

**School of Business Administration in Karviná**

**Silesian University in Opava**

# **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

**(Updated edition)**

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# **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

**The structure of units:**

- 1 Reading and role play**
- 2 Case studies**
- 3 Intercultural tests.**

**Topics:**

**Part A deals with general topics while part B focuses on specific cultures**

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- III The Importance of Eating Habits for Various Cultures...p.16**
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**B**

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- VIII Holidays and Celebrations in Turkish Culture...p.46**
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## INTRODUCTION



This text has been designed for multicultural groups of students who study at School of Business Administration, Silesian University, within the Socrates-Erasmus programme, and at partner universities.

Multicultural training is supposed to develop cognition skills needed to understand life in foreign countries, the students are allowed to explore their own cultures before they start discussing values, expectations, behaviours, traditions rituals, forms of greetings, and identity symbols. The methodology used in the course is student-centered as the students hypothesise, brainstorm, discuss, conclude and inform other students and the teacher about their findings, which means that the students also teach the teacher.

The most significant goal of the course is to develop students' awareness concerning diverse cultures differences and develop their empathy and tolerance. This attempt is reflected in the presented text as it provides the students with the opportunity to discuss and confront their opinions in the class where people of numerous nationalities are supposed to cooperate (the exchange students mostly come from partner universities in Belgium, Belarus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Holland, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, and others).

# UNIT 1

## Business Organization and Culture



### Reading

a The ability to understand and communicate in other languages is now one of the basic skills that EU citizens need if they are to participate fully in the European society. The act of learning and speaking other languages encourages the learner to open himself or herself up to other people and to begin to understand other cultures and outlooks as well as essential skills in a world menaced by racism and xenophobia. Within a very short time, the European Union has undergone its most significant enlargement. The new Union is home to almost 500 million Europeans from diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is more important than ever that EU citizens have the skills necessary to understand and communicate with their neighbours.

b Intercultural communication skills are assuming a large role in global marketing and sales strategies as Europe has recently been developing a highly competitive economy, trading with countries around the globe. A mobile workforce and workers with language skills in the EU and outside Europe enjoy a wider choice of job or training opportunities than their monolingual colleagues. Intercultural skills are also needed by the students who have an opportunity to study abroad within various programmes offered by the EU, like e.g. Socrates-Erasmus programme.

c According to R.Gibson intercultural skills are not only needed by those involved with mega cross-border mergers, but by people working in all kinds of organizations. Even domestic companies employ multicultural workforce, which has been confirmed for example in the research concerning small and medium-sized businesses in North Moravia and Silesia regions. The following chart presents all the nationalities listed in the questionnaires distributed to 100 small and medium-sized businesses in the above mentioned area.

Nationality	Percentage (out of 100% foreigners employed in SMB)
1 Slovaks	60.8%
2. Germans	54.1%
3. Poles	47.3%
4. Austrians	35.1%
5. Americans	24.3%
6. Other nat.	21.6%
7. British	18.9%
8. Ukrainians	17.6%
9. Russians	14.9%
10. Romanies	10.8%
11. Hungarians	5.4%
12. no foreign.	5.4%

Another chart concerns culture differences found out by the Czech staff during cooperation with foreigners.

Nationality	Cul.values	Politeness	Tolerance	Discipline	Punctuality	Non-verbal	Total
1.Germans	13	12	8	10	7	9	74
2. Slovaks	3	5	5	9	8	11	44
3. Poles	2	5	3	5	6	8	33
4. Others	5	2	6	6	2	-	23
5. Russians	5	4	1	3	3	2	16
6. Austrians	4	1	-	3	1	1	13
7. British	3	3	-	2	2	1	13
8. Romanies	1	1	1	2	2	1	10
9. Americans	2	2	-	2	1	2	9
10.Ukrainians	2	2	-	1	-	1	8
11.Hungarians	-	-	-	-	-	3	4

d It is obvious that managers in many companies will come in touch with international teams at home, abroad, during negotiating with foreign partners, and managing a diverse workforce. This phenomenon should be considered positive as diversity provides more fertile environment for creative thinking and innovation, and more and more companies are looking for finding synergy effects in cultural diversity, which means that diversity is seen as an asset.

### Tasks:

#### A Write a topic sentence for each of the paragraphs

- a \_\_\_\_\_
- b \_\_\_\_\_
- c \_\_\_\_\_
- d \_\_\_\_\_

#### B Explain the following concepts:

- racism \_\_\_\_\_
- xenophobia \_\_\_\_\_
- diversity \_\_\_\_\_
- global marketing \_\_\_\_\_
- monolingualism \_\_\_\_\_

#### C Write a paragraph about small and medium-sized businesses in your country, about their status, problems and culture diversity of their staff.

#### D Discuss the data in the second chart and try to say which specific culture related issues Czech partners were surprised at.

**E Play the roles of a Czech employer and a foreign partner discussing culture-related problems that can have an impact on the efficiency of the staff.**

**F Comment on the following ironic European stereotypes**

- cooking like a Brit
- available as a Belgian
- talkative as a Finn
- humorous as a German
- driving like a French
- technical as a Portuguese
- controlled as an Italian
- flexible as a Swede
- famous as a Luxembourger
- patient as an Austrian
- sober as an Irish
- humble as a Spaniard
- generous as a Dutchman
- organised as a Greek
- discreet as a Dane

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

G. Hofstede called culture *collective programming of mind*. It means that culture involves not only its visible part related to literature, music, and art, but rather a shared system of attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviour.

There are many models illustrating culture, e.g. an iceberg model showing the tangible expressions of culture above the surface of the water and the underlying attitudes and values below the surface, a tree model with its roots providing the image of the historical origins and other hidden issues, and an onion model with its four different layers of culture which might affect an individual's profile-meanings, beliefs, attitudes, and values.

#### **Discussion questions:**

- Which types of culture do you think have the biggest influence on a person's behaviour-corporate, gender, age, religious, regional, class, etc. culture?
- Can you make general rules about the relative importance of each layer, or are the influences different in each individual case?
- Discuss the relative importance of these different types of culture on a person whom you know well, or on a well-known figure from politics, sport or entertainment.

## 2.2

### What has happened here?

If people are visiting another country they may feel that native people have different attitudes to the private and public spaces. In North America, for example, people do not like standing closer than 50 cm, if it is not for a close family and lovers. Friends can come within 0.5 to 1.2 m. All the other people usually come within the area of 1.2 to 2.7 m. For a North American the public space begins over 2.7 m. People usually like to mark their space, e.g. on the beach they spread their towels around them or in the library they put their books around them.

There is a well-known case of a German professor teaching in the USA. He always kept his office door closed and wondered why he did not have as many students seeing him in office as his American colleagues did. He thought that the students did not want to ask him for advice because of his nationality.

### Tasks:

- **Make comments about this cases**
- **Discuss issues concerning proxemics in your culture**

### 2.3 Comment on these statements:

- Globalization means that there is now one business culture everywhere in the world
- When in Rome, do as the Romans do.
- It's impossible to generalize about cultures-there are so many differences.

## 3 Intercultural tests

The following tests have been designed by D.Utley for a multicultural team which meets regularly in both business and social situations. Read the tests and

- say to what extent you **agree strongly, agree, disagree, disagree strongly**
- if you disagree, suggest an alternative
- add any other items you consider necessary.

### 3.1 Business

- 1 Arriving late for an appointment is unacceptable. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 A company's image is reflected in the way its personnel dress. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Talk to all people as colleagues, not subordinates. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Interrupting people in meetings is impolite and counterproductive. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Meetings should have a strictly observed timetable. \_\_\_\_\_



- 6 Always explain to a colleague any doubts you have about their suggestions.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Never disagree with a superior. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Never say *NO* to a request. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Always ask permission to speak in a meeting. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Always offer to do something even if you are not sure you can.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 11 Always pretend to listen, even if you are not doing  
so. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 If somebody offends you, always explain to her/him what has  
happened. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.2 Social

- 1 People should say what they mean clearly and directly. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Never say directly that you don't agree with somebody. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Dress casually for social events. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Always separate business life from personal life. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 If you don't know what to say, talk about the weather. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Never ask anyone their age. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Men should talk to women differently from the way they talk to men. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 Only speak when you are spoken to. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 Never refuse a suggestion about what to do or where to go. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Make sure you pay for any food or drink you are offered in a restaurant. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 Always consult a guest about what they would like to do. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 Use compliments freely. \_\_\_\_\_







## UNIT II

### Religions and Their Impact on Intercultural Communication

#### 1 Reading

1 Religious beliefs influence the behaviours of members of many cultural groups, including numerous business people. Such beliefs influence how people view the world. Some cultural groups are dominated by one religion; business dealings in these cultures must be in harmony with the prevailing beliefs. Then, some countries have several major religions; business people there must respect the value choices of the various religions' practices. In other countries religion is not a major social factor. The relationship between religions and business is controversial. Arguments can be raised that the various religions both encourage and discourage business activities.



2 It is often mentioned that business today operates in a global environment and that to remain competitive in this environment, these businesses need to understand the global milieu within which they operate. Therefore, the modern business corporation needs to understand both the economic and the non-economic factors that influence the environment and economy.

3 One non-economic factor influencing business are cultural values. All business people must be aware of such cultural values because the values people treasure provide a life-orientation for their actions. Moreover, these values underlie people's motivational structures which, in turn, inform their behaviours, including their economic behaviours, which means that corporations must consider and attempt to understand both the religious traditions (sacred and civil) and the philosophies of those countries with which they do business, because these systems are the sources of cultural values which in turn guide human behaviour, including economic behaviour.

4 There are potential benefits to be used by civilization in general and business in particular, if the modern business corporation accepts the mantle of responsible stewardship and becomes proficient at it. It is obvious that what their managers do - good or bad - will flow to the rest of the world. Corporate leaders can follow the great ethical traditions found within the world's religions and philosophies.

5 Religion is based on a system of beliefs: polytheists believe in many gods, monotheists ascribe just to one god. Believers used to tell stories about their gods or write various tales and myths. The collections of myths creates mythology. Some myths are common for more religions, e.g., the myth about creation of the first human being, the myth about the great flood of the world, etc. There are also some people who believe neither in god's existence nor in any heavenly principles – these are atheists, people without denomination. Other people assume that man cannot know anything about the origin of the world as well as about their own fate, they are called agnostics.

6 In most religions there are individuals who interpret religious texts and supervise the right course of religious ceremonies. These people usually belong to top priesthood or make ministry, however, in some religions there is no ministry at all. According to these religions it is said that there is no need of an intermediator between man and god or gods.

### **Tasks:**

**A Explain the meaning of the underlined words and collocations**

**B Which is the dominating religion in your country?**

**C Does it influence doing business there?**

**D Write a short paragraph about the most widespread religions in the world**

**E Interview a person from a different culture about the most important culture values including religion**

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

All religions have 'sub-groups' within them which are called denominations. Denominations account for the differences in practices between people of the same religion. Sometimes, denominations can be so different from each other that they almost constitute a separate religion. At other times denominations can share teachings and practices.

There must be a dialogue between the denominations if the religion is to present itself as 'united' against others. This is not always possible and leads to intra-religious disputes - arguments within a religion. On occasion these disputes have led to fighting between people of the same religion.

It is often said that 'religion is the cause of all wars'. This is a difficult statement to maintain. It is more frequently true that religion (or often denomination) is the factor that unites one group of people against another. However, it is not often true that religion itself causes the war. More likely, one religion or denomination fights another in order to secure land or power - not religious supremacy.

There is an ongoing conflict regarding Northern Ireland. The Nationalists wish to have the province of Northern Ireland returned to Eire (The Republic of Ireland). The Unionists want the rule of Northern Ireland to continue to be with the United Kingdom. However, this conflict is often said to be Catholic versus Protestant. Most Nationalists are Catholic; most Unionists are Protestant.

### **Decide whether**

- the conflict is a religious conflict, over differences between religious doctrines**
- the conflict is a political conflict, over control of land and people.**

## 2.2

Here are some other conflicts that have been called religious wars. Using the Internet or reference books, decide for yourself whether they are truly religious conflicts or whether religion simply divides the opposing groups:

- The Bosnian War
- The Iran - Iraq War
- The Gulf War

## 2.3

### **Religious Tolerance**

Most religions teach tolerance towards members of other denominations and faiths. However, few preach that all faiths are equal and that people belonging to different religions are equally right in their beliefs. Religious tolerance can mean exactly - tolerating, or putting up with people, not accepting them fully.

Here are three different positions held by people from different religions. Their religion is not obvious from their statements. What is obvious is their attitude towards people from different viewpoints to their own.

Read the three statements carefully and then put the most tolerant statement on the left and the least tolerant statement on the right.

Statement 1

I believe my religion to be correct although I recognize that other faiths have salient points that I believe that god would agree with.

Statement 2

I believe my religion is the only route to God. All other religions are the work of a dark force and their followers are being misled.

Statement 3

I believe that there are many paths to the truth that I call God. All religions are attempts to make sense of our reality. The end-reaching God is important, not the means.

### 3 Intercultural tests

#### 3.1

Match the following religions to the number of their followers

Christianity	14,890,000
Islam	353,141,000
Hinduism	22,518,000
Buddhism	1,147,494,000
Sikhism	746,797,000
Judaism	1,929,987,000

#### 3.2 Find out which religions the following descriptions are related to

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Worship: private worship, worship at home and collective in the Mosque

Prophet or founder: Muhammed

Teachings: the 5 pillars

Holy writings: the Koran

Belief in God: Monotheistic

It has been practised for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Worship: private worship, worship at home and collective in the Gurdwara

Prophet or founder: Guru Nanak

Teachings: Teachings of the 10 Gurus and holy book

Holy writings: Guru Granth Sahib

Belief in God : monotheistic

It has been practised for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Worship: private worship, worship at home and collective in the Temple

Prophet or founder: none

Teachings: concept of Samskara, stories of Deities and battles

Holy writings: Vedas and others

Belief in God: polytheistic

It has been practised for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Worship: private worship, worship at home and collective in the Synagogue

Prophet or founder: Abraham and many other prophets

Teachings: the 10 commandments, the covenant, laws and guidance

Holy writings: the Torah and the Talmud

Belief in God : monotheistic

It has been practised for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Worship: private worship, worship at home and collective in the Church  
Prophet or founder: Jesus  
Teachings: sermons, parables of Jesus, writings of St. Paul and others  
Holy writings: the Bible  
Belief in God: Monotheistic  
It has been practised for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Worship: meditation  
Prophet or founder: Siddharta Gautama - the Buddha  
Teachings: enlightenment through the 4 noble truths  
Holy writings: Pali scriptures, Theravada and Mahayana scriptures  
Belief in God : atheistic  
It has been practised for: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3.3

**Match the descriptions to the religions. The described religions are different from those mentioned in the previous exercise**

- 1 Confucianism
- 2 Ethnic religions
- 3 Taoism

a In Africa, Australia, North and South America live people belonging to traditional primitive communities using language without written records, which means they do not have sacred books or texts and belief is transmitted mouth to mouth. For the majority of especially African nations members life is divided into series of rituals, like birth, maturity, marriage death, illness, infertility, etc. One member of the nation is specially dedicated to become a kind of priest of his group who would be responsible for practising sacrifices and dedication of future members to nation's cults. Cult has an important role to play also in tribe gathering practices used for planting and harvest.

b The doctrine of the founder is not a real religion, it is rather a kind of morality helping people to reach perfection. It provides rules of social life, it has no gods, no clergymen and no temples. It honours only one cult – the cult of ancestors.

c This religion is based on two powers facing each other – women's jin and men's jang. These two energies complement and help to balance each other. People should find their way, stop destroying harmony, honour gods of heaven, earth and water, the power of wind, rivers and mountains.

### 3.4

**Say which holy book the following text belongs to.**

It is prohibited to drink wine under which all sorts of strong inebriating drinks are comprehended. Some people think that only moderate use of wine is allowed and only excess is forbidden, but received opinion is that to drink any strong drinks in lesser or greater quantity is unlawful. The drinking of wine has common effects as quarrels and disturbances in company and neglecting the performances of religious duties.

There are also some regulations concerning the distribution of meat. It is forbidden to eat blood and pork and all the flesh of animals that are killed in the name of honour or any idol or by other animals. However, in cases of necessity, when a man may be in danger of starving, he is allowed to eat any of the prohibited kinds of food.

## UNIT III

### The Importance of Eating Habits for Various Cultures

#### 1 Reading

Read the following text and match the suitable topic sentences to the paragraphs. Then write the last paragraph as a conclusion.



- 1 Food for different cultures and religions
- 2 Characteristics of Chinese food
- 3 Food is symbolic
- 4 Food celebrates life events
- 5 The importance of local resources
- 6 Factors determining food in Nepal
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_

a Food is in the centre of many important activities, e.g. weddings, birthdays, religious feast days, national holidays, but food can also be the great icebreaker when people meet for pleasure or business. The importance of food in understanding human culture lies in its variability and people of different backgrounds eat very differently. The basic ingredients from which food is prepared, the ways in which it is prepared and eaten, the customs of serving food, the utensils, and the beliefs about the food's properties differ by culture.

b It may happen that somebody's pet is another person's favourite food. There are food prohibitions in some cultures too. Beef, for example, which is very popular in America, is forbidden to Hindus, while Moslem and Jewish cultures normally do not have pork eaten frequently by the Chinese and others. Feeding habits are also different - from hands and chopsticks to full sets of cutlery. Even when cultures use forks, it is possible to distinguish a European from an American.

c The differences among cultures related to food exist due to the differences in geographical location and available resources. People living near the sea, lakes and rivers eat more fish and crustaceans, while people who live in colder climates tend to eat heavy fatty food. However, with the development of the global economy food differences are beginning to disappear. McDonalds has spread to every continent except Antarctica and yoghurt is served all over the world.

d Throughout history, food has been used as a symbol of wealth or gratitude, or to demonstrate position and power. Eating exotic meals may be a sign of wealth and power, while eating only basic food means belonging to a common class. In some cultures the offer of a glass of cool clean water is the greatest honour one can receive, in others people have to offer their guests lavish food signifying the amount of respect they give them.

e It is not surprising that Chinese food belongs to the most popular in the world combining the use of plants and animals that grew prosperously in the Chinese land for a long time. Here are some examples of the ingredients used by the Chinese cuisine: rice, wheat, maize, buckwheat, yam, sweet potato, soybean, peanut, Chinese cabbage, turnip, malva, amaranth, radish, mushroom, peach, apricot, plum, apple, jujube, date, pear, litchi, pork, dog, beef, chicken, dug, goose, pheasant, fish, red pepper, garlic, ginger, and spring



onion. The Chinese think that food affects health and therefore it is also a medicine. They follow the basic *yin-yang* principles, which means that meals are also divided into those that possess the *yin* quality and those of the *yang* quality. When *yin* and *yang* forces in the body are not balanced, i.e. when a person overeats, there is an excess of the force in the body, causing diseases.

f Nepal, an Asian landlocked country, has special eating habits, which is a reflection of the specific environment and culture. About 90% of the Nepalese live in rural areas. They grow grains, fruit and other crops in the lowlands, rice and corns in the cooler hill regions, and potatoes and barley at high places with the coolest temperatures. Religious rules affect what kind of meat people in Nepal eat. Hindus do not eat beef, Muslims pork and Buddhism prohibits the killing of any animals but allows the eating of meat, so Buddhists hire butchers to slaughter animals for food. A typical family meal in Nepal includes *daal bhat* - rice with lentil gravy, *chapati* - flat bread, and *achaar* - paste of spiced pickled fruits. The Nepalese often lack electricity for refrigerators and cooking, so they often use dried food such as grains, lentils, and beans.

g \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B Prepare characteristics of your national food and determine factors influencing it.**

**C Name a special family food and its ingredients. Is it served on special occasions or throughout the year? Are there any customs and traditions related to this food? Is it influenced by where you live?**

**D Here are some food idioms used in English. Match them to their explanations.**

- 1 eating humble pie
- 2 Swiss cheese
- 2 done to a T
- 3 he takes the cake
- 4 cream puff
- 5 pie in the face
- 6 in a real stew
- 7 sink our teeth into st

a someone who is easily influenced or easily beaten

b to get really involved with something interesting

c publicly being forced to admit defeat

d in trouble, in a state of worry or confusion

e usually used in a negative sense meaning that the person referred to is disagreeable

f the blame or responsibility for a bad plan

g a plan that has a lot of possibilities for failure  
h done to perfection (the steak is turned at the grill at the right time)

**E Can food be a source of culture shock? Prepare a dialogue based on your experiences.**  
**2 Case studies**

**What has happened here?**

**2.1**

A manager of a German company was sent on business to Japan. Everything was well prepared for negotiating. However, he felt that he was treated as an unwelcome foreigner and he had to change his lifestyle completely, being out each night. If he wanted to get familiar with Japanese dealers, he would have to drink a lot of sake with them.

Tasks:

- How would you cope with this situation?
- The demands of socializing can put the business person staying in a foreign culture under great pressure. Make a list of special attitudes to socializing in your culture.

**2.2**

A couple from Western Europe was invited to a Moslem family for dinner. They pressed their host to fix a time and arrived half an hour late. When they were sitting in the dining room, they asked about the host's wife and were told she was busy in the kitchen. Before the meal was served, the couple had asked the host where the toilet had been because of washing their hands. The main course was served on a large platter and the couple took food from wherever they could reach trying to keep up conversation. Soon after the dessert they left.

Tasks:

- What did the couple wrong? Find at least four things.
- Are business and pleasure mixed in your country?
- Where does socializing take place (in the office, in the sauna, on the golf course, in a restaurant or a pub, at someone's home)?
- What topics can you talk about? What topics are taboo?

**3 Intercultural tests**

**3.1**

**International meals**

**Study the ingredients of international meals. Then match them with their names and countries they come from.**

- 1 corn tortillas, black beans, rice, salsa
- 2 spaghetti, tomato sauce, Parmesan cheese,
- 3 shrimp, eggplant, peppers, mushrooms, oil, rice
- 4 barbecued chicken breast, potatoes, mayonnaise, onion, peppers, corn
- 5 Indian cheese, spinach, peppers, oil, onion, rice, chapati (wheat bread )
- 6 wheat pasta, carrots, zucchini, peppers, chickpeas, lamb
- 7 meat balls, beef or lamb, cucumber, tomato, pepper, parsley
- 8 dumplings, pork, sauerkraut

- a Japan
- b the Czech Republic
- c Turkey
- d Morocco
- e Mexico
- f Italy
- g the U.S.A.
- h India

- tempura
- kófte
- barbecue chicken
- couscous
- beans and rice
- spaghetti
- Sag paneer
- vepřo-knedlo-zelo



Try to say what kinds of drinks are served with the mentioned meals in their home countries.

### 3.2

Try to guess which country is described in the following passage

Phoenicians from the Middle East introduced grapes to this country in about 1100 B.C. Hundreds of years later Romans brought olives from Italy. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century Moors introduced short-grain rice and *za faran*, or saffron, and in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries explorers and traders returned home with nutmeg and cloves from India. Peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, and chocolate were brought from Americas.

The country's classic dish includes sausage, mussels, lobster or chicken, red pepper, peas, tomatoes, and saffron rice, but people living in the dry central plateau also make spicy sausage called *choriso*.



## UNIT IV

### Division of Cultures

#### Reading

*appraisal, environment, focuses, gender, hierarchy, interaction, multinational, willingness*

1 Comparative and so called ‘intercultural’ studies are becoming increasingly more important in the global business \_\_\_\_\_. The valuable study of cultures by G.Hofstede and E.T.Hall have led to the culture dimensions, such as **individualism versus collectivism, monochrony versus polychrony, masculinity versus femininity, high power distance versus low power distance, high uncertainty avoidance versus low uncertainty avoidance, high context versus low context, high contact versus low contact, etc.**

2 G.Hofstede is known for his work on four dimensions of cultural variability based on the survey data collected from \_\_\_\_\_ corporations in 40 countries. Uncertainty avoidance refers to how comfortable people feel towards ambiguity. Cultures which ranked low feel more comfortable with the unknown. As a result high uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer formal rules and they feel with uncertainty uncomfortable. Power distance is related to the distribution of power in institutions and organisations. People in high power distance cultures are more comfortable with a larger status differential than low power distance cultures. Masculinity and femininity dimension refers to expected \_\_\_\_\_ roles in a culture. Masculine cultures tend to have very distinct expectations of male and female roles in society while feminine cultures have a greater ambiguity in what is expected of each gender. The dimension of individualism refers to the orientation that people in different countries have toward their work. Individualistic cultures are task-oriented, individuals are self-motivated and seek individual \_\_\_\_\_ and reward. Collectivist cultures are motivated by their desire to advance the interests of the group, they seek reward for the group.

Later Hofstede’s works with Bond introduce another dimension connected with the rapid economic development of some Asian countries. This dimension refers to the selective promotion of particular set of ethics found in Confucian teaching, e.g. thrift, perseverance, a sense of shame, tradition, and following a \_\_\_\_\_.

E.T.Hall described other important concepts concerning cultural differences – time, context and space. Time with monochronic cultures is characterised as linear, tangible, and divisible. Events are scheduled one item at a time and this schedule takes precedence over interpersonal relationships. Polychronic time is characterised by simultaneous occurrence of many things and by a great involvement with people. High and low context refers to the amount of information that a person can comfortably manage. In high context cultures background information is implicit while in low context cultures much of the information must be made explicit in an \_\_\_\_\_ and people from low context cultures usually verbalise much more background information. The dimension of space can include an area, or objects that are considered an individual’s territory. This sense of personal space can be perceived not only visually, but also by the ears, by the skin, the muscles and by the nose.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner classified cultures along a mix of behavioural and value patterns. Their research \_\_\_\_\_ on the cultural dimensions of business executives. In their book *Riding the Waves of Culture* Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner identify seven

value orientations. Some of these value orientations can be regarded as nearly identical to Hofstede's dimensions. The seven value dimensions identified were: universalism versus particularism, communitarianism versus individualism, neutral versus emotional, diffuse versus specific, achievement versus ascription, human-time and human-nature relationships.

Out of these seven value dimensions, two reflect closely the Hofstede dimensions of Collectivism/Individualism and to a lesser extent power distance. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's communitarianism/individualism value orientation seems to be virtually identical to Hofstede's Collectivism/Individualism. Their achievement/ascription value orientation, which describes how status is accorded, appears to be linked to Hofstede's power distance index, at least if one accepts that status is accorded by nature rather than achievement, and that this reflects a greater \_\_\_\_\_ to accept power distances. It is, however, not a complete match, as Hofstede's power index does not only relate to how status is accorded, but also to the acceptable power distance within a society.

### **Tasks:**

**A Read the text and complete the missing words**

**B Try to say what type of culture your culture is closer to**

**C Compare your conclusions in the multicultural group. Which cultures will be situated on the opposite poles?**

**D Explain the following concepts:**

global business \_\_\_\_\_  
reward \_\_\_\_\_  
explicit versus implicit \_\_\_\_\_  
business executives \_\_\_\_\_  
divisible time \_\_\_\_\_

**E Imagine you are going to study to Germany. What type of culture can you expect there? Find out the most important moments in German history.**

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

A Western European marketing manager is working in Japan. It is very difficult for him because during meetings the Japanese colleagues hardly ever say anything. When they are asked if they agree to his suggestions, they always say "yes", but they don't do anything to follow up the ideas. The only time they open is in a bar in the evenings where they expect him to go out with them on a regular basis.

Analyze this case study, say which culture dimension mentioned in reading it is related to, and try to find a solution.

## 2.2

An American manager working in Japan is impressed by the performance of one member of his team. At the next team meeting he praises this person in front of the group. The rest of the Japanese team look confused.

Make comments and say which culture dimension mentioned in reading it is related to, and try to find a solution.

## 2.3

A British businessman in an Arabic country wants to make an important deal. He can't afford to waste any time, so he is frustrated when he waits for ages to get an appointment with his partners. Meetings never start on time, and when they do, there are frequent interruptions with people coming in to get papers signed.

Make comments and say which culture dimension mentioned in reading it is related to, and try to find a solution.

## 3 Intercultural tests

### 3.1

According to Hall's division to high and low context cultures Japan is a typical example of the first type. It means that non-verbal clues are important and the meaning of words can depend on the context. "Yes" can mean "I agree" or only "I am listening". Relationship building is very important for these cultures. Germany is an example of low context cultures where more explicit clues are used and mostly put into words. This type of cultures tends to be task-centered, not relationship-centred.

Find the position of the following cultures on the line where Japan and Germany are on the opposite sides.

- |                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>1 the UK</i>      | <i>5 the USA</i> |
| <i>2 Scandinavia</i> | <i>6 France</i>  |
| <i>3 Greece</i>      | <i>7 the CR</i>  |
| <i>4 Spain</i>       | <i>8 Italy</i>   |

**HHC**, \_\_\_\_\_, **LCC**  
**Japan** \_\_\_\_\_ **Germany**

### 3.2

Hofstede explains that in masculine cultures the roles of men and women are distinct. Men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success while women should be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

**Try do divide the following features into the feminine and masculine ones.**

- 1 managers aim for consensus
- 2 managers are expected to be decisive
- 3 people live to work
- 4 competition and performance are important at work
- 5 caring for others is a dominant value
- 6 equality and solidarity are important at work
- 7 conflicts are fought out
- 8 conflicts are solved by compromise

### 3.3

Within the time demension the attitude to past, present and future is very important. Some cultures put more emphasis on the past, others stress the present, and for others the future is the most significant one. For many cultures the past is behind them and the future is in front of them. However, in Madagaskar people see the past in front of them because they can see what has already happened. The future is behind them because they do not know what will happen.

**Match the following features with the cultures with short-term and long-term orientation.**

- 1 respect for traditions
- 2 large amount of savings
- 3 people are thrifty
- 4 people expect quick results
- 5 traditions adapted for modern context
- 6 people are used to slow results

### 3.4

Indirectness and conflict avoidance are typical for some cultures, for example for Thai and others. It means that it is not possible to criticize people in front of others because it leads to a "loss of face". In this cultural context direct criticism is unacceptable and there are many other ways of dealing with this situation.

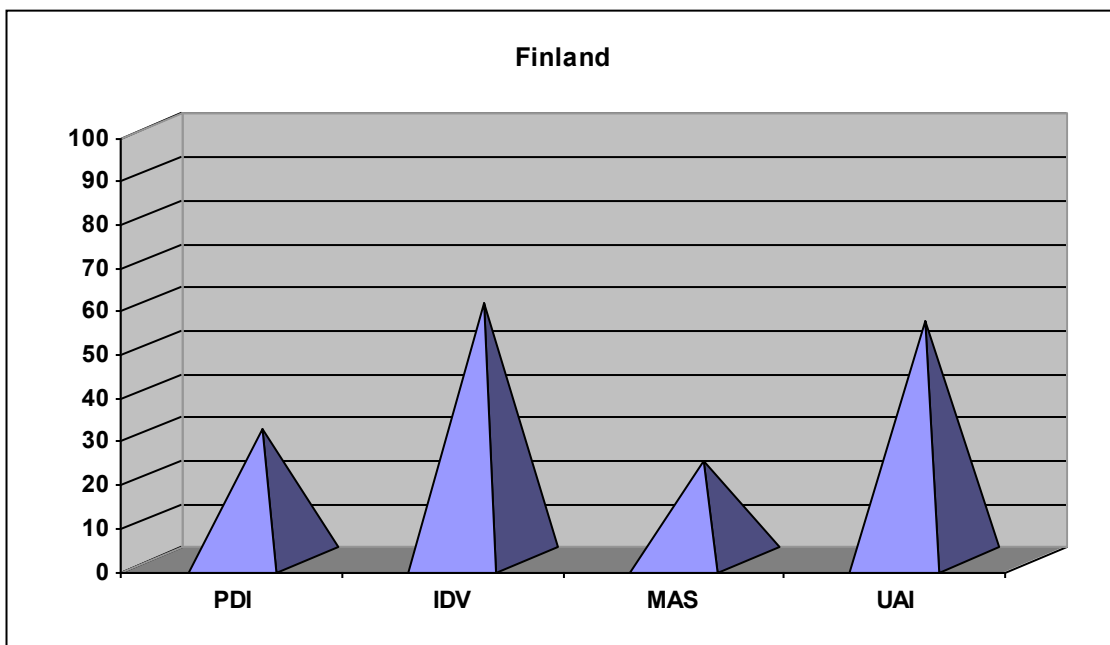
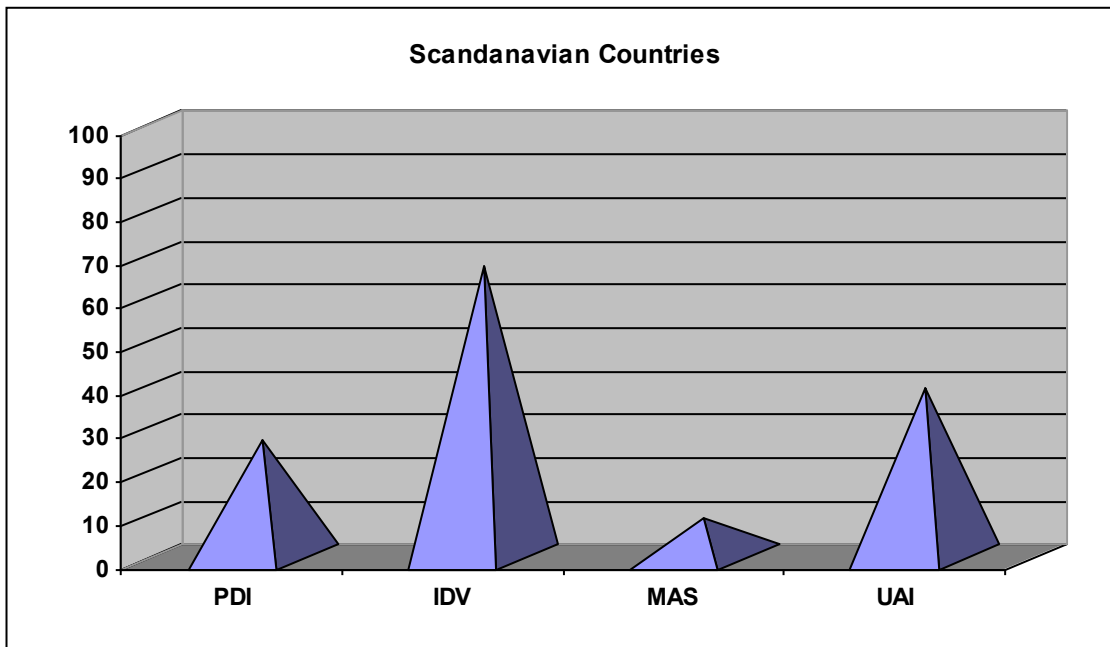


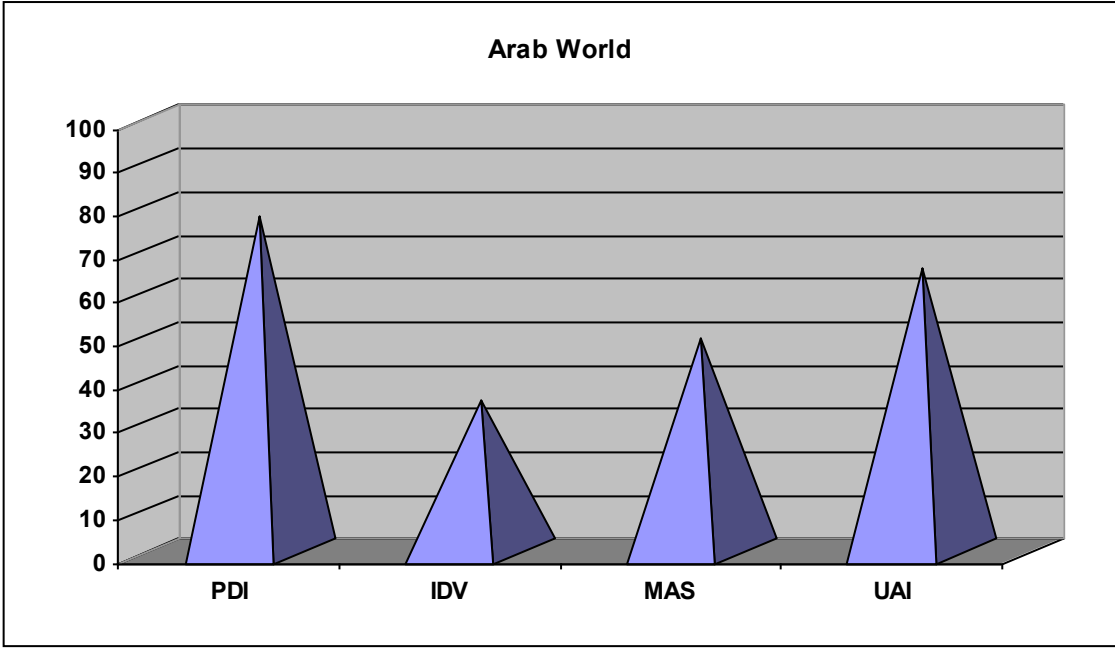
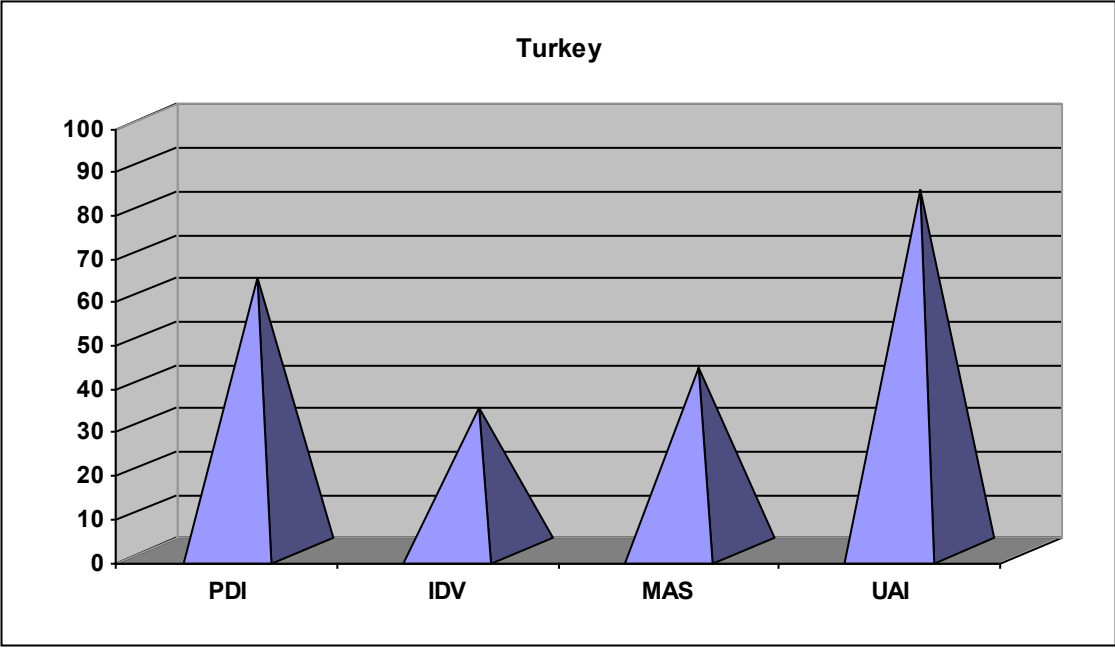
Sometimes it is also necessary to use indirect language. Put the following phrases in the order "most direct" to "most indirect".

- Please open the window.
- It's hot in here.
- Would you be so kind and open the window?
- Could you possibly open the window?
- Don't you think it's a little hot in here?

### 3.5

Compare the following graphs showing Hofstede's dimensions in various cultures. Try to make a similar one for your native culture.





## UNIT V

### The Power of Non-Verbal Communication

#### 1 Reading

Do you know that .....

- ❑ **Over 700,000 possible physical signals can be sent through body movement alone?**
- ❑ **60 to 75% of all meaning is communicated non-verbally?**
- ❑ **65% of an interviewer's decision to hire is based on non-verbal cues?**
- ❑ **Non-verbal communication is the primary means of forming first impressions?**



1 Communication can be defined as a transfer or exchange of information between entities. Communication is one of the basic needs of human existence, but verbal communication is not the only means of communication available to us. Non-verbal communication includes any communication which is independent of a formal language and, nowadays, there are numerous means of non-verbal communication.

2 Humans are generally thought to have five senses and communication for us can be related to any of these senses. Non-verbal communication related to the sense of sight involves motion, colour and shape. In nature, there are numerous examples of this kind of communication. Ancient man, for example, used pictures for communicating. Quite fascinating prehistoric cave drawings, dating back some 20,000 years, have been discovered in the Franco-Cantabrian region (South-western France and Northern Spain). The usage of drawings must have later developed into hieroglyphs or picture writing. Of the hieroglyphs discovered, the oldest are from Egypt (c. 3100 B.C.) and the latest, dated in the fourth century, come from the island of Philae. Picture writings have also been used by the ancient Cretans and Hittites.

3 Humans have other means of visual communications such as facial expressions and gestures. Facial expressions, like a frown or a smile, are effectively used by us on various occasions to communicate our meaning. A dancer uses gestures to communicate with spectators. So does a mime artist. Gestures can be both unambiguous and ambiguous. If somebody pointed to a jug of water and then at their mouth, this would be an example of an unambiguous gesture. It would be obvious to another person that the first person was requesting a drink. There is hardly any chance of misinterpretation here. On the other hand, there are gestures that have different meanings under different circumstances. Their meaning depends upon various factors: cultural, geographical, social, etc.

4 Of our senses, the sense of hearing is basically related to verbal communication but of course can be used for non-verbal communication too. It has been experimentally shown that feelings of calmness, lethargy, anger, depression, cheerfulness and so on can be

communicated through the use of rhythmic sounds. Sound therapy is being used to cure depression.

5 Communication can be related to the olfactory senses too. Substances known as pheromones are used by certain insects and animals to communicate their sexual desire to the opposite sex. Pheromones are also used to convey anger, fear, threat, danger, etc. Pheromones are used by humans too, though unconsciously and to a very small degree when compared to their use in animals.

6 The sense of touch is a powerful form of communication. A kiss, a handshake, a hug or even a simple pat on the back can communicate more effectively than a dozen spoken words. Some people even claim to be able to hold another person's hand and reveal their thoughts by the varying tensions of their muscles.

7 Communication through the sense of taste includes \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8 Some areas of non-verbal communication can differ between cultures. These differences can mainly be related to kinesics and oculistics, but also to proxemics and haptics, for example the gesture made with a thumb and a forefinger means \_\_\_\_\_ in the USA, \_\_\_\_\_ in France, \_\_\_\_\_ in Japan, and \_\_\_\_\_ in Tunisia.

**Tasks:**

**1 Read the text and make comments on the statements at the beginning.**

**2 Try to complete paragraphs 7 and 8.**

**3 List all the non-verbal disciplines and say what kind of non-verbal signals they are related to.**

**4 Are there any gestures typical for your cultures? Show them to the rest of your class.**

**5 Are there any universal gestures?**

**6 Does your culture belong to high or low contact cultures?**

**7 Explain the following concepts:**

hieroglyphs \_\_\_\_\_

frown \_\_\_\_\_

ambiguous \_\_\_\_\_

uncounsciously \_\_\_\_\_

lethargy \_\_\_\_\_

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

A European manager who came to work in the USA was pleased to have an excellent secretary. After she had completed another piece of work long before the deadline, he went up to her, tapped her on the shoulder and thanked her. Her response was to complain to the manager's boss.

**Which non-verbal discipline is the case study related to?**

### **2.2**

An Argentinian student is attending an English course in England. He often stays behind after his class to ask the British lecturer some questions. When he approaches, the teachers begins to move away. The student wonders whether the teacher doesn't like him or whether students are not supposed to ask questions after classes.

**Which non-verbal discipline is the case study related to?**

**2.3** A businessman from continental Europe arrives for a meeting in London, wearing a suit, a sports jacket and a tie. His British counterpart who is wearing a suit is asking him whether his luggage has been lost by the airline.

**Whas has happened? Which non-verbal discipline is the case study related to?**

### **2.4**

A European businessperson is sitting on a chair with his leg crossing the other one, exposing one of his soles in an Arab country. His partner feels insulted seeing it.

**Explain what happened. Which non-verbal discipline is the case study related to?**

### **2.5.**

A USA manager working in Japan was surprised that the Japanese staff he was cooperating with did not look into his eyes.

**Explain what happened. Which non-verbal discipline is the case study related to?**

## **3 Intercultural tests**

### **3.1**

In which culture heavier women are seen as more attractive?

- a the Ivory Coast
- b Jamaica
- c New Guinea

Explanation:

Nowadays, the preference for thinness seems to be universal in the contemporary Western society. However, in the Ivory Coast there is a very different beauty standard that can be summarized by the saying "The Bigger, the Better." In the Ivory Coast, we learn, women approaching marriage are placed on diets designed to increase their weight so they will be "Big and Beautiful" to meet the larger beauty standard of that culture.

### 3.2

While travelling in another country an American woman stayed with a local family. She was served a bowl of solid, coagulated chicken blood as the best part of the dinner. Can you guess the country she was visiting?

- a Greenland
- b Uruguay
- c Vietnam

Explanation:

When we encounter people from other cultures, we may fail to understand them because of differences in language, values, gestures, emotional expression, norms, rituals, rules, expectations, family background, and life experiences. One important cross-cultural difference involves food. Each culture has unique ideas about what's edible, what's delicious, and what's disgusting. In Vietnam coagulated chicken blood is a local delicacy.

### 3.3

When foreigners are visiting a home in an Asian country, they are supposed to politely decline an offer of food the first two times, but then they should always accept the food when it is offered a third time. Which country is this behaviour typical for?

- a India
- b Japan
- c Iran

Explanation:

This is one of the typical rules of Japanese etiquette that are never taught to visitors, but visitors will be seen as very rude if they behave in culturally inappropriate ways.

### 3.4

**Guess the meaning of the Japanese gesture when two forefingers are placed on somebody's head forming bunny's ears.**

- a I'm scared like a bunny
- b I've been hearing things about you
- c I'm angry

Explanation:

People from all over the world demonstrate the remarkable diversity of international gestures. The mentioned one is used when a person is angry.

### 3.5

**A popular gesture - thumb up - can also be used in Iran. What does it mean?**

- a Good luck to you.
- b An obscene gesture related to the sexual intercourse
- c You will always be number one for me

Explanation:

This gesture is identical to the Anglo-American gesture for "Good luck to you". But in Iran it is an obscene gesture and a European travelling in Iran would outrage people there if he performs this gesture.

### 3.6

**Read the description of a kind of greetings and say which country it is typical for.**

The proper form is to bow about 15 degrees with hands sliding down toward the knees or at the sides, back neck stiff, and eyes averted. The formal bow is about 30 degrees with palms on the knees and often bobbing up and down. It is impolite to bow with both hands in the pockets.

- a Brazil
- b Japan
- c Turkey

Explanation:

- In Japan, it is extremely important to know the rank of people with whom you come in contact.
- "The person of lower rank bows first and lowest."
- "The higher the rank of the person facing you, the lower you bow."

- ❑ "The lower the bow and the longer one holds the position, the stronger is the indication of respect, gratitude, sincerity, humility, etc."
- ❑ With equals match bows, adding an extra one when you want to show a slight edge of respect.
- ❑ When unsure of status, the safest move is to bow a shade less low than the other person.





## UNIT VI

### Finnish Business Ethics

#### Reading



a Culture values are essential issues in each culture and each society determines certain standards related to the culture values. Comparison of the selected standards in the area of the

ethics and etiquette in business communication and its evaluation as well as its interpretation from the point of view of the theory of cultures. One way how to find out about specific culture values is a questionnaire research. It was possible to

distribute questionnaires during the stay at School of Business Studies, Oulu Polytechnic. The evaluation of the questionnaire is the basis of the following characteristics.

b The Finnish people have developed strong national awareness, which is connected with the pride of their country. This also shows the fact that all the issues related to the native country should be protected. These facts could be the explanation why Finland, Sweden and Denmark were hesitating before joining the European Union.

c Finland and other Nordic countries have a long tradition of social awareness, social systems and many years these countries were opened to immigrants. In comparison with the Western European countries racial issues are a lot less ardent there. A high percentage of women work professionally not only in traditional sectors, such as education and health service, but they also take important positions in economic and political life of the countries. The current Finnish president, for example, is Tarja Halonen, elected in 2000.

d The Finnish people are considered to be reserved and emotionless, which is also reflected in their attitude towards negotiating. Language knowledge of people communicating on business is usually very good. The dominating language is English, but a lot of people also speak German, and in certain regions Swedish.

e The basic rules of business etiquette involve punctuality and keeping the schedule of the negotiating. Ignoring these issues by foreign partners usually results in not accomplishing the business target. The process of negotiating can be characterized by an open and practical attitude of the Finnish people who do not accept redundant rhetoric and digressions. The Finnish people always prepare for the business meetings carefully and they expect the same from their foreign business partners.

f Finnish companies are interested in environmental issues which can also be one of the criteria of evaluating a foreign partner – together with the quality of a product and provided service. It is necessary to respect characteristic features of Finnish and all Nordic partners as each of them will expect foreign partners to adopt punctuality, accuracy and keeping obligations.

## Tasks:

### 1 Read the text and summarize the content of each paragraph in a topic sentence

a _____	d _____
b _____	e _____
c _____	f _____

### 2 Explain the meaning of the underlined words

### 3 According to the structure of the text, prepare the characteristics of business cultures in your countries

### 4 Make an interview with your partner from a different cultural background concerning specifics of business etiquette in his/her culture

### 5 Say if the following statements are true or false:

- Finnish culture is close to individualist cultures
- it has high tolerance towards risk taking
- it tends to be monochronic
- it belongs to cultures low in masculinity values
- it is closer to low power distance cultures
- it has developed tolerance and empathy
- *sisu* is the Finnish phenomenon connected to Finnish history.

### 6 Follow the points from the previous exercise and make proper statements about your culture

## 2 Case studies

### 2.1 Study the following questionnaire and try to fill it in

The following questionnaire based on the method of the semantic differential was distributed to 2 groups of students during the courses taught at School of Business Studies, Oulu Polytechnic - Finnish (40) and international (18-French, Germans, Scottish, Somali, Spanish, and Swedish).

**Which dimensions related to the division of cultures can you identify in the questionnaires?**

1. Which interests do you focus on?

individual interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	team interests
----------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

2. How were you brought up?

towards independence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	keeping up traditions and links with relatives
----------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--

3. Which do you prefer?

sympathy, tolerance, social awareness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	sympathy and tolerance are inferior
---------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------------------

4. Which life orientation do you prefer?

willingness to take risk and live without certainty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unwillingness to take risk and live with certainty
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--

5. What is your attitude towards authority, supervisors, etc?

respect for authority and supervisors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	no respect for authority and supervisors
---------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--

6. What is the role of time in your life?

time is important for me, I try to keep deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	time is not important for me, I do not keep deadlines
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

7. What is the position of women in your workplace?

equal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unequal
-------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------

8. List please three associations related to the following concepts:

Tolerance.....

Morality.....

Sisu.....

## 2.2

### Evaluation of the questionnaire

**Read about the results of the questionnaire and say whether they confirmed your expectations**

#### Group 1- Finnish students

##### Question 1

The average value is 3.4, which means that the Finnish students declared being in the middle between individual interests and team interests.

##### Question 2

The value of 3.6 indicates that again the students placed themselves almost in the middle between being brought up towards independence and keeping up traditions and links with relatives.

##### Question 3

In stating preferences concerning sympathy, tolerance and social awareness, the students expressed their opinion of being distinctly very close to sympathy, tolerance and social awareness with the value of 2.1.

##### Question 4

The students definitely ( 1.8 ) prefer willingness to take risk and live without certainty.

##### Question 5

The value of 2.6 shows that the students think that their culture is closer to respect to authority and supervisors.

##### Question 6

According to the value of 2.0 for the Finnish students time is quite important and they tend to keep deadlines.

##### Question 7

The students declared that the position of women is definitely closer to equal – 1.8.

##### Question 8

The associations concerning tolerance involved the following items:

getting along with different people, being open-minded, honest and helpful, putting up with different opinions, respect, knowledge, intelligence, equality, working hard, and keeping promises

The associations related to morality:

following the rule, distinguishing good and bad values, not hurting other people, fair play, equality, work ethics, respect other people's privacy, not thinking about who and what is the best for you, and defending your beliefs

The students gave the following definition of sisu:

determination, a will to survive and Finnish strength.

The explanation involved a reference to the past of the country when the Finnish people had had to fight for their existence against the forces of nature and people. Therefore, it was necessary for the Finnish people to have natural strength and durability to survive. The students said that sisu is a phenomenon the Finnish people are born with and it is in their blood.

## **Group 2 – international students**

Questions 1 and 2

The answers show the value of 3.4 in both questions, a very similar result to group 1.

Question 3

The value declared in the answer 3 is 2.3, which is a little lower than with group 1, i.e. for the international students sympathy, tolerance and social awareness are a little more important.

Question 4

A big difference is shown in the question 4 because the average value is 3.8, which is significantly different from the same value in group 1 (1.8). This means that international students are a lot less prepared to take risks than the Finnish students.

Question 5

The value of 3.0 indicates that the international students feel less respect for authority and supervisors than group 1.

Question 6

The value of 2.4 shifts the international students more towards the importance of time dimensions and keeping deadlines.

Question 7

The international students expressed the opinion that woman are almost equal at the workplace in their countries ( 1.5), the value is lower than that one of the group 1.

Question 8

The associations concerning tolerance involved the following items:

the same chances for everyone, men and women are equal, obeying social rules, acceptance of new people – outsiders, foreigners, refugees, other cultures, patriotism, accepting other points of view, being nice to all people, respect, sympathy, and empathy

The associations related to morality:

obeying the law, equality in everything, nothing illegal, keeping moral principles, confidence, life values, respect, distinguishing right and wrong, honesty, animal rights, and crime

Sisu in opinion of international students:

strong will, not giving up, being stubborn, not being wrong, carrying on when hope and strength are gone, and stamina.

## Comparison of the two groups

Values in questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 were higher in the international group, values in question 1 and 2 were almost identical, and values in question 7 were lower in the international group.

## Conclusion

The evaluation of the research has shown that the hypotheses were confirmed in all the points except the issues related to the attitudes towards authority and supervisors, where the value indicated by the Finnish students is not as high as it was expected. Anyway, Finnish culture is close to individualist cultures, it has high tolerance towards risk taking, it is distinctly monochronic, it belongs to cultures low in masculinity values, it has developed tolerance and empathy, and *sisu* is the Finnish phenomenon connected to Finnish history.

However, it is necessary to say that some culture dimensions are being changed, e.g. the general characteristics of Finnish culture as low in masculinity values is very often substituted for company culture being in specific situations high in masculinity values, especially in terms of competitive atmosphere.

As far as the characteristics of the Finns, it can be confirmed that they avoid small talks and foreigners often get impressions that Finns do not know how use them. One of the opinions says that this situation is a reflection of the fact that Finns want to use language for something that actually pushes things further on the pragmatic level as they take talking seriously.

However, the latest research has shown that Finns are opening up. This big cultural change comes from two sources: joining the EU and seeing the success of Nokia. The Finns have started to feel more confident regarding their impact on a world scale. They are becoming more flexible and internationally oriented. There have been changes in Finnish infrastructure and in the number of women working professionally who tend to be more people and atmosphere oriented than men.

## 2.3

As it was mentioned before, Geert Hofstede's research presents issues typical for other cultures so that business people can be more effective when interacting with people in other countries. If understood and applied properly, this information should reduce the level of frustration, anxiety, and concern during international business interaction.

For example, when negotiating in Western countries, the objective is to work toward a target of mutual understanding and agreement and 'shake-hands' when that agreement is reached - a cultural signal of the end of negotiations and the start of 'working together'.

In Middle Eastern countries much negotiation takes place leading into the 'agreement', signified by shaking hands. However, the deal is not complete in the Middle Eastern culture. In fact, it is a cultural sign that 'serious' negotiations are just beginning.

**Differences in the four culture dimensions found out by G.Hofstede can be shown in the best way in the graphs. Try to make them for Finnish culture.**

### 3 Intercultural tests

#### 3.1 Say if the following statements are true or false about Finnish culture

- Be aware that the Finns are Lutheran people who value conscientious work and initiative.
- The Finns strongly respect private property, law and contracts.
- It is not very hard to reach contacts in Finland during the summer holiday period from late June to mid August.
- Give a firm handshake on arrival and departure and make eye contact as soon as possible.
- Straight talking is not normal practice.
- Punctuality is very important in Finland.
- You are advised to be honest in your presentations and take notes on what is agreed.
- You don't have to be prepared to talk about quality, price, payment and availability at an early stage in negotiations.
- Business cards can be an advantage.
- Banking hours are generally 09:15- 16:15 Monday to Friday
- Finns are not transactional and need long-standing personal relationships in order to conduct business.
- The basic business style is formal – i.e. there is relatively little small talk and Finns prefer people to speak succinctly and to focus purely on business.
- Finns are not interested in long- term relationships.
- Never turn down an invitation to use the sauna, as it is an entrenched part of the Finnish culture.

#### 3.2

#### **Read the following information about the Finnish sauna and find something of the same importance in your own culture**

The sauna has a special role in the domestic life of Finns. It is an experience shared with family and friends. Important business meetings may be followed by a sauna in which the conversation is continued on a more informal basis. Saunas are found everywhere.

There are approximately 1,212,000 saunas in private apartments and another 800,000 in summer cottages and public swimming pools. This means more than 2,000,000 saunas for a population of 5.2 million.

### 3.3

**Ask the Finnish students in the class to confirm or not the following statements about gift giving and visiting in Finland**

- If you are invited to a Finn's home, bring flowers, good quality chocolates or wine to the host.
- Flowers should not be given in even numbers.
- Do not give white or yellow flowers since they are used at funerals.
- Do not give potted plants.
- Gifts are opened when received.
- If you are invited to a Finnish home, arrive on time. Finns are punctual in both business and social situations.
- Remove your outdoor shoes before entering the house.



## UNIT VII

### Spanish Culture and Its Specifics

#### Reading

1 Spain has been for thousands years one of the cultural centers of Europe. It has beautiful cities and towns, offering old monuments as well as futuristic architecture. However, flamenco, Easter processions and bullfights are the most famous stereotypes related to Spanish culture.



2 Flamenco is a musical tradition in the south of the country, in particular in Andalucía. In April, *Feria de Abril* takes place in Sevilla, which means a week of singing and dancing, and drinking great *Sherry wine* and eating delicious tasty snacks called *tapas*. Originally, this festival was just a cattle-market, but with the years it turned to be one of the most popular festivities in Spain. You will have the opportunity to see the typical flamenco dresses, which are worn by almost all women. In the evening a party of *Flamenco* and *sherry-wine* begins.

3 During the Easter Week you can see another marvellous event- *Semana Santa*, with its world-famous processions. The most important takes place in Sevilla (Andalucía). The traditions of *Semana Santa* go back to 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Catholic Church decided to present the *Passion of Christ* to the population in an easily understandable way. They had wooden figures of Saints made by the greatest artists of that time and those figures were carried with the processions. The realism of this representation impressed people deeply, and still today the Sevillian people watch processions with a group of so-called *Nazarenos*, in long gowns with hoods, behind them *Penitentes*, with crosses on their shoulders, then the figures of the Saints carried by *Costaleros*, each of them has to carry a weight of up to 100 kg. All those men are members of a *Cofradia*, groups dedicated to organize one of those processions.

4 Bullfighting is probably the best known, although at the same time the most polemical Spanish popular custom. This festival could not exist without the *Toro Bravo*, a species of bull of an archaic race that is only conserved in Spain. Many civilizations revered to the bull-cult. The Bible reports on sacrifices of bulls in honour to the divine justice. Also in the religious ceremonies of *Iberian* tribes living in Spain in prehistorical times bulls played an important part. The origins of the *Plaza* (bullring) probably are not the Roman amphitheaters but the Celt-Iberian temples where those ceremonies were often held. While the religious cult goes back to *Iberians*, it were the Greeks and Romans that converted it into a spectacle. In 18<sup>th</sup> century the poor population invented the bullfight on foot. *Francisco Romero* was a key-figure in introducing the rules for that new “sport”. For its fans *La Corrida* is of course rather an art than a sport and the challenge of the *man* fighting against the *beast*. It is an archaic tradition that has survived in this country.

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**Tasks:**

**A Read the text and try to add a short conclusion**

**B What is the attitude of foreigners towards the bullfighting?**

**C Make a list of the phenomena typical for your cultures. How are they viewed by foreigners?**

**D Explain the following words:**

stereotype \_\_\_\_\_  
sacrifice \_\_\_\_\_  
challenge \_\_\_\_\_

**E How can national stereotypes be overcome? Make a list of recommendations.**

**F Read the following passage about tapas, complete the missing words and say whether in your cultures similar snacks exist**

**The origin of tapas**

*covered, demand, digestion, recovered, soak*

*„La tapa“* has to be eaten between main meals as food that allows the body to hold until lunch or dinnertime.

Some authors assure that „the tapa" was born when, and due to an illness, the Spanish king Alfonso the 10th, the Wise, had to take small bites of food with some wine between meals. When he \_\_\_\_\_ from the disease, he ordered that wine can be served only with something to eat.

Tapas were also convenient for farmers because the main meal, with lots of fat, left the organism so busy doing the \_\_\_\_\_ that a „siesta" had to be done for a couple of hours before going back to the fields or in the workshop. This snack asked for wine, because alcohol enhanced the enthusiasm and the strength, and in winter it warmed the body up so as to bear the very cold days on the fields and into the middle-age workshops.

Once the „botillerias" („bottle-shops") and „tabernas" (taverns) were all around Spain, the wise King \_\_\_\_\_ continued being effective. And for that reason, the glass or jar of wine was served \_\_\_\_\_ with a slice either of smoked ham or cheese, with two aims: first to avoid that insects or other impurities could fall into that jar and then for the guests to \_\_\_\_\_ the alcohol they drunk with something solid, like King Alfonso had advised.

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

A European organization is planning a major international congress in Spain. As communication with the local organizers is very difficult, the group goes to visit the site. They are impressed by the hospitality of the local hotel owners' association, but they are worried that although the long meals were enjoyable, they are not getting very far with their business proposals. The budget is not available and the cost of the conference venue is unclear. Although the committee members go home frustrated, they are pleasantly surprised when the conference is a complete success, and they make a substantial profit.

**What is happening here? Try to explain the situation, taking into consideration the following concepts:**

- relationship building**
- high and low context cultures**

### **2.2**

Susan and Helen are two English teachers working in Spain. They live in a flat near the city centre in Barcelona and often exchange greetings with their neighbours. They have tried to invite their neighbours for a drink or a meal on several occasions, but none of the neighbours has ever accepted the invitation. The neighbours seem to be very sociable as they often invite a lot of relatives, but they have never invited Susan and Helen who now feel uncomfortable and believe they are disliked and not wanted in the building.

**How would you explain the neighbours' behaviour to Susan and Helen?**

### 2.3

When planning an advertisement to be used internationally, it is important to think about the possible different connotations of the translated text in the target culture.

What problem can the following names cause in the Spanish market?

- The new General Motors car called "NOVA"
- The Mitsubishi "PAJERO"

### 2.4

Try to explain why the following names could not be accepted in other countries:

- the English word "mist" for the German market
- the Fiat "Uno" for the Finnish market
- the German name "Kipferl" for the biscuit sold in France.

## 3 Intercultural tests

### 3.1

The following table shows the results of a survey of 6,000 people in three different countries. Try to complete the missing numbers, choose from the numbers below the table. Then complete the data about your culture on the scale from 1-300.

	Germany	UK	Spain	My country
Successful	199	49	16	___
Ambitious	201	63	27	___
Aggressive	191	131	66	___
Hard working	227	59	___	___
Arrogant	188	171	44	___
Boring	124	___	48	___
Humorous	___	183	108	___
Lazy	21	85	___	___
Untrustworthy	71	94	___	___

141, 269, 63, 228, 38

### 3.2

Say if the following statements are true or false about Spanish culture

- The Spanish dress more formally than many other Europeans.

- ❑ Shorts are not usually worn in public.
- ❑ In Spain, crossing your fingers has several good meanings, usually things such as "protection" or "good luck". This is a nice gesture to be friendly.
- ❑ The family is not the most important thing to people in Spain.
- ❑ Time is very relaxed. It is wise for foreigners to be punctual, but Spaniards do not put a great emphasis on time themselves. The Spaniards often consider deadlines an objective that will be met if possible, but do not become overly concerned if the deadline is not achieved.
- ❑ It is not necessary for foreigners to have all materials printed in Spanish.
- ❑ Business cards should be two-sided, one side having English and the other side containing Spanish. When presenting your business card, place the card with the Spanish side facing your Spanish colleague.
- ❑ Business in Spain is not obtained as a result of personal relationships because the relationship building process takes too much time.
- ❑ Be prepared for chaotic business negotiations. Often numerous people will be speaking simultaneously.
- ❑ Men who are close friends will often exchange a hug and women who are close friends usually meet and part with a small hug and a kiss on each cheek.
- ❑ Dining is not usually associated with establishing business relationships in Spain, so be prepared for your business associate(s) to join you at any or all of your daily meals.

### 3.3

#### **Say how many official languages Spain has - 1, 2, 3 or 4?**

There are several unique languages spoken in Spain, besides the predominant Spanish. These include Catalan, which is spoken in the regions of Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands, and Gallego which is popular in the northwest. Each of these languages has different pronunciations and spellings. Additionally, the native language of the Basque region is called Euskera. It is not a form of Spanish, and its origins are unknown.

### 3.4

#### **How are Spanish children given their surnames?**

In most areas where Spanish is spoken as the native language if, for example, Juan López Marcos marries María Covas Callas, their child would end up with a name such as Mario López Covas.

The matter of Spanish surnames might seem confusing at first, but that's mostly because it's different. Although there are numerous variations of how names are handled, just as there can be in English, the basic rule of Spanish names is fairly simple: In general, a person born into a Spanish-speaking family is given a first name followed by two surnames, the first being the father's family name (or, more precisely, the surname he gained from his father) followed by the mother's family name (or, again more precisely, the surname she gained from her father).

## UNIT VIII

### Holidays and Celebrations in Turkish Culture



#### Reading

Read the following text and complete the blanks with the following words:

*caliph, compassion, distinguishes, lokum, pilgrimage, prescribes*

Turkey is a Moslem country with about 98% population of Sunni and Shia, but it is a secular state with complete freedom of religion. The Turks converted to Islam on their way to Anatolia from Central Asia and before the declaration of the republic Turkey was the home of the \_\_\_\_\_, the leader of world's Moslem community. Although Islam is not the state religion (its status was abolished in 1924) and Turkish laws are not based on Islamic principles, Islam maintains influence on society, especially in the rural areas.

One of the pillars of Islam that is observed in Turkey is fasting in Ramadan. It \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfil people's moral and spiritual destiny. Its objective is to give man the power to keep in check his desires and tendencies that make him prone to greed, revenge, anger, provocation, and fear. It seeks to free the human soul and lends it the moral and spiritual strength to promote beauty harmony, goodness, truth, kindness, peace, \_\_\_\_\_ and justice, which means that it is not only leaving one's drinking, eating and other lawful pleasures, but being close to God by obeying Him.

Prescribing fasting the Quran says: "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed to you as it was to those before you, that you may learn self-restraint." The original Arabic word translated as self-restraint is *taqua*, which has broad significance. It symbolizes basic moral quality that demarcated the line between morality and amorality, and \_\_\_\_\_ humans from animals. *Taqua* can be developed only by controlling and keeping in check one's desires, impulses, and emotions.

Ramadan, calculated according to the lunar calendar, finishes with a three-day holiday called *Seker Bayrami* – Sugar Holiday. A favourite treat at this time is \_\_\_\_\_, or Turkish delight, colourful gelatin cubes covered with powdered sugar. Another Islamic holiday is *Kurban Bayrami* – Sacrifice Holiday- it honours Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his only son Isaac by the sacrificing of a ram. It also marks the season of the \_\_\_\_\_ to Mecca.

Secular holidays in Turkey are celebrated according to the Western calendar. They include for example *New Year's Day*, *National Sovereignty Day*, commemorating the Grand National Assembly's inauguration in the 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *Atatürk's Memorial Day*, commemorating the beginning of the national movement for independence in 1919 led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and *Republic Day*, celebrating the anniversary of the foundation of the republic in 1923.

## Tasks:

**A Does fasting exist in other denominations? Where and why?**

**B What are the benefits of fasting?**

**C Find out more information about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. How did he contribute to the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic?**

**D Turkish people also celebrate March 18. What does this date commemorate and why does it occur in the name of Onsekiz Mart University?**

**E Match the names of the following Turkish food and drinks with their descriptions.**

- 1 ayran
- 2 shish kebab
- 3 raki
- 4 dolma
- 5 baklava
- 6 pilav

- a stuffed vine leaves
- b grilled meat on a skewer
- c rice meal
- d aniseed-flavoured grape brandy
- e dessert of pastry and syrup
- f drink made of yoghurt

**F To begin a meal Turkish people might say *Afiyet olsun*, which means “May what you eat bring you well being”. When they want to compliment the cook on the meal, they say *Elinize saglik*, “Bless your hands”.**

**What do people in your cultures say in the same situations? Make comparisons.**

## G Turkish coffee

Since the days of the Ottoman Empire coffee has played an important role in Turkish lifestyle and culture. First brought to Istanbul by two Syrian traders, coffee became part of ceremonies at the Ottoman court. Coffee makers with their assistants prepared and served coffee for the sultan. Women in harem also received intensive training on the proper technique of preparing Turkish coffee.

Today, Turkish coffee is a very fine, powder-like grind. An aromatic spice called cardamom is sometimes added to the coffee while it is being ground. Turkish people heat coffee with water in a special pot called *cezve* until it begins to foam. The process is repeated several times. Turkish coffee has various levels of sweetness ranging from bitter to very sweet. Sugar is not added after it is served therefore spoons are not needed. A rule of the Turkish coffee ceremony dictates that if the foam is absent from the surface of the coffee, the host loses face.



## **Discussion questions:**

- What do Czech *turecká káva* and Turkish coffee have in common?
- How was coffee brought to central Europe?
- What are standard drinks in your cultures?

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

**When people from Europe come to Turkey, they can be surprised at some specifics of the Turkish etiquette. Study the following situations, try to say what was strange from the point of view of a European and then read explanations.**

- **Visitors noticed that respect to old people is expressed in a strong way-kissing the person's hand.**

The Turks always respect elders by kissing their right hand then placing the forehead onto the hand. When entering a room, if you are not automatically met by someone, greet the most elderly or most senior first. Friends and relations would greet each other with either one or two kisses on the cheek, male friends do the same.

### **2.2**

- **When doing business with Turkish partners, Europeans often want to do it as quickly as possible, which cannot be accepted by the Turks.**

Building a relationship with your Turkish counterparts is therefore critical. The first meeting should be solely focused on getting to know each other. Once a relationship has been established, you can safely move on to business matters.

### **2.3**

- **Sometimes foreigners feel that they do not negotiate with the senior members of the company who are competent to make decisions.**

Decision making can be slow. It is most likely that you will meet and negotiate with less senior members of a company first. Once you are seen as trustworthy and your proposal is financially acceptable, you will then move on to meet more senior members. A decision is ultimately made by the head of the company.

### **2.4**

- **Foreigners putting forward too many deadlines notice that it does not work in Turkish circumstances.**

Do not use deadlines or pressure tactics as the Turks will use this to their advantage and reverse the tactic by threatening to cancel agreements or end negotiations. Be patient.

## 2.5

- ❑ **Visitors to Turkey can be shocked by the behaviour of football fans celebrating the victory of their favourite teams.**

Most Turkish men love football and usually support one of three teams: Galatasaray, Beşiktaş or Fenerbahçe. Asking after their team's recent fortunes will always produce lively and animated responses.

## 2.6

- ❑ **Europeans do not get any response when asking questions related to some historical events.**

Avoid giving opinions over sensitive issues involving Turkey, especially Turko-Kurdish relations, the Cyprus issue and EU membership. Turkey has had a turbulent political history which may be best left in the past. Try and avoid this subject as a whole.

## 3 Intercultural tests

### 3.1

**State if the following statements are true or false:**

- ❑ Polygamy was banned in Turkey in 1920s.
- ❑ Traditional family values are very important to the Turks
- ❑ The new Turkish Republic in 1920s was not proclaimed a secular state
- ❑ Women got the right to vote in 1934.
- ❑ Respect to old people and those with higher social status is not important.

### 3.2

**Read the following proverbs and say how they reflect Turkish culture values.**

- ❑ A vinegar seller with a smiling face makes more money than a honey seller with a sour face.

- ❑ Stretch your legs to the length of your blanket.
- ❑ There is nothing more expensive than what is bought cheaply and there is nothing cheaper than what is bought expensively.
- ❑ The hunter is sometimes hunted.
- ❑ If God wants to make a poor man happy he first makes him lose donkey and then allows him to find it again.

### 3.3

**Superstitions are unreasoning beliefs among people living in a community, arising sometimes from fear, sometimes from helplessness. Many of them are not related with any scientific bases, reason and religious faith.**

- ❑ One cannot eat a meal by putting his one foot over another. It means disrespect to the table.
- ❑ A mirror which is broken may bring bad luck.
- ❑ Thirteenth day of a month is considered as ill-omen.
- ❑ Nails cannot be cut at nights.
- ❑ When excrement of a bird falls on the head, it means that the person will earn money.
- ❑ To catch a spider means poverty.

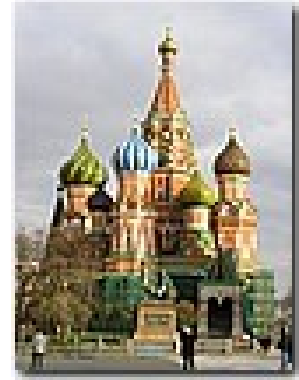
**Do you have similar superstitions in your cultures?**

## UNIT IX

### Russian Business Culture

#### 1 Reading

a The Russian people believe that one should hope for the best, but should always prepare for the worst. This attitude is related to the fact that the Russians have been hardened by centuries of war with her neighbours and have been facing generally tougher economic conditions than people in other countries. This belief reflects a mentality that is different than the Western ethos of positive thinking, which maintains that if one keeps trying and thinks positively, good things will happen. Reactions to failure also differ. Confronted by defeat, Westerners tend to respond actively, e.g., holding meetings, organizing plans, etc. But Russians, on the other hand, are ready for the worst-case scenario, so when it does happen, they are able to accept the worst more readily.



b Russian business culture has its specifics and it is necessary to know that Russians deal with business problems differently. The reasons of such behaviour can be seen in the historical development of Russia.

c As a result, meetings and debates of Russian managers often exceed allotted time limits and tend to move away from their initial agendas. In the West, such an approach would be considered a serious imperfection. However, a positive characteristic of this so-called imperfection is its readiness to accept different outcomes.

d Another difference can be seen in the method of Russian managers contrasting with the Western approach. Many Westerners feel that Russian managers sometimes discuss problems without specific solutions in hand. This suggests that the Russian state of mind is based more on the idea that the formulation of a problem is considered at least half the battle, while in the West the focus is generally on the solution and Westerners usually discuss problems after they had already found several solutions. However, nowadays, the situation keeps changing and a lot of Russian businessmen would oppose the idea mentioned above.

e Moreover, visitors to Russia must be aware of the fact that Russian business culture is hierarchical. Decision making people higher up in the hierarchy have authority over their subordinates. Business should be done with the decision makers and not with any people who may have been sent to meet you. Russian businessmen must have the opportunity to learn their partners and their ethics personally, as personal and informal contact is an important part of doing Russian business.

#### Tasks

**A Read the jumbled text and put the paragraphs into the right order**

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

d \_\_\_\_\_

e \_\_\_\_\_

**B Find synonyms for the following words in the text**

failure \_\_\_\_\_  
respond \_\_\_\_\_  
subordinate \_\_\_\_\_  
tough \_\_\_\_\_  
approach \_\_\_\_\_

**C Explain what positive thinking is and say whether it exists in your home culture**

**D Comment the following passage from a guide for foreign businessmen in Russia concerning vodka drinking on business**

**Vodka drinking**

If you are going to do business in Russia, you must be prepared for vodka drinking.

Although recently, the government has been trying to reduce the consumption of vodka by producing new brands of beer, the effect vodka drinking has had in the Russian economy is enormous. With the big changes taking place and misery for many people the life expectancy has gone down for the male population, much as a result of excessive drinking, therefore nowadays it is a big social problem.

Signing a business contract is almost always followed by trying out a glass of vodka as it is a sign of Russian hospitality to share a glass of alcohol.

**E How is signing a business contract celebrated in your culture?**

**2 Case studies**

**2.1**

Gift giving is a part of business communication and it is often connected with some superstitions. Russians take pleasure in giving and receiving gifts. Gifts for adults are generally opened in the presence of others.

Typical Russian gifts that tourists usually buy in Russia involve Palekh boxes, Zhostov trays, and Pavlov scarves.

When invited to a Russian home, it is recommended to bring a gift of chocolates, dessert items, good wine, or other alcohol. Bringing a bouquet of flowers for a woman is a good idea, but the number of flowers must be odd. Even numbers are usually for funerals. Pink, cream-coloured, orange, and blue flowers are rarely given any special meaning, but yellow flowers should be avoided.

**Comment superstitions in the Russian gift giving and compare them to superstitions in your cultures.**

## 2.2

**Read the information about gift giving in other countries and choose the right expression to fill in the blanks**

- In Japan if you receive a gift, take it with *your right hand/both hands* and open it *immediately/later in private*. If you give a gift such as something from your country, it must be wrapped beautifully.
- In Germany if you are invited to someone's house, buy flowers for the hostess. *Remove the wrapping before handing them to her/don't remove it*.
- In Korea it is good manners to refuse a gift *at first/many times* as people have to be persuaded at accept one.
- In Taiwan give your gift with both hands. Don't give *clocks/ knives/ scissors/*.

## 2.3

**Read the following passage describing how requests are expressed in Russian and English languages and try to guess the missing words in the conclusion.**

### **Research concerning requests in English and Russian**

Differences related to sociocultural norms of communication are a very frequent subject of research. University students in Voronezh, British, American and Russians were asked to fill in a questionnaire about expressing a request. They were presented various ways of requests and their task was to choose the most proper and common ones from the point of view of their cultures and indicate the factors determining the choice, like e.g. relation between communicators, sociopsychological distance, circumstances and reasons for a consequent activity.

The request concerned borrowing something from a person.

The form of Imperative was the most frequent with the Russians-more than 58%, British - more than 3% and Americans about 8%.

2 The second question was aimed at offering something.

The form of a question was used most often by the British - about 56%, Americans - 43% and finally Russians - only 31%.

3 In the third question students were asked to indicate the use of question in asking for permission.

It was used by the British in 36%, by Americans in 46% and by Russians in 6 %.

The listed results of the research show that very often the Russian speaking Americans sound too strict, while English speaking Russians are too official and uncertain, not wanting to

express their opinions. This situation is due to the transfer of norms from one language into another one.

English has at disposal numerous introductory \_\_\_\_\_, e.g. I think, I believe, I feel, I suppose, I guess, it seems to me, etc., while Russian uses only "dumayu, po-moyemu, mnie kazhetsa". This means that Russian has much fewer introductory phrases than English. Moreover, English provides a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ verbs, e.g. might, may, could, etc, hedges, like you know, you see, and lexical means, like evidently, probably, likely, etc. Russian uses only "znayesh" and lexical means, like e.g. "navernoye, kazhetsa, vozmozhno".

Russian has also much fewer means smoothing \_\_\_\_\_ than English and the question is what the reason of this situation is. One of probable answers may be the fact that speech acts in English and Russian have different cultural and pragmatic presuppositions. The English must be \_\_\_\_\_ because the addressee must have a good impression of the speaker, but the main communicative value in Russian is sincerity, therefore a Russian communicator must be honest, objective and open.

Similar explanations may be connected with the expression of \_\_\_\_\_ in both languages, where an English communicator will use the phrase "I do not think he did that" while the Russian will say "Ya dumayu, eto nepravda".

### **3 Intercultural tests**

#### **3.1**

##### **Say if the following statements are true or false**

- Foreigners are expected to be on time to all business appointments, but Russian counterparts may be late, as this may be a test of foreigners' patience. Business appointments can begin one or two hours late.
- Social events are more relaxed. It is acceptable for foreigners to be 15 to 30 minutes late.
- Patience is an extremely important virtue among Russians; punctuality is not.
- Nowadays, participation in religion is decreasing as not many citizens practice Protestantism, Islam, Russian Orthodoxy, and Judaism.
- There is a Russian term meaning "connections" or "influences". It is extremely difficult to do business in Russia without help from a local. To help with this, gifts, money or other items are often a good idea when doing business in Russia.
- When shaking hands with someone, it is not necessary to take off gloves.

## 3.2

### Here are some Russian customs and superstitions

#### Customs and superstitions

Russian culture is steeped in superstitions. Some aspects apply, quite seriously, to business. Russians will joke about these superstitions, but deep down they will also take these things very seriously. As well, there are some customs and points of etiquette which foreigners should adhere to.

- Never shake hands over a threshold: it will lead to an argument
- Never put your feet up on furniture or show the soles of your feet when sitting: it is considered very rude
- Be careful complementing something in a host's home: they may try to give it to you

## 3.3

### Try to answer the following questions concerning the world cultures

- Russians are highly literate, and have almost a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ literacy rate.

a 80%  
b 90%  
c 100%

- Good topics of conversation include \_\_\_\_\_.

a the current changes taking place in Russia and their current economic situation  
b personal topics  
c religion

- A Moslem place of worship is called a \_\_\_\_\_.

a church  
b mosque  
c synagogue

- Among Arabs, the common headdress is called a \_\_\_\_\_.

a Panama hat  
b fez  
c Kaffiyeh

- In Burma, the \_\_\_\_\_ is worn as an amulet for protection against evil.

a fish  
b frog  
c cat



□ In Thailand, a monk wears a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ robe.

a orange

b green

c white



## UNIT X

### American Individualism and Japanese Team Working

#### Reading

Every society has its own customs and ways of acting. The United States have a wide variety of national backgrounds, therefore there are numerous regional and *temperamental* differences. It is difficult to make *generalizations* about American manners and customs, but it is possible to point out a few characteristics of behaviour that are common. Some American attitudes and the ways in which Americans act may be difficult for people from other countries to understand because they seem not only odd but *inconsistent*.

Americans have a strong sense of their own importance, which is reflected in the surface informality in American manners and lack of social distinctions. Titles are not used frequently and business people may address others by their first names. This surface informality often *confuses* foreign visitors who do not understand the point at which informality stops. A teacher, who is friendly and informal in the class, grades each student's work critically and carefully.



There are only six countries in the Geert Hofstede research that have Individualism as their highest Dimension: USA (91), Australia (90), United Kingdom (89), Netherlands and Canada (80), and Italy (76). The high Individualism ranking for the United States indicates a society with a more individualistic attitude and relatively loose *bonds* with others.

Individualism and collectivism is connected with the concept of identity. Individualistic cultures emphasize the "I" identity and collectivistic cultures emphasize the "we" identity, which is a fundamental difference between Western and Eastern cultures. The relational and communication patterns of this dimension are discussed below:

The communication process in individualistic cultures focuses on inter-individual levels, while collective cultures focus on the group base (whether you are in-group, one of us; or out-group, one of them). However, individualism and collectivism is not a polarized dimension: cultures function on a continuum. For instance, within the US or Canada, there are pockets of individualistic ethnic communities and pockets of collectivistic ethnic communities. So when discussing the individualistic versus collectivistic dimension, we are talking about patterns or value orientations within a country, in which there may be many variations. Pointing out the patterns and understanding them is a first step in learning to respect the differences.

In individualistic cultures, people tend to be verbally direct. They value communication openness, learn to self disclose, like to be clear, *straightforward*, and contribute to a positive management climate, while in collectivistic group-oriented cultures, indirect communication is preferred because the image of group harmony is essential. In western cultures, talking is very therapeutic; in Asian cultures, including Japanes culture, there is an emphasis on

observing and reflecting about the process. It is rare in Asian cultures to have an open conflict, because it appears to disrupt group harmony.



**Tasks:**

**A Read the text and explain the meaning of the words**

**temperamental** \_\_\_\_\_  
**generalization** \_\_\_\_\_  
**inconsistent** \_\_\_\_\_  
**confuse** \_\_\_\_\_  
**bond** \_\_\_\_\_  
**straightforward** \_\_\_\_\_

**B Try to explain what the following Japanese concepts mean**

**enryo** \_\_\_\_\_  
**wa** \_\_\_\_\_

**C Compare two countries of your choice from the point of view of individualism and collectivism**

**D How can individualism and collectivism influence the process of negotiating**

**E Play the role of an American and a Japanese team members during negotiating**

**F Comment the following passage about the American dream and complete the missing words. Is people's attitude in your culture similar?**

*compensation, desire, driving force, merit, myth, succeed*

Built into the United States work concept is the idea of the American Dream that every individual can \_\_\_\_\_ and prosper financially by working hard. This idea still surfaces in many ways in the US and is a \_\_\_\_\_ behind many individuals' \_\_\_\_\_ to come to the US. This idea contributes to a strong work ethic and a system that is \_\_\_\_\_ based - believing that hard work deserves \_\_\_\_\_. It becomes a reality for some and a \_\_\_\_\_ for others, contributing to a widening spread between the rich and poor in the US.

**G Guess what nationality is described here**

During negotiations they do not expect the individual to come up with an answer. The answer will arise by the individual's participating in the discussions and in allowing time to come up

with the right solution. The hierarchy of the people involved in the decision making is clearly understood.

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

Imagine that you have been assigned to host a group of Japanese or Chinese students who are visiting your campus for the next two weeks. They have all studied English since they were 10 years old and speak the language well. What things should you tell them that will help them fit into the culture on your campus and in your town? Make a list of behavioural rules they should know about.

### **2.2**

Choose a specific Asian country, e.g. People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, and research the business subculture of the country, and write a report summarizing what you would need to know to conduct business successfully there (business etiquette, roles and status, decision-making customs, concepts of time, nonverbal communication styles, and so on).

### **2.3**

Locate someone, preferably a businessperson, who has spent some time in another country, and interview him or her about the experience. What preparation did the person have before going to the country? In what ways was the preparation adequate? Inadequate? How might he or she have prepared differently? Ask for anecdotes about particular communication.

### **2.4**

Don is interviewing candidates for a managerial job in his company. One of the internal candidates is Li-Chen Nguyen. She is a computer programmer whose technical work is excellent. She's been a member of some of the most successful work teams in the company. When Don interviews her, he tries to draw her out. He wants her to talk about her leadership contributions to the groups. However, Li-Chen looks at her hands; she says everyone in the group worked hard; she seems embarrassed. Don begins to wonder if she has the people skills needed to be an effective manager.

### **2.5**

George is in Japan trying to negotiate a joint venture with the owner of a Japanese company. George has heard horror stories about the distribution system in Japan, and he tells Taro Nakamura that he wants to bypass the traditional system and use the more efficient direct distribution system used in the United States. Mr. Nakamura is silent for a long time. George wonders if he's paying attention and repeats his demand. Finally, Mr. Nakamura says, "That might be difficult." George nods. "Sure, it will be tough, but I know you can do it." Then he

goes on to his next point. At the end of the session, he's shocked when Mr. Nakamura is unwilling to sign the contract George has prepared. George wonders whether anyone can trust the Japanese.

### **3 Intercultural tests**

#### **3.1**

**Say if the following statements are true or false about the appearance and non-verbal communication in Japanese business etiquette**

- Men should wear dark conservative attire. Business suits are most suitable.
- Shoes should be easy to remove.
- Women's dress does not have to be conservative.
- Women should only wear low-heeled shoes to avoid towering over men.
- The "OK" sign means the same in Japan.
- Pointing in not acceptable.
- Personal space is valued. Because the Japanese live in such a densely populated area, they value their personal space.
- It is not acceptable to blow your nose in public
- The Japanese are not comfortable with silence.

#### **3.2**

**Say if the following statements are true or false about the behaviour of the Japanese**

- Drinking is an important part of Japanese culture. It is a way to relieve business stress.
- Never pour a drink yourself; always allow someone else to do it for you.
- Business entertaining is mostly done in restaurants or bars after business hours. Often in *karaoke* or "hostess bars."
- It is also usual that foreigners are invited to the home of the Japanese host.
- It is not acceptable to slurp noodles.
- The number 4 is bad luck, because in Japanese it sounds like the word for death.
- The ceremony surrounding giving gifts is very important.

### 3.3

#### Say if the following statements are true or false about the gift giving in Japan

- ❑ The selection of the wrapping paper is critical. Nothing should be wrapped in white as it symbolizes death.
- ❑ The gift must be given and accepted with the right hand.
- ❑ Gifts should be given at the end of a visit.
- ❑ The Japanese frown on open displays of affection. They do not touch in public. It is highly inappropriate to touch someone of the opposite sex in public.

### 3.4

#### Say if the following statements are true or false about greetings and business cards in Japan

- ❑ In Japan, business cards are called *meishi*. Japanese give and receive *meishi* with both hands. It should be printed in your home language on one side and Japanese on the other. Present the card with your home country language side up.
- ❑ It is possible to write on the card and put it in the pocket or wallet.
- ❑ In a business situation, business cannot begin until the *meishi* exchange process is complete.
- ❑ The customary greeting is the bow.
- ❑ The Japanese prefer to use first names.
- ❑ The Japanese prefer not to use the word no.



## UNIT 11

### The Potential of Polish Market and Polish Culture



The growing Polish market is one of the most promising in Europe and it attracts increasingly more foreign investment, which is probably due to the EU enlargement in 2004. Although Poland has always seen itself as an essential part of Europe with strong cultural bonds with Italy and France, only recently, numerous foreign companies have begun to realise the potential of Polish market.

Poland can offer low-cost labour, which many international companies use, but it is necessary to look at the Polish market from the point of view of education as a large proportion of Polish population is highly educated and schools match the highest of European standards. The education of Polish society was a goal of rulers as early as the twelfth century, when monks were brought from France and Silesia to teach agricultural methods to Polish peasants. The Polish are proud of Kraków Jagiellonian University, founded in 1364 by Kazimierz the Great, that became one of Europe's great early universities and a centre of intellectual tolerance. Its development was stalled by the death of the king, and later the university was re-established by King Vladislaus Jagiello and his wife Jadwiga. The Renaissance and Enlightenment periods in Western Europe brought advanced educational theories to Poland. In 1773 King Stanislaw August established his Commission on National Education, the world's first state ministry of education whose aim was to set up and uniform national education system.

Potential investors in Poland have to realise that history and culture are very important there. As Poland belongs to the Baltic countries, Scandinavian investors seem to be the favourite ones as partners who can be trusted, in spite of the fact that their ancestors invaded Poland in the period called "the Swedish Flood".

Poland, together with other former Eastern European countries belonging to the Baltic Sea Region, is an example of radical economic and social changes in world history as it has turned from socialism and central planning to democracy, market economy and membership in the European Union in a very short period. Obviously, the transition has sometimes been painful, bringing social differences within the country - the young city-based generation and the countryside lagging behind.

#### Tasks

**A Read the article above and try to find more information about the following items in the text:**

- cultural bonds with Italy and France

- ❑ the King Vladislaus Jagiello and his wife Jadwiga
- ❑ the "Swedish Flood"
- ❑ the Baltic Sea Region countries

**B Find crucial moments in Polish history and say how they influenced the formation of the Polish national character**

**C Compare changes in Poland to the Czech Republic and other former Eastern European countries**

**D Find synonyms for the following words in the text or explain their meaning**

- essential \_\_\_\_\_
- bonds \_\_\_\_\_
- potential \_\_\_\_\_
- monk \_\_\_\_\_
- peasant \_\_\_\_\_
- establish \_\_\_\_\_
- ancestor \_\_\_\_\_
- lag behind \_\_\_\_\_

**E Write a topic sentence for each paragraph and add another paragraph developing the ideas in the last one**

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_

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**F Complete the missing words in the following paragraph for foreign business partners and make comments**

Business partners

*commitment, consensus, consider dealing, productive, relationships*

Identifying the right business partners for you in Poland and building \_\_\_\_\_ relationships with them requires time, care and \_\_\_\_\_. It will take time to understand how your potential partners do business, time to understand



whom you are \_\_\_\_\_ with and where they work within the sector. Successful business \_\_\_\_\_ are built by regular visits to Poland, with telephone, fax and email communications between visits. Decisions in Poland in both government and business sometimes seem to take long time. Poles often take their time to \_\_\_\_\_ issues thoroughly and are unlikely to proceed unless they can reach a firm \_\_\_\_\_.

**G What do you know about the Polish language? What family of languages does it belong to?**

**H Try to read the most famous Polish tongue twister**

W Strzebrzeszynie chrząszcz brzmi w trzcinie. /vuh shchebsheshinyeh kshanshch bshmee vuh tshchynyeh/.

**Which tongue twisters are typical for your native languages?**

## **2 Case studies**

### **2.1**

Statistics show that Poland is one of the most corrupted countries in the European Union. But what is fraud or corruption? Is it the headline news of large corporate bosses finding means of funneling cash through transactions with other entities often through other countries? Or does it include the grey market economy where people do not work officially not paying taxes and, where possible, claiming social security benefits? Does this also include employees taking advantage of their workplace, such as taking stationary for private purposes, surfing the Internet for cheap vacations during work and using the office phone for private telephone calls?

**Tasks:**

- **Discuss the questions asked in the paragraph above and try to answer them.**
- **Does corruption exist in your home country?**
- **What do you know about the *Corruption Perceptions Index* and its latest results?**

### **2.2**

Here is a list of a few situations where fraud or corruption have been identified.

Poland has a grey market of over 24 percent. It is the second poorest country in the EU when measured by the GDP per capita. Out of 250 or so regions in the EU, Poland's 16 include six of the 10 poorest. Therefore the income earned in many parts of Poland is at the minimum level of zł.850 per month or zł.5 per hour.

Taxation of 19 percent starts at a quarter of this monthly figure. In addition, ZUS (social security) of about 23 percent is also deducted from the employee's salary with the employer also paying an additional amount of about 23 percent. There is no gradual introduction of taxes and social security. It hits people with the first pay packet. Therefore many people do everything possible to evade paying personal income tax and social security. The choice is

simple for this class: feed the family or pay taxes. The grey market will hardly be eliminated because rewarding a helping hand cannot economically be included in the tax system and when the phenomenon turns into full-time job or help is given on a regular paid basis, it causes losses in the national economy.

### **Tasks:**

- **Explain what GDP is.**
- **What is GDP in your home countries?**
- **How important was GDP for the countries entering the EU in 2004?**
- **Discuss taxation in your home countries.**

## **2.3**

**Read the following proposal to rectify the current situation in Poland. Say if the suggested solution is acceptable.**

The poorest people should be taken out of the tax system so that basic living is tax- and ZUS-free. There should also be a gradual introduction to income taxes and social security as income increases. These policies will help to reduce unemployment in Poland in the future.

## **3 Intercultural tests**

### **3.1**

**Say if the following statements are true or false about Polish people participating in meetings:**

When arriving at a meeting, Polish people shake hands. **YES/NO**

Some people exchange embraces or even a kiss during a greeting. **YES/NO**

This indicates familiarity rather than love. **YES/NO**

A kissed greeting is not only a delicate touch of cheeks. **YES/NO**

### **3.2**

**It is necessary to have information about addressing people in Polish culture.**

If you are not familiar with Poles, call them Pan (Mr) or Pani (Ms). **YES/NO**

Dropping the Mr or Ms and using only such titles as Director, President, or professions (Waiter, Driver, Cashier) is taken as impolite behaviour. **YES/NO**

Superiors do not have to be addressed "proszę pana" or "proszę pani", **YES/NO**

or by their title: "panie doktorze", "pani doktor", "panie dyrektorze" etc.

*Bruderszaft* is something like a fraternal toast.

YES/NO

### 3.3

**Read the explanation of what *bruderszaft* means. Do you have similar toasts in your cultures?**

It should not be declined as this could be taken as an offence. Relations between people who have taken part in this ceremony turn from official to personal. From then on first names can be used, in Polish "przejsć na ty" ("ty" being the informal "you" -being on first-name terms). *Bruderszaft* is accomplished in the following way: two people simultaneously raise a toast, after which they interlock arms and down their drinks. The last part is an exchange of kisses and a "Call me Marek," - "Call me Piotr."

### 3.4

**This is a short description of Polish eating habits. Which food mentioned below is considered to be the Polish national dish?**

If in France one cannot count all the types of cheese, in Poland the same applies to sausages and cold cuts. Recently barbecues have become highly fashionable with the meat-eating Poles. Special occasions, such as the visit of a guest from abroad, however, demand the preparation of more complicated and rarer dishes. To stay in Poland and not try bigos made of cabbage is like being in Paris and not seeing the Eiffel Tower. Bigos was once a special hunters' dish, served at the end of a long day. During a visit to the mountains it is recommended to try *oscypek* - ewe's-milk cheese. It is not found in any other place in the world and is in the shape of a roll with pointed ends. As the mountain people themselves make it, apart from its quality, care is also taken with its aesthetics - they are imprinted with attractive designs.

### 3.5

Poles are convinced that they are an exceptionally hospitable nation and like to be reassured of this. There are two Polish proverbs related to this: "A guest in the home, God in the home" and "Get into debt, but do it in style."

**What is the explanation of these two proverbs?**

### 3.6

**Do you recognize the place in the picture? What do you know about it?**



## REVISION

### TEST YOURSELF

#### Say if the following statements are true or false

- It is common to shake hands the first time you meet a Polish business partner.
- When greeting people in the UK or the US you shouldn't use first names, but wait until they call you by your first name and then you can do the same.
- German managers don't have a strong sense of authority.
- In French business correspondence the language is very formal
- Americans usually put the shareholder first and are ready to sacrifice individuals in order to gain profit.
- People often nod their head for NO in Bulgaria.
- When there is a queue in Russia, it is normal for a foreign businessperson to go to the front.
- It is quite strange to go out to eat after 10 p.m. in Spain.
- The Chinese say their surname before their first name.
- In Italy, England and France market logic is employed in hiring new managers while in Germany and Spain local managers with more technical training are preferred.
- You shouldn't talk about business at a meal in China.
- In Scandinavia people often work additional hours and willingly take work home.
- The Japanese aren't fond of humour in seminars.
- Older managers in Poland hold business qualifications rather than technical degrees.
- In Brazil the personal attitude to business relationship needs to be emphasized.
- Talking with one's hands in his/her pockets is considered very impolite in Liechtenstein.
- In Japan it is common to show concentration and attentiveness in public by closing the eyes and nodding the head up and down slightly. Nodding tends to mean "yes, we have understood you" rather than "yes, we welcome your proposal".
- In East Asia group harmony, long-term relationships, loyalty and company reputation are the core corporate values.

- ❑ Americans appear to be less exuberant than their Polish colleagues.
- ❑ In Asian countries it is rude to look people in the eyes.
- ❑ In Italy it is expected for businessmen to hug each other when being introduced.
- ❑ When Arabs receive a gift, it is a custom to open it in front of the giver.
- ❑ The French think that a good manager allows staff to work alone with little control.
- ❑ In North America much business is done over the phone while in Poland there is preference for doing business face to face.
- ❑ A traditional greeting in China is "Have you eaten?".
- ❑ You are discouraged to use self-effacing humour during your public speaking engagement in Australia.
- ❑ You shouldn't give a Russian six flowers because it's unlucky.
- ❑ Corporate hospitality - for example, a night at the theatre - is more common than gift-giving in British business life.
- ❑ Denmark is more male-dominated than Japan.
- ❑ In north European and Anglo societies people see that conflicts in a company can be destructive and rather something to be avoided.
- ❑ In Sweden managers are hardly ever women.
- ❑ Mexicans have always been taught not to do business with anyone but friends.
- ❑ In Germany people don't make a clear distinction between personal and business relationships.
- ❑ In Saudi Arabia it is impolite to refuse a cup of coffee.
- ❑ Most Americans believe that respect depends on family background.
- ❑ In Spain a woman named Helena Lopez who married a man named Hector Portillo would be known as Helena Lopez de Portillo.
- ❑ In China the least senior person generally enters the meeting room first.
- ❑ Europeans from France, Belgium and Denmark enjoy jokes that involve making light of topics that make people feel anxious, such as death, illness and marriage.
- ❑ In Ukraine all businesses are closed between 11:00 a.m. and noon for staff shopping escapades.

- ❑ During presentations Japanese business executives don't expect separate handouts, prepared for different people, by job function.
- ❑ When you visit someone's house in Poland you may be asked to take your shoes off.
- ❑ British audiences don't like to participate as audience members and they especially do not want to have to react or respond at all during the first ten minutes of a presentation.
- ❑ In France giving a gift with your company logo is seen as impersonal and in bad taste.
- ❑ English managers base staff reductions on the performance-to-salary ratio while their German peers would favour discharging young managers who could find jobs more easily.
- ❑ You may feel free to cross your legs in the Middle East.
- ❑ In western Europe avoid giving your hostess red roses as they have romantic implications.
- ❑ In Lithuania it is welcome to offer a one-year compulsory sabbatical for top management every five years with remuneration reduced by a half.
- ❑ A Greek business lunch will tend to be a rather short attraction.
- ❑ Arguments are always emotional and direct and there are sudden changes of viewpoint in business meetings in Poland.
- ❑ In Germany you should use your boss's first name because it's polite. When someone gives you a present in Japan, you should open it immediately.
- ❑ American audience during a presentation expects jokes, modernity, logic, slogans, informality and a hard sell.
- ❑ The numbers 6, 8 and 9 are considered lucky in China. Therefore, these three digits are firm favourites when choosing phone numbers, car registration numbers and room numbers.
- ❑ In the Arab sphere people stand closer than in Europe: one metre or nearer.
- ❑ It is considered professional to deviate from the meeting agenda in Switzerland.
- ❑ People from The Republic of Ireland, the UK, Australia and New Zealand express a strong preference for jokes involving word plays.
- ❑ In pre-negotiation socializing respect the Russians' need for initial formality.
- ❑ French managers base promotion on seniority or group loyalty criteria.
- ❑ If you hear whistles at your public speaking program in Poland, you better run because it is a signal of disapproval.

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