensions (in analogy to the discovery of the LTO dimension based on the CSV study).
Why are the dimensions of other authors effective at all when applied to the field study?	3.1 Research Question Details	As above.
Why do dimensions of other authors suggest more direct, immediate, transparent, or more fundamental explanations at the same time (Occam's razor) for observations *actually* made?	3.1 Research Question Details	As above. Plus the question, why some question of other researchers are more fundamental (e.g. TRU, ART)
Does Indian culture better fit with agile approaches than German culture?	3.1 Research Question Details	The working assumption of decomposing stages of the software development process into logical stages such as planning, analysis, design, coding etc., represents somehow a pragmatic oversimplification: for further research it is suggested to

		investigate whether different development methodologies and paradigms in their *entirety* better (or worse) fit with cultural dimensions.
May quality orientation be explained by cultural dimensions?	4.20.1 Quality: Fixing the Machine	It might be interesting to examine whether and to which extent striving for quality relates to cultural dimensions. It might also be valuable to examine whether such national strengths are developed deliberately or derive from within as an exhibition of deeply rooted values.
Does quality orientation relate to low-PDI?	4.20.1 Quality: Fixing the Machine	As above. At first sight there seems to be a correlation. Interestingly, there such is no such for UAI apparently!
May punctuality be sufficiently explained by UAI, as Hofstede argues? Or does it require the ART dimension?	5.1.4 UAI: Uncertainty Avoidance 6.2.4 UAI: Uncertainty Avoidance 6.2.10 ART: Attitudes with Regard to Time	The first six countries rating high on UAI are Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, Uruguay, Belgium, and Malta. Quite obviously, the UAI dimension does not *exclusively* explain punctuality.
Are anxious cultures expressive cultures, as Hofstede suggests?	5.1.4 UAI: Uncertainty Avoidance	Looking at the UAI values provided by Hofstede et al, such a general statement remains debatable. There actually are cultures which rate low on UAI and show emotions at the same time (e.g. India and Colombia, if PDI permits). Also, the high-UAI Germans are not exactly known for showing emotions. But in any case, the citation reminds strongly to NVA (5.2.3 NVA: Neutral vs. Affective). Also consider PDI: initial observation is that high-PDI requires more words per day.
Is there a correlation between IDV, MAS and LTO?	5.1.5 LTO: Long-term Orientation	The LTO dimension is difficult to grasp for Westerners. May observations be explained alternatively by other dimensions than LTO?
Does external pressure materialize more directly and to a larger scale in specific cultures than it does in diffuse cultures?	5.2.4 SVD: Specific vs. Diffuse	SVD deserves more inquiry because it explains observations where other dimensions fail, and because of its high damage potential.
Which conclusions may be drawn from single relationships among the vast number of cultural dimensions?	6.3.3 The Strength Matrix (raw) 6.3.4 The Strength Matrix (consolidated)	Each relationship of cultural dimensions is potentially worth research. However, this is 'terra cognita' in many cases (even Hofstede reflects about correlations among his dimensions, e.g. between PDI and

		IDV). Some even say this area is 'over-researched'.
How does the effectiveness of cultural dimensions evolve over time?	7 Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions	There is a widely un-researched component regarding the effectiveness dynamics of cultural dimensions: their influence changes over time, e.g. as relationships mature (IDV), trust is built up (TRU) and power distance ceases (PDI.
How can ART and TRU be investigated by accurate scientific means?	7 Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions	Both dimensions are more fundamental than those of Hofstede. Their effectiveness is proved by the field study. Unfortunately, their empirical evidence base is debatable.
Which other factors beyond the investigated dimensions determine group behavior?	7 Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions	This question arose from the observation that cultural dimensions do not have an effect on all people in the same way, but the effect depends on other factors such as former experience, education, and very particularly on the management layer in hierarchical organizations. A general rule of thumb seems to apply: the higher the position, the lesser the effect of dimensions surfaces. Additionally, the length of time in which people are exposed to cultural encounters obviously plays a role.
How might the application of the cultural dimensions contribute to national or corporate initiatives, e.g. digitization?	7 Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions 7.3 Conclusions and Recommendations Summary	Digitization initiatives invariably face the challenge of changing the culture – but have a hard time in specifying how to proceed. For example, PDI and UAI have to be obviously brought down, among others.
How to investigate deeper the existence of stage-specific cultural patterns along the IT systems development life-cycle?	7 Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions	The question of impacts on IT systems development came initially as an enriching bycatch over the unfolding of this thesis. Unfortunately, results gave initial insights (no stage-specific patterns could be identified), but came with concerns that this question requires methodological adaption and an enlarged sample size.

***Figure 35*: Summary of Potential Research Questions.**

- **Summary**

It is up to the novice researcher to choose any of the potential research questions, depending on his research goals and inclination. The breadth or deepness of the intended research will play a role as well. Judged by the potential added value, in particular those questions which are concerned about (a) the dynamics of cultural dimensions (things change over time!), (b) other factors (e.g. position in the hierarchy), (c) the identification of stage-specific patterns along the IT process, (d) the area whether Indian culture better fits with certain IT development methodologies (e.g. agile approaches) than German culture, or (e) the obvious question regarding why Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) disregard the fundamental concept of perception of time and reality (ART) would be excellent and fruitful candidates. There is still much terra incognita to explore.

7.3 Conclusions and Recommendations Summary

The problem investigated in this study is that cross-national IT system development initiatives invariably face cross-cultural management problems, particularly when having to do with remotely managing budget, time, and quality requirements. Consistently, the purpose of this qualitative extensive case study is to explore how managers can resolve cross-cultural management conflicts during a cross-national IT system development initiative. The reasons for disappointments may be found in a wide array of underlying factors, such as technology challenges, unclear requirements and expectations, poor contracts, shortcomings in management, and many other drivers. As a starting point for this dissertation, it was assumed that the negligence of cross-cultural conflicts contributes a substantial share to these disappointments.

The choice of qualitative extensive case-study research as the scientific methodology turned out to be effective. It supported the holistic identification of relevant drivers instead of

concentrating on isolated, detailed parts of the entire research area. Additionally, it fostered the extension of existing theory. The research questions have not been asked before, in particular not in regard to outsourced IT systems development.

It is well cited in the extant management literature that project management theory has not been tested through empirical investigations of large, complex engineering and construction projects (Prieto, 2015; Kozak-Holland and Proctor, 2020). "...The challenges faced by practitioners in the project management discipline and how it doesn't equip them well for transformational projects, (and the) gap between project management research and implementation. The project management discipline lacks a unified theory and established body of research that is widely accepted" (Kozak-Holland and Procter, 2020: p.13). Defining project performance in large-scale projects – where their size is significant and the predefined accomplishment schedule is lengthy – is challenging as several factors may impact project performance and there exists no consensus in the project management literature regarding the appropriate criteria for measuring project performance. This is because such a measure usually depends upon the viewpoints of project managers or other key stakeholders. However, scholars have recently proposed alternative measures of project performance, such as human skills and competency of project workers or stakeholders (Khosravi, Rezvani and Ashkanasy, 2020). This dissertation extends project management theory by (a) unfolding a more comprehensive and consistent set of perspectives, (b) investigating the effectiveness of dimensions, and (c) making an attempt to draw reasonable conclusions for large and complex IT ventures.

This investigation started with both an observation and a provocation: the initial observation was that Hofstede's dimensions explain the majority of behavioral events, but not exactly all of them. In some cases, arguments based on Hofstede led to far-fetched and cumbersome, sometimes even misleading reasoning. The provocation lay in the claim of Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) that their dimensions would be complete at the same time. Both of these

factors invited for deeper inquiry, which lead to the outcome that there are actually explanatory gaps left by Hofstede's team. In contrast, it is difficult to determine with mathematical precision how large these gaps are. In any case, the field study analysis extracted various examples for these gaps. The inquiry suggests that *around* four fifths of observations may be explained by Hofstede's dimensions. However, judged by effectiveness, his dimensions clearly dominate collaboration (PDI, IDV, UAI), at least in Indo-German encounters, but fail to explain *everything*.

Consistently, the answer to the first research question (whether Hofstede's dimensions are complete) is: 'no, they aren't', at least not for analysis and predictive purposes. In this context it has to be mentioned that it surely makes a difference whether a research attempt is purely *inductively* based on numerical data (such as that of Hofstede's team, for whom what hasn't been measured, doesn't exist), or whether the goal is to come to a comprehensive evaluation scheme, which contains a *deductive* momentum.

The above explanations lead to the challenge to investigate the remaining gap of approximately 20%. The inquiry comes to the conclusion that this explanatory gap may be filled with dimensions of other authors, whereas nine of 23 candidate dimensions do not survive the acid tests for consistency and validity. The remaining 14 dimensions represent a more comprehensive evaluation scheme for cultural encounters than that of Hofstede alone, which consist of six dimensions. In other words, eight dimensions were added to Hofstede's six dimensions. This enriches the evaluation scheme by offering additional perspectives. Some of these dimensions offer more direct explanations for observations; some offer more fine-grained explanations, and some offer more fundamental ones.

Consistently, the answer to the second research question is: there is good reasoning to add cultural dimensions to complete the evaluation scheme. These are: Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's dimensions NVA, SVD, AVA and ART as well as Meyer's dimensions COM, EVA,

PER and TRU. These dimensions contribute to completing the picture whereas some refine Hofstede's dimensions (e.g., as IDV is refined by COM and EVA); some appear, which is surprising, to be of more fundamental nature (e.g. ART and TRU); and finally, some explain observations which otherwise would be hardly possible (e.g. SVD).

Regarding the third research question, the analysis of the effectiveness of cultural dimensions brought up partly surprising and partly expected results. The most effective ranks are occupied, not surprisingly, by Hofstede's PDI, IDV, and UAI dimensions. Constraints on the Indian side arise from high-PDI and low-IDV, whereas the German side suffers from high-UAI (and low-UAI Indians). This is affirmative and not that surprising. The interesting insight is that the ranks of medium effectiveness are mostly occupied by non-Hofstede dimensions: ART, COM, TRU, EVA, and SVD. The evaluation of effectiveness is neutrally based on frequency and impact, but it has to be emphasized that ignoring these dimensions comes with a high-damage potential. In simple words: Maybe, these dimensions do not materialize that often; but if they do, they may cause serious harm.

Regarding the fourth research question (the inquiry of stage-specific patterns along the IT development process), analysis suggests that invariably the same cultural dimensions materialize across all project phases: Hofstede's PDI, IDV and UAI, closely followed by ART and TRU. Only very weak indications could be identified for stage-specific patterns. It is suggested to enlarge the sample size in further research and to adapt to a more focused methodology.

The above findings might be, with appropriate care, generalized to situations when two cultures with similar cultural profiles interact. At least they form an initial offset basis for such cases. Derived insights might even be applied to national challenges when the task arises to change corporate cultures, such as the task of transforming culture for contemporary digitization initiatives (potential research question).

To ‘summarize the summary’ by simplistic messages: No, Hofstede is not enough. Yes, other dimensions should be applied for reasons of completeness. Yes, a well-reasoned effectiveness ranking is possible. No, it is not possible to identify stage-specific patterns so far.

At the beginning of this study, the complexity of the matter appeared to be overwhelming. This study aimed to provide orientation to both business practitioners and researchers by investigating the significant points of the matter. It is up to the reader to decide whether this ambition has been achieved.

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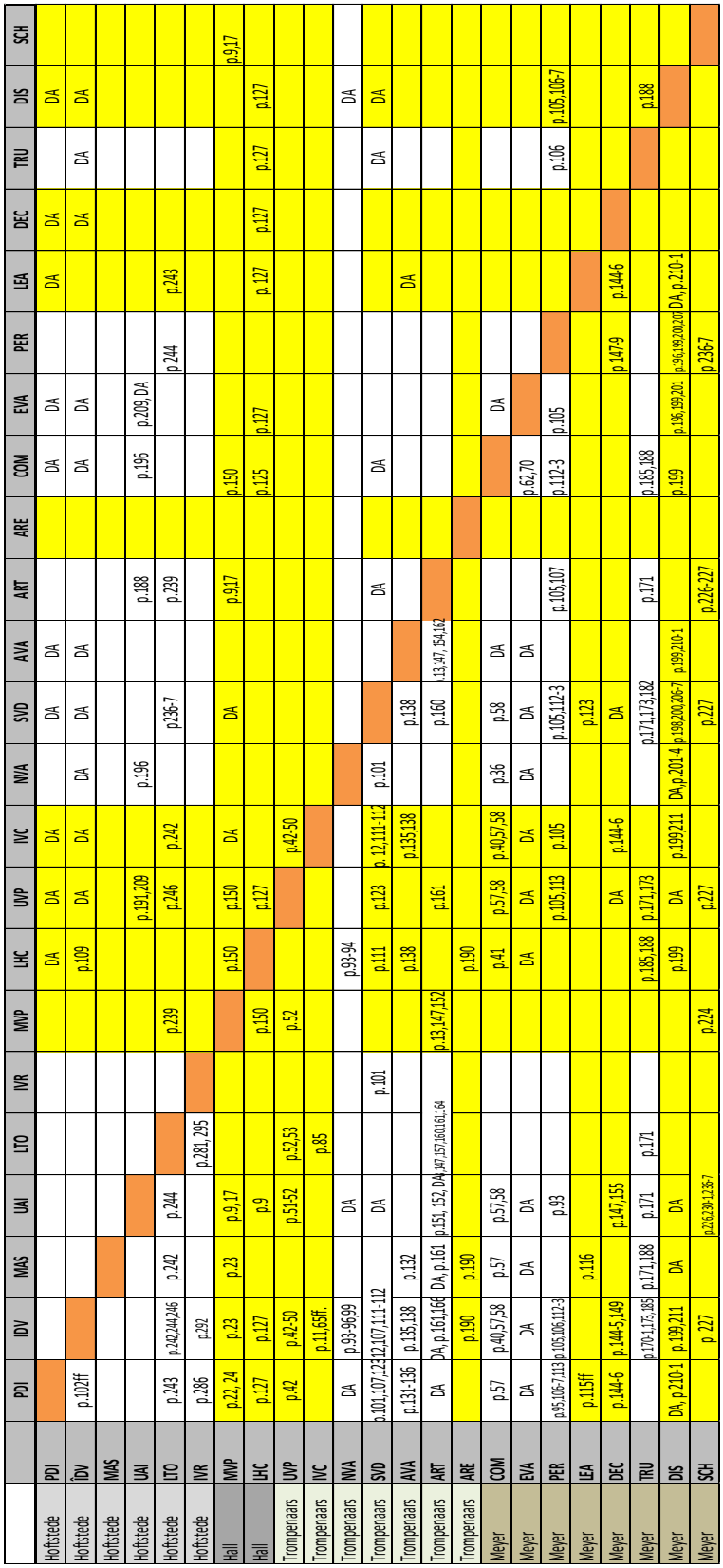
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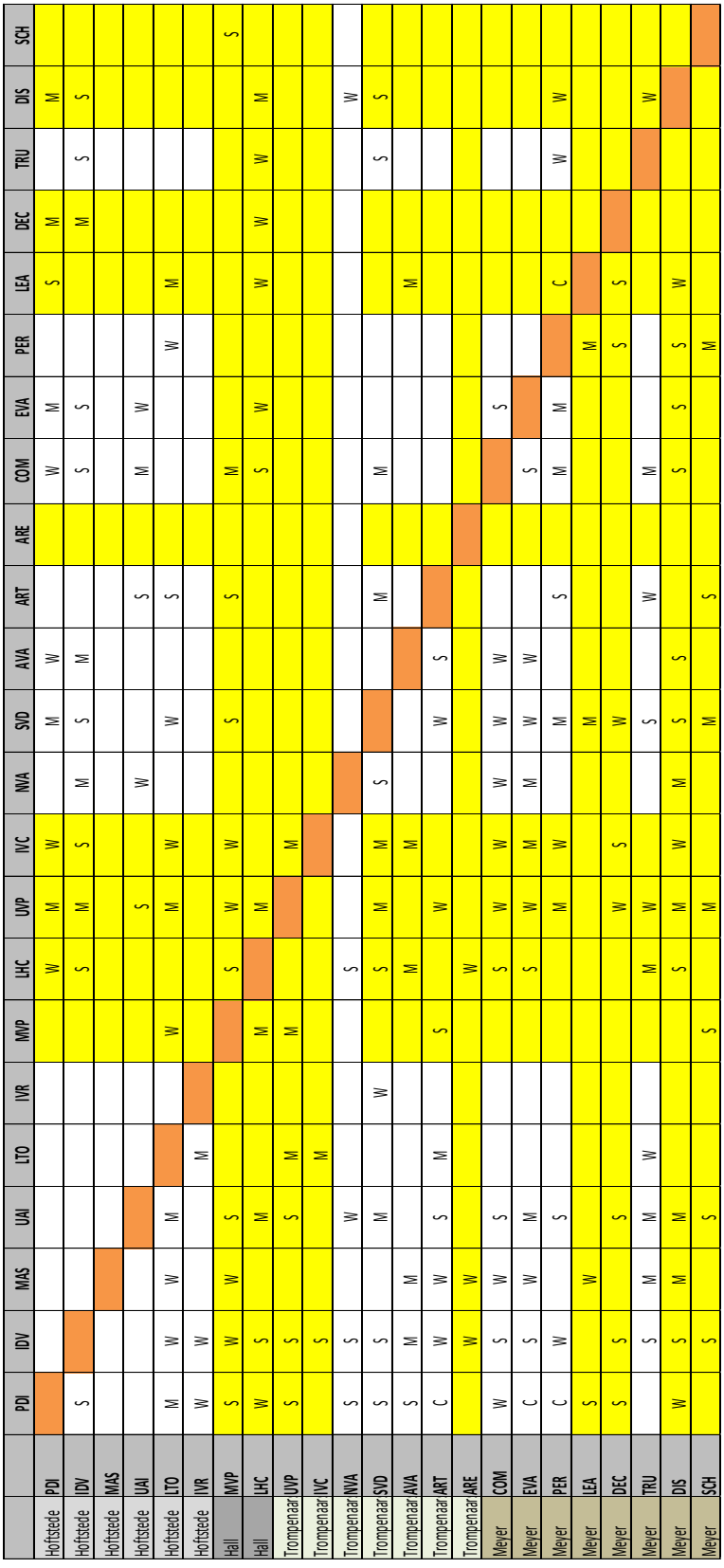
9 Appendix A: Reference Matrix



		PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MVP	LHC	UVP	IVC	NVA	SVD	AVA	ART	ARE	COM	EVA	PER	LEA	DEC	TRU	DIS	SCH
Hofstede	PDI								DA	DA	DA		DA	DA			DA	DA		DA	DA		DA	
Hofstede	IDV	p.102ff							p.109	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA			DA	DA			DA	DA	DA	
Hofstede	MAS																							
Hofstede	UAI									p.191,209		p.196			p.188		p.196	p.209, DA						
Hofstede	LTO	p.243	p.242,244,246	p.242	p.244			p.239		p.246	p.242		p.236-7		p.239				p.244	p.243				
Hofstede	IVR	p.286	p.292			p.281, 295																		
Hall	MVP	p.22, 24	p.23	p.23	p.9, 17				p.150	p.150	DA		DA		p.9,17		p.150							p.9,17
Hall	LHC	p.127	p.127		p.9			p.150		p.127							p.125	p.127		p.127	p.127	p.127	p.127	
Trompenaars	UVP	p.42	p.42-50		p.51-52	p.52,53		p.52			p.42-50													
Trompenaars	IVC		p.11,65ff.			p.85																		
Trompenaars	NVA	DA	p.93-96,99		DA				p.93-94														DA	
Trompenaars	SVD	p.101,107,122,127,107,111-112			DA		p.101		p.111	p.123	p.12,111-112	p.101			DA		DA			DA		DA	DA	
Trompenaars	AVA	p.133-136	p.135,138	p.132					p.138		p.135,138		p.138							DA				
Trompenaars	ART	DA	DA, p.161,166	DA, p.161	p.151, 152, DA	p.147,157,160,161,164		p.13,147,152		p.161		p.13,147, 154,162	p.160											
Trompenaars	ARE		p.190	p.190					p.190															
Meyer	COM	p.57	p.40,57,58	p.57	p.57,58				p.41	p.57,58	p.40,57,58	p.36	p.58	DA				DA						
Meyer	EVA	DA	DA	DA	DA				DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA			p.62,70							
Meyer	PER	p.95,106-7,113	p.105, 106,112-3		p.93					p.105,113	p.105		p.105,112-3		p.105,107		p.112-3	p.105				p.106	p.105,106-7	
Meyer	LEA	p.115ff		p.116									p.123											
Meyer	DEC	p.144-6	p.144-5,149		p.147,155					DA	p.144-6		DA						p.147-9	p.144-6				
Meyer	TRU		p.170-1,173, 185	p.171,188	p.171	p.171			p.185,188	p.171,173			p.171,173,182		p.171		p.185,188						p.188	
Meyer	DIS	DA, p.210-1	p.199,211	DA	DA				p.199	DA	p.199,211	DA, p.201-4	p.198,200,206-7	p.199,210-1			p.199	p.196, 199,201	p.196,199,200,201	DA, p.210-1				
Meyer	SCH		p. 227		p.226,230,1,236-7			p.214		p.227			p.227		p.226-227				p.236-7					

Figure 36: **Reference Matrix**

10 Appendix B: Strength Matrix (raw)



		PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI	LTO	IVR	MVP	LHC	UVP	IVC	NVA	SVD	AVA	ART	ARE	COM	EVA	PER	LEA	DEC	TRU	DIS	SCH
Hofstede	PDI		S			M	W	S	W	M	W	S	S	S	C	W	W	W	S	S	S		M	
Hofstede	IDV	S				M	W	W	S	M	S	S	S	M	W	W	S	S	W	S	S		S	
Hofstede	MAS					W	W	W		M		M		M	W	W	W	W	M	W		M	M	
Hofstede	UAI					M	S	S	M	M		S	M		S	S	W	M	S	M	S	S	M	
Hofstede	LTO	M	W	W	M		M	W			M	W	W		M	W	W	W	W					
Hofstede	IVR	W	W	W	S	M		S	S	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	M	M	M	M	W	W	W	
Hall	MVP	S	W	W	S	W	S		S	W	W	W	S	W	S	W	M	M	M	M	W	W	W	
Hall	LHC	W	S	M	M	M	M	M		M	M	S	S	M	M	W	S	S	W	S	W	W	W	
Trompenaar	UVP	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	S		M	S	M	M	W	W	W	W	M	W	W	W	M	
Trompenaar	IVC	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	S	M		S	M	M	S	W	W	M	W	S	S	W	W	
Trompenaar	NVA	S	S	S	W	W	W	W	S	S	S		S	W	W	W	W	M	M	M	W	M	M	
Trompenaar	SVD	S	S	S	M	M	W	M	S	M	M	S		W	W	W	W	W	M	M	W	S	S	
Trompenaar	AVA	S	M	M	M	M	W	M	M	M	M	W	W		W	W	W	W	M	M	W	W	S	
Trompenaar	ART	C	W	W	S	M	W	S	W	W	W	W	W	W		W	W	W	M	S	W	W	M	
Trompenaar	ARE	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W		W	W	W	W	W	W	W	
Meyer	COM	W	S	W	S	M	W	W	S	W	W	W	W	W	W	W		S	M	M	W	W	M	
Meyer	EVA	C	S	W	M	M	W	W	S	W	M	M	W	W	W	W	S		M	S	S	W	M	
Meyer	PER	C	W	M	S	M	W	W	M	M	W	M	M	M	W	W	M	M		M	W	W	M	
Meyer	LEA	S	M	W	M	M	W	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		M	M	M	
Meyer	DEC	S	S	S	S	M	W	M	M	W	S	M	W	W	W	W	M	S	S	M		M	M	
Meyer	TRU	M	S	M	M	M	W	M	M	W	W	M	S	S	W	W	M	M	M	M	M		M	
Meyer	DIS	W	S	M	M	M	W	M	S	M	W	M	S	S	M	W	S	S	S	M	M	M		
Meyer	SCH	M	M	M	S	M	W	S	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	

Figure 37: Strength Matrix.

11 Appendix C: Raw Data Research Questions 3 and 4

	Dimension	Frequency	Impact	Score	Planning	Analysis	Testing & Delivery	Design/ Architecture & QA	Coding and M&S	Project & Change Management	General & Management
1.	PDI	3	3	9	x						
	IDV	3	3	9	x						
	MAS	1	2	2	x						
	UAI	1	3	3	x						
	SVD	1	2	2	x						
	ART	1	3	3	x						
	TRU	1	3	3	x						
	TRU	1	2	2	x						
2.	PDI	1	1	1							x
	COM	1	2	2							x
	EVA	1	1	1							x
3.	PDI	2	3	6							x
	IDV	1	3	3							x
	IDV	1	1	1							x
	UAI	1	1	1							x
	NVA	1	3	3							x
	NVA	1	1	1							x
	ART	1	2	2							x
4.	IDV	1	2	2							x
	SVD	1	2	2							x
	AVA	1	1	1							x
5.	PDI	1	2	2							x
	IDV	1	3	3							x
	MAS	1	1	1							x
	UAI	1	1	1							x
	SVD	1	1	1							x
	COM	1	2	2							x
	EVA	1	2	2							x
	TRU	1	3	3							x
6.	PDI	1	3	3	x					x	
	IDV	1	2	2	x					x	
	MAS	1	2	2	x					x	
	UAI	1	3	3	x					x	
	SVD	1	2	2	x					x	
	AVA	1	1	1	x					x	
	ART	1	3	3	x					x	
	COM	1	3	3	x					x	
	TRU	1	2	2	x					x	
7.	IDV	1	2	2	x					x	
	MAS	1	2	2	x					x	
	UAI	1	2	2	x					x	
	ART	1	2	2	x					x	
8.	IDV	1	2	2	x					x	
	SVD	1	2	2	x					x	
	COM	1	1	1	x					x	
	TRU	1	2	2	x					x	
9.	PDI	1	3	3			x			x	
	PDI	1	2	2			x			x	
	IDV	1	2	2			x			x	
	UAI	1	2	2			x			x	
	COM	1	2	2			x			x	
	EVA	1	2	2			x			x	
	TRU	1	2	2			x			x	
10.	IDV	1	3	3			x			x	
	COM	1	3	3			x			x	
	EVA	1	2	2			x			x	
	TRU	1	2	2			x			x	

11.	PDI	2	3	6			x			x		
	IDV	1	3	3			x			x		
	UAI	1	3	3			x			x		
	COM	1	3	3			x			x		
	EVA	1	3	3			x			x		
	ART	1	2	2			x			x		
12.	IDV	1	2	2			x			x		
	UAI	1	3	3			x			x		
	ART	1	2	2			x			x		
	EVA	1	2	2			x			x		
	TRU	1	3	3			x			x		
13.	PDI	1	2	2			x			x		
	UAI	1	3	3			x			x		
	SVD	1	3	3			x			x		
	ART	1	3	3			x			x		
	COM	1	3	3			x			x		
	PER	1	3	3			x			x		
14.	PDI	1	3	3			x			x		
	IDV	1	3	3			x			x		
	UAI	1	3	3			x			x		
	SVD	1	3	3			x			x		
	ART	1	3	3			x			x		
	COM	1	2	2			x			x		
	EVA	1	2	2			x			x		
15.	MAS	1	3	3			x			x		
	IVR	1	1	1			x			x		
	AVA	1	2	2			x			x		
	TRU	1	3	3			x			x		
16.	NVA	1	2	2			x			x		
17.	PDI	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	IDV	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	MAS	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	UAI	2	3	6				x	(x)			
	ART	2	3	6				x	(x)			
	PER	1	3	3				x	(x)			
18.	PDI	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	IDV	3	2	6				x	(x)			
	MAS	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	UAI	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	COM	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	EVA	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	TRU	2	2	4				x	(x)			
19.	IDV	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	MAS	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	UAI	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	UAI	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	SVD	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	ART	1	3	3				x	(x)			
20.	PDI	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	IDV	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	MAS	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	UAI	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	IVR	1	1	1				x	(x)			
	NVA	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	SVD	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	ART	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	COM	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	EVA	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	PER	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	TRU	1	2	2				x	(x)			
21.	PDI	1	1	1				x	(x)			
	IDV	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	MAS	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	UAI	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	IVR	1	1	1				x	(x)			
	NVA	1	1	1				x	(x)			
	ART	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	COM	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	EVA	1	2	2				x	(x)			
	PER	1	3	3				x	(x)			
	TRU	1	1	1				x	(x)			

22.	PDI	1	3	3		x						
	IDV	1	2	2		x						
	MAS	2	2	4		x						
	UAI	4	2	8		x						
	SVD	1	2	2		x						
	ART	2	2	4		x						
	COM	1	2	2		x						
	EVA	1	3	3		x						
23.	PDI	1	3	3							x	
	IDV	1	2	2							x	
	UAI	1	3	3							x	
	NVA	1	2	2							x	
	COM	1	2	2							x	
	EVA	1	3	3							x	
24.	PDI	1	2	2							x	
	PDI	2	1	2							x	
	IDV	1	2	2							x	
	IDV	2	1	2							x	
	UAI	2	1	2							x	
	AVA	1	2	2							x	
	ART	1	3	3							x	
	COM	1	1	1							x	
	COM	1	2	2							x	
	EVA	1	2	2							x	
	TRU	1	2	2							x	
25.	SVD	1	2	2					x			
	ART	1	3	3					x			
26.	PDI	1	2	2			x					
	PDI	1	1	1			x					
	IDV	1	2	2			x					
	UAI	1	2	2			x					
	ART	1	1	1			x					
	TRU	1	2	2			x					
27.	PDI	1	3	3			x					
	IDV	1	2	2			x					
	MAS	1	2	2			x					
	UAI	1	2	2			x					
28.	PDI	1	2	2								x
	IDV	1	2	2								x
	IVR	1	2	2								x
	TRU	1	2	2								x
29.	IDV	1	2	2								x
	UAI	1	2	2								x
	COM	1	2	2								x
	EVA	1	2	2								x
	TRU	1	1	1								x
30.	AVA	1	2	2								x
31.	PDI	1	3	3								x
	PDI	1	1	1								x
	IDV	1	3	3								x
	IDV	1	1	1								x
	SVD	1	3	3								x
32.	IDV	1	2	2								x
	IVR	1	2	2								x
	TRU	1	2	2								x
33.	PDI	1	2	2								x
	IDV	1	2	2								x
	SVD	1	3	3								x
	COM	1	2	2								x
	EVA	1	3	3								x
34.	PDI	1	3	3								x

35.	PDI	1	3	3								x
	IDV	1	2	2								x
	TRU	1	1	1								x
36.	PDI	2	2	4								x
	IDV	1	2	2								x
	COM	1	2	2								x
	EVA	1	2	2								x
37.	PDI	1	2	2								x
	IDV	1	2	2								x
	COM	1	1	1								x
	EVA	1	2	2								x
	TRU	1	2	2								x
38.	PDI	1	3	3								x
	MAS	1	1	1								x
	UAI	1	3	3								x
	SVD	1	1	1								x
	ART	1	2	2								x
	COM	1	2	2								x
	EVA	1	2	2								x
	PER	1	2	2								x
39.	PDI	1	3	3				x	x	(x)		
	IDV	1	2	2				x	x	(x)		
	UAI	1	3	3				x	x	(x)		
	SVD	1	1	1				x	x	(x)		
	ART	1	1	1				x	x	(x)		
	TRU	1	1	1				x	x	(x)		
40.	PDI	1	3	3	x	x					x	

***Figure 38*: Raw Data Research Question 3 and 4.**

12 Appendix D – Personal Background

The German author of this dissertation was assigned to an IT systems development project in Delhi to fulfill the role of liaison management. The goal was to improve collaboration between the Indian and German team, both consisting of around 100 team members each. This was a very privileged and exceptional position hardly found in other business environments. It enabled, backed by executive management, full concentration on the examination of international cross-cultural collaboration, free of any operational obligations. Senior management at the German headquarters had made manifold disturbing and unexplainable observations, which were located beyond technology and consistently required a mediator to be present onsite. As acknowledged by both the Indian and the German part, the liaison manager contributed to improvements in cooperation and delivered tangible results. Consistently, the assignment was extended thrice and finally ended after a two-year period.