

NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

BRITISH KNOWLEDGE WORKERS IN A
NORWEGIAN WORKING ENVIRONMENT

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KRISTIANE NOTØY RØDLAND
CHARLOTTE VORKINN

SUPERVISOR:

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANNE KARI BJØRGE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of Norway's main industries is oil and gas, which has an international character. In addition, within this sector there is a greater demand for knowledge workers as opposed to traditional workers. To date, there is a lack of research and literature directly comparing Norway to Britain with respect to intercultural communication. Therefore, we wish to map potential barriers regarding culture and communication in order to fill this gap. Thus, the following research question was proposed:

What are the main cultural and communication challenges perceived by British knowledge workers with regard to the Norwegian working environment?

The research question was answered through conducting 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews with British knowledge workers in eight different companies. The Norwegian working environment is assessed through a British perspective. As this approach is of a qualitative nature without hypotheses or a probability sample, we are not able to draw statistical conclusions or generalize our findings. However, we aim to encourage further research within various fields as a result of our interpretation of our findings.

One of our most significant findings could be that the Law of Jante is underestimated with regard to the GLOBE cultural dimensions. The degree to which the "law" is rooted in Norwegian culture may not necessarily be revolutionary, but the scope of its effect on office culture in a multicultural context is of interest. Aspects of the Law of Jante could affect a Norwegian's desire for feedback, conflict aversion, how ideas are shared, and who should take responsibility. This might influence the manner in which British and Norwegians communicate in the working environment. Another finding concerns the importance of the role of English as a Lingua Franca and the average English proficiency of Norwegians, as these aspects may pose challenges for a Briton attempting to learn Norwegian.

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Charlotte Vorkinn

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
RESEARCH QUESTION	3
PURPOSE OF STUDY	4
LITERATURE REVIEW	5
COMMUNICATION	5
<i>What is Communication?</i>	6
The Communication Process	6
Information versus Communication	8
<i>Organizational Communication</i>	8
Internal and Interpersonal Organizational Communication.....	9
Effective Communication.....	10
One-Way versus Two-Way Communication	11
<i>Communication Models</i>	12
The Media Richness Model	12
The Social Information Processing Model.....	13
The Dual-Capacity Model.....	14
Perrow’s Model of Technology and Structure	14
The Impact of Communication Technology In Organizations	15
<i>Communication in teams</i>	16
<i>Language is Power</i>	16
English in International Business.....	17
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION	19
CULTURE	20
<i>Cultural Dimensions</i>	22
<i>GLOBE Project</i>	23
<i>Critique of GLOBE</i>	27
<i>Norway</i>	27
Dimensions	28
<i>Britain</i>	32
KNOWLEDGE WORKERS	33
<i>Knowledge Workers and Knowledge Work</i>	33
<i>Managing Knowledge Workers</i>	34
<i>Use of Technology</i>	36
CONCLUSION.....	38
METHODOLOGY.....	39
<i>Research Design</i>	39
<i>Research Approach</i>	40
<i>Research Method</i>	41
<i>Research Strategy</i>	42
Primary Data.....	42
Secondary Data.....	44
DATA COLLECTION	45
<i>Selection Criteria</i>	45
Assumptions	46
<i>Interview Preparations</i>	46
Information Sheet.....	46

Consent Form	47
Interview Guide	47
Approach	48
<i>The Interview</i>	48
Locations.....	48
Recordings	49
Observations.....	49
DATA ANALYSIS	50
<i>Transcriptions</i>	50
<i>Analysis</i>	51
EVALUATION OF METHOD	51
<i>Researcher Bias</i>	51
<i>Validity</i>	52
<i>Reliability</i>	53
<i>Ethics</i>	54
Moral Responsibility	54
Interview Relationship	54
CONCLUSION.....	56
FINDINGS	57
GENERAL INFORMATION	57
MOTIVATION	58
MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONFLICTS.....	59
<i>Misunderstandings</i>	59
<i>Conflicts</i>	62
COMMUNICATION	63
<i>Channels</i>	63
<i>Level of Formality</i>	64
<i>Socializing at the Office</i>	65
LANGUAGE	66
SOCIALIZING	67
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE.....	68
RESPONDENT RECOMMENDATIONS	70
CONCLUSION.....	71
DISCUSSION.....	72
MOTIVATION	73
GLOBE DIMENSIONS.....	74
<i>Similarities</i>	75
<i>Discrepancies</i>	77
Collectivism I	77
Collectivism II.....	77
Humane Orientation	78
Assertiveness.....	78
Performance Orientation.....	79
COMMUNICATION	80
<i>Formal Communication</i>	80
Face-to-Face Communication	81
Other Media.....	82
<i>Informal Communication</i>	83
LANGUAGE	84
<i>Professional Language</i>	84
<i>Learning Norwegian</i>	85
<i>Office Language</i>	86

<i>Common Linguistic Challenges</i>	87
<i>Advantages of Learning Norwegian</i>	87
HUMOR.....	88
CONCLUSION	90
LIMITATIONS.....	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY	I
APPENDIX	VIII
APPENDIX 1: GLOBE CLUSTERS.....	VIII
APPENDIX 2: TRANSLATED QUOTES.....	IX
APPENDIX 3: SOCIAL INFORMATION PROCESSING MODEL.....	X
APPENDIX 4: CULTURAL DIMENSIONS.....	XI
APPENDIX 5: INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESPONDENTS.....	XV
APPENDIX 6: CONSENT FORM.....	XVI
APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	XVII
APPENDIX 8: INFORMANT OVERVIEW.....	XXI
APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW SYMBOL KEY.....	XXII

LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND CHARTS

Figures

Figure 1: Communication Process (Jandt, 2010), p. 8.

Figure 2: Four Country Clusters (Harzing & Pudelko, 2013), p. 19.

Figure 3: Knowledge Worker Categories (Davenport, 2014), p. 37.

Figure 4: Social Information Processing Model (Miller, 2009), p. x.

Tables

Table 1: Media Richness Model (Miller, 2009), p. 13.

Table 2: Perrow's Model of Technology and Structure (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014), p. 15.

Table 3: Layers of Language (Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 2014), p. 17.

Table 4: GLOBE Cultural Dimensions Norway Summarized (Warner-Söderholm, 2010), p. 28.

Table 5: GLOBE Cultural Dimensions Britain Summarized (Chhockar, Brodbeck & House, 2009), p. 32.

Table 6: Norway versus Britain GLOBE Scores (Compared Table 4 and 5), p. 76.

Charts

Chart 1: Cultural Dimensions – Norway, p. 28.

Chart 2: Cultural Dimensions – Britain, p. 32.

INTRODUCTION

Today's knowledge based economy or 'information society,' in combination with increasing work migration has led us, the writers, to recognize the importance and implications of a multicultural working environment. There is an increased amount of knowledge-driven organizations, thus the demand for knowledge workers evolves accordingly.

In general, Norway has an abundance of foreign labor residing within its borders. However, there is a tendency for Norway to attract low-skilled workers rather than the necessary knowledge workers (Bjørnstad, et al., 2010). Norway's' main industries or sectors are petroleum, marine, maritime, and mineral research. Within these sectors there is a large demand for knowledge workers such as engineers and economists in order to optimize the exploitation of these resources. All these industries face similar challenges within recruiting, technology, management, environment, and internationalization (Forskningsradet.no, 2013). Seeing that the oil and gas sector is one of Norway's main industries, as well as being highly international both in terms of production (e.g. foreign workers) and distribution, we considered this to be a highly relevant and suitable context for our data collection. The reason for focusing on this industry is due to its relevance and Norway's competitive advantage. According to the Norwegian government, Norway comes short in the international competition of attracting talent (Regjeringen.no, 2007). For instance, the demand for engineers is larger than what Norway is currently able to supply on its own. Hence, oil and gas companies are highly dependent on foreign engineers, especially those with experience (Halvorsen, 2014).

We have decided to focus solely on foreign knowledge workers within the Norwegian oil and gas industry holding a bachelor's degree or higher, for example engineers and geologists. We interpret knowledge workers as those whose main asset is intangible; the tasks are at times abstract and typically "non-routine" problem solving. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) has certain requirements in order to consider an individual as a skilled worker. This entails someone who has "completed vocational training, completed higher education or have special qualifications" (UDI.no, 2014). However, we seek those who have a higher educational background rather than being trained through experience. Thus, our

interpretation of this is that a knowledge worker can be a skilled worker, however, a skilled worker cannot be a knowledge worker.

We assume international workers can be divided into roughly two groups: expatriates and self-initiated internationals. The term expatriate could be defined as an individual working in a foreign subsidiary of a multinational enterprise for a pre-defined period of time (Reiche & Harzing, 2011). We choose to define self-initiated internationals as individuals self-initiating a relocation to a new country of employment on a local contract without a specified return date and potentially accompanied by their family. Throughout this thesis, we will refer to these as *internationals*. This study assesses internationals due to our communication focus and our assumption regarding their increased motivation for learning Norwegian. In addition, as there is no clear term to differ between “expatriates” and other foreign knowledge workers, this could imply there is a lack of research on this group in Norway.

There is a great deal of literature on cross-cultural adjustment. The U-curve of cross-cultural adjustment stresses four stages that one is likely to experience when moving to a new country. The “Honeymoon” stage will last for approximately three months until the “Cultural shock” stage occurs. This phase will last for half a year before reaching the Adjustment stage. Finally, the Mastery stage will appear after two or three years (Stewart Black & Mendenhall, 1991).

The majority of engineers migrating to Norway stem from Sweden, Great Britain, and Germany, respectively (Rugtveit, 2013). These are all countries with a western culture, both regarding national and corporate cultures. According to the GLOBE Project, the Nordic countries are all placed within the same category due to cultural similarities (See Appendix 1) (Grove, 2005). Seeing as though Norway is not included in the initial study, it will not be found in this cluster. However, we have received access to a study from Gillian Warner-Söderholm (2010), which applies the GLOBE methodology in order to assess the Norwegian national culture. As Sweden and Norway are assumed to be clustered together in her study, we have excluded Sweden from our research.

Due to English being the main language of communication in an international business context we assume there will be a lower language barrier for Britons as opposed to Germans. As a result of this, our focus is solely on Britons in Norway. On the one hand, seeing as though

English is not the native language in Norway, the British employee could find it difficult to enter into a conversation when Norwegians talk amongst themselves. On the other hand, most Norwegians speak English quite well and it is not uncommon to have English as a corporate language. Due to this, we believe that Britons will have lower language barriers than for example a German. However, the importance of a language barrier itself and its influence on well-being, may therefore be underestimated.

Considering Aberdeen is one of the “oil capitals” of the world, we assume that a great deal of the internationals in Norway stem from here, rather than solely England. Thus, Britain consisting of England, Scotland, Northern-Ireland and Wales, is deemed most applicable. There is a lack of qualitative literature on Britain with regard to culture, therefore the qualitative analysis of Britain will be based solely on England.

Cultural differences, both national and organizational, may play a role in the attractiveness of the Norwegian labor market. Organizations vary with regard to internal norms, values, and leadership. For example, in accordance to theory, knowledge workers would prefer more autonomy than unskilled workers, but does the level of autonomy differ between national cultures, or is it solely contingent on the profession? Culture affects the manner in which one communicates. In other words, cultural differences in formality and other aspects are contingent of the culture from which one stems. Communication influences the motivation and well-being of an individual at both the workplace and on a social scale. In short, being able to communicate properly gives the individual a sense of inclusion in the office as well as limiting misunderstandings. This leads us to the following research question.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the main cultural and communication challenges perceived by British knowledge workers with regard to the Norwegian working environment?

In addition, we have two supplementary questions in order to thoroughly answer the research question.

- What comparisons can be made to cultural dimensions and are there any discrepancies to the theory?
- To what extent does the role of English as Lingua Franca affect how and to which degree Britons learn Norwegian?

PURPOSE OF STUDY

A limited amount of research has been conducted within this specific area of intercultural communication. Therefore, focusing on British knowledge workers' perception of the Norwegian workplace will provide additional insight from a new perspective to supplement existing literature. The aim of our study is to provide nuances that potentially have a negative impact on certain aspects of the British-Norwegian cultural relationship. There are research papers and articles concerning relationships between other nations with respect to intercultural communication, but these do not compare Britain and Norway directly. Our research is based on both primary and secondary data. We hope the results of this thesis will contribute to create an extended awareness for managers within international human resource management.

As we are aware, national culture affects organizational culture and the organizational culture affects the manner in which individuals communicate. However, if there are several national cultures within an organization, these must not be ignored. In the following chapter we will discuss relevant theories and literature needed to answer the research question. Then we will assess the methodology used to approach the question at hand, after which we will present our findings and discussion. Finally, we will provide a conclusion in addition to presenting recommendations for future research and stress the limitations of our research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, we will discuss the theory surrounding intercultural communication, as it will assist in helping us move forward with our research process and finally being able to discuss and draw conclusions. The literature review is structured in the following way. First, we shed light on communication theory, in order to introduce organizational communication. Next, we will present intercultural communication as well as evaluating cultural dimensions, which are relevant for further discussion. Finally, we will put forward some literature regarding knowledge workers.

COMMUNICATION

The English word “communication” is descended from the Latin word ‘communicare,’ which means to impart, participate, share or make common (Bisen & Priya, 2014). Communication is a complex concept, but Arnulf & Brønn (2014) list three general assumptions of communication: 1) It is more of a process than a condition; 2) it happens between people, connecting them in time and space; 3) contains an object or content, which is made common.

Due to the enormous amount of communication theories, explaining or even just mentioning all of these is a major task. In general, we can sort these theories into four levels: (1) individual level, (2) group level, (3) organizational level, and (4) societal level (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014). The communication interest in this paper is on the organizational level, hence the theories we apply concern organizational communication. However, our focus is limited to communication within an organization, which is internal interpersonal communication. Hence, making associations to individual and group level communication inevitable. Within organizational communication there are numerous theories. However, we have made a selection of theories we believe to have relevance for our research.

This section begins with a basic overview of communication in general, before moving on to organizational communication, including what characterizes effective communication and by which means organizational members communicate. Finally, we will highlight the role of language and the prominence of the English language in an international setting.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

According to Nordquist (2015) communication is the process of sending and receiving messages through verbal and nonverbal means: speech, writing, signs, signals, or behavior.

Bisen & Priya (2014) provide a more detailed definition, stating that communication is “the interchange of thought or information between two or more persons to bring about mutual understanding and desired action. It is the information exchange by words or symbols. It is the exchange of facts, ideas and viewpoints which bring about commonness of interest, purpose and efforts” (p. 2).

We deem these definitions as the most applicable for our research and recognize that communication can be verbal and nonverbal, written and oral. Regardless of the communication situation, communication has some basic components. These include a context, a sender or a source, a message, noise, a channel and a receiver. We will elaborate upon these in the next section called “the communication process.”

The ability to communicate by using words is what separates human beings from other animals. This ability enables us to learn from the past, and learn from the experiences of others. Nordquist (2015) calls this human communication and states that it occurs on three levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal and public. Intrapersonal communication is communicating with yourself through activities such as processing of thoughts, listening, personal decision making, and determining of self-concept. Interpersonal communication is communication between two or more individuals in face-to-face or mediated conversations, small group discussions and interviews. Erlien (2006) states that interpersonal communication serves as four functions: a social function, an expressive function, an information function, and as a control function. Public communication refers to a speaker sending a message to an audience. This may be direct, such as a face-to-face speech, or indirect such as a message passed on over television.

The Communication Process

The transmission of a sender’s ideas to the receiver and the receiver’s feedback or reaction to the sender constitutes the communication cycle (Bisen & Priya, 2014). We will now describe the ten components of the communication process as stated by Jandt (2010). This includes a

source, encoding, a message, a channel, noise, a receiver, decoding, receiver response, feedback, and context.

The process begins as a person has an idea he or she wants to communicate. This person is the source or sender. Next step is encoding, which is the process of where the source formulates an idea by means of a symbol. The symbols vary, and you can encode thoughts into words or unto non-spoken symbols. The message then, is the resulting object of the encoded thought. A message is a use of symbol or symbols (written, spoken or nonverbal) that the recipient interprets as having been created intentionally (Modaff, DeWine & Butler, 2012).

Next, this message is transmitted through a channel or medium. However, there can be noise that distorts the signals intended to reach the receiver. The noise can be external, internal, or “semantic”. External noise is for instance sights, sounds and other stimuli drawing one’s attention away from the message. Internal noise is your thoughts and feelings (like being tired or being hungry) that may interfere with the message, by for instance making you pay less attention to it. “Semantic noise” refers to how one can be distracted by alternative meanings of the sender’s words, sentences and symbols.

After being transmitted through a channel, with or without noise, the message reaches the receiver. The receiver may be intended or unintended and will start decoding the message by assigning meaning to the symbols received. Anything the receiver does (doing nothing or taking some action) after having attended to and decoded the message is called receiver response. This may or may not be the action desired by the source. Feedback concerns receiver response, and the sender assigns meaning to this response. Finally, there is the component of context. Context is the environment in which the communication takes place and helps define the communication (Jandt, 2010).

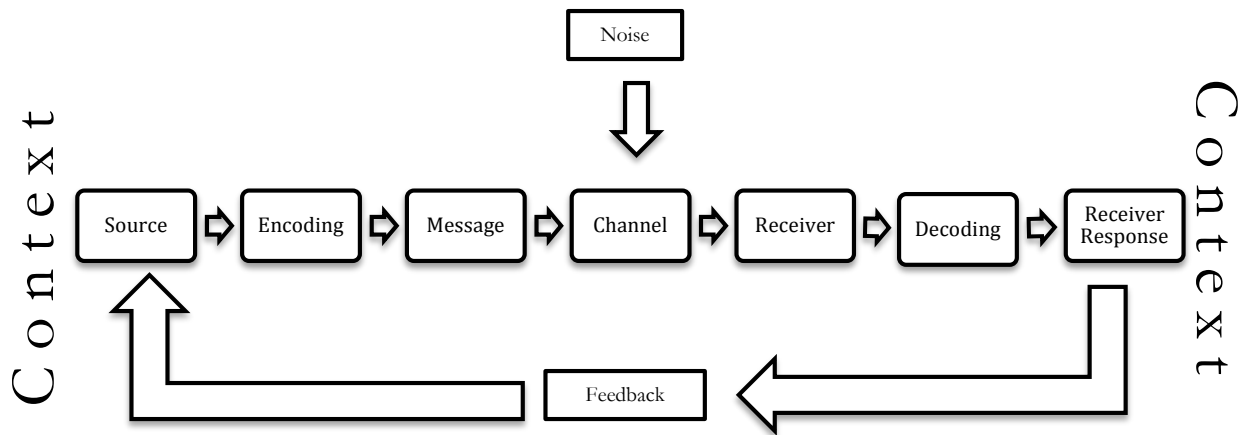


Figure 1: Communication Process (Jandt, 2010)

Information versus Communication

Information and communication may be perceived as overlapping concepts, but there is a profound difference. Information is the content being transferred in the communication process between people. As stated in Arnulf & Brønn (2014), our language, experiences, skills and interests influence what we consider to be information. This implies that what is significant or is understood by individuals could differ greatly. Also, a great deal of information requires specific skills in order to be interpreted and understood, for instance statistics and coordinates on a map. In other words, the information is comprehended only by those capable of interpreting it. The information in itself has no robust and unambiguous meaning. An implication of this is that even though the sender communicates a message, this does not imply that it is understood and makes sense to the receiver.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Communication plays an important part in the coordination of organizations and managing the need for coordination and communication in the right way may contribute to the effectiveness of the organization, potentially in a number of ways (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014). One way of increasing effectiveness is by increasing motivation. After all, there is no shortage of research supporting the fact that motivated employees are more productive than those who lack motivation, and productive employees will have an impact of the effectiveness of an organization. We assume communication can impact motivation, and vice versa.

An organization can take many forms, but altogether it is a group of people working together towards a common goal. The English word organization stems from the Greek word *organon*, which means “instrument” or “tool”. This tool is created and sustained through communication. Seeing that an organization consists of individuals, and that it is impossible to organize anything without communicating together, we can say that organization and communication are interrelated (Modaff, DeWine & Butler, 2012).

Communication is what holds an organization together, whatever its business or its size (Bisen & Priya, 2014). Modaff, DeWine & Butler (2012) define organizational communication as “the process of creating, exchanging and interpreting (correctly or incorrectly), and storing messages within a system of human interrelationships” (p. 2). Communication within organizations takes place between individuals and in groups. Diversity, including various ethnicities and age groups, constantly changing circumstances, as well as the use of digital media for communication, characterizes organizations today. This makes organizational communication highly complicated (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014).

According to Bisen & Priya (2014), communication serves to instruct, integrate, inform, evaluate, direct, teach, influence, build image, and to conduct employee orientation. Communication is important in the phase of employee orientation and integration. As a new employee enters the organization he or she will be unfamiliar with the organization’s culture, objectives, policies, rules, regulations and procedures. Communication is critical to make people acquainted with these aspects as well as with their co-employees and superiors.

Internal and Interpersonal Organizational Communication

As already mentioned, our focus concerns only internal, and not external organizational communication. When people within the organization communicate with each other, this is internal communication. They communicate in order to work as a team and realize common goals. Erlien (2006) defines internal communication as “the information flow and the exchange of ideas and viewpoints between managers and employees, as well as the communication between individuals and groups at different levels and in various units or parts of the organization” (p. 17) [See Appendix 2 for translation].

External communication occurs when people in the organization communicate with anyone outside the organization. These people may be clients or customers, dealers or distributors, media, governments, or the general public (Bisen & Priya, 2014). An organization depends upon good internal communication in order to succeed with their external communication (Erlie, 2006). When referring to organizational communication from now on, it is the internal communication we have in mind.

From a physiological view, internal communication is supposed to support motivation, feedback, interaction and control (Erlie, 2006). As we interpret it, this communication can be formal and planned, as well as informal and unplanned, face-to-face and written. Examples of internal communication are reports, memos, office order, flyers, video conferencing, meetings, and e-mails, as well as small talk in the hallway or by the coffee machine.

Internal communication is a management's responsibility, and it is a crucial one. Employees are in need of communication in the sense that they are dependent on receiving (and providing) information and facts in order to perform their work, but there are also emotional aspects, which is linked to motivation. Appropriate internal communication is also crucial during restructuring and changes, and it is a mean of creating and maintaining an organizational culture (Erlie, 2006). From a legal standpoint, a certain threshold of formal internal communication is also required. An example of this is The Working Environment Act in Norway (Arbeidsmiljøloven). However, an elaboration on this is beyond the scope of this paper.

Effective Communication

New forms of communication technology, meaning new channels of communication (e.g. digital media), have enabled people to deliver a message in faster and more efficient ways. Even though this may call for a more efficient way of informing people, it is not necessarily effective communication. We might believe that we have fulfilled our job in the communication process as soon as we have delivered our message (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014), but simply assuming that the other part has received and understood the message in the right way can be fatal.

According to Arnulf and Brønn (2014), effective communication involves knowing who to contact, how to get their attention, how to create the right kind of mutual sharing, and eventually how to achieve the intended consequences while avoiding misunderstandings, conflicts and ethical missteps. However, Modaff, DeWine and Butler (2012) state that misunderstandings are unavoidable in organizational communication, partly due to levels of hierarchy, struggles for power, opposing goals, gender and cultural differences, use of technology, control mechanisms and reward systems.

Modaff, DeWine and Butler's (2012) model of the Communicative Organization emphasize misunderstandings, and claim that they occur due to conflict in values, lack of information, and strategic misinterpretations. The latter refers to individuals who actually want to misunderstand the message purposely because it benefits them somehow. The essence of the model concerns the encouragement to anticipate misunderstandings and view them as a source of positive outcomes. For instance, misunderstandings can be a foundation for learning.

One-Way versus Two-Way Communication

The literature recognizes two perspectives of communication. The first one is communication as transfer. This perspective stresses the role of persuasion and one-way communication. According to this view, the communication is successful as soon as the message has reached the receiver using as little time and resources as possible. Marketing communication as a discipline clearly illustrates the transfer perspective. It is also quite common to apply this kind of communication during change and crisis in an organization. For example, if a leader is sending mass messages; this use of one-way communication can be the source of several communication problems. (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014)

The second perspective is communication as sharing, enhancing the role of two-way communication and people having equal impact on each other in the communication process. The sharing perspective enhances a continuous learning process. Who is being the sender and who is being the receiver is alternating. The aim of the communication is that the respondents should end up having a more or less common understanding of the message. This two-way communication is concerned with interpretation and understanding, and even if the

communication has failed in the sense that common understanding has not been achieved, it is still regarded as communication. (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014)

Two-way communication and strategic management are the two most important factors needed in order to achieve effective organizational communication (Erlie, 2006). Mutual learning concerns sharing information in an environment with mutual trust and respect, thus strengthening or changing attitudes and behavior, in order to achieve results (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014).

COMMUNICATION MODELS

Miller (2009) lists three models of communication media choice in organizations:

1. The Media Richness Model
2. The Social Information Processing Model
3. The Dual-Capacity Model.

In addition, we include the model of Technology and Structure by Perrow (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014).

The Media Richness Model

The initial model within communication media choice was the Media Richness model, and it has contributed to the research surrounding the remaining two models. The Media Richness model is a framework for understanding the choices people make regarding communication media use in an organization. What makes an employee choose one communication medium over another for a particular task?

Media richness theorists combine the notion of task ambiguity with the notion of media richness (stating that a medium can be rich or lean in its information-carrying capacity) and argue that people will choose media that matches the ambiguity of the message. Ambiguity refers to the existence of conflicting and multiple interpretations of a case. Four criteria have been used to distinguish to which degree the media is rich or lean: (1) the availability of instant feedback, (2) the use of multiple cues, (3) the use of natural language, and (4) the personal focus of the medium. If the medium has all or many of these characteristics, then it is a rich

medium. Channels having none or few of these are called lean media. When dealing with highly ambiguous tasks, one will choose to use a rich communication medium (for instance face-to-face interaction), while when dealing with an unambiguous task, one will opt for a lean medium. These effective media selection predictions are illustrated in Table 1.

	UNAMBIGUOUS TASK	AMBIGUOUS TASK
Rich Media	<p>Communication Failure</p> <p>Data glut. Rich media used for routine tasks. Excess cues cause confusion and surplus meaning.</p>	<p>Effective Communication</p> <p>Communication success because rich media match ambiguous tasks.</p>
Lean Media	<p>Effective Communication</p> <p>Communication Success because media low in richness match routine messages</p>	<p>Communication Failure</p> <p>Data starvation. Lean media used for ambiguous messages. Too few cues to capture message complexity.</p>

Table 1: The Media Richness Model (Miller, 2009)

However, according to Miller (2009), several studies have not found support for the model and even in studies generally supporting it, there are discrepancies. For instance, studies have shown that there is a lot of media use behavior which is not accounted for by a match between the ambiguity of the task and the richness of the channel, as well as it is quite clear that task ambiguity is not the only thing that matters, and that people may have another or several goals (e.g. maintaining a relationship) in addition to this when choosing communication channel. In order to more fully explain the usage of organizational communication technologies, alternative models have been put forward.

The Social Information Processing Model

This model states that the adoption of organizational technologies and the use of all organizational communication media depend on the social environment of the organization. The use of communication technology is a complex function of the objective characteristics of the task and media, past experience and knowledge, individual differences, and social information. The element of objective characteristics of task and media (which in fact are task ambiguity and media richness) is shown as influencing media use, thus this model can be seen

as an extension of the media richness theory. Several studies support the Social Information Processing model of media use, as they have found that communication patterns do have an influence on technology adoption. For an illustration of the model, please see Appendix 3.

The Dual-Capacity Model

This model of communication media choice in organizations postulates that communication media are not simply “rich” or “lean.” The Dual-Capacity model says that every organizational medium carries two kinds of messages through its data-carrying capacity and its symbol-carrying capacity. The choice of communication medium will depend on both of these capacities. A medium’s data-carrying capacity refers to what degree a medium is able to convey task-relevant data effectively and efficiently. In other words, how much information the medium can carry. This is equivalent to media richness in the first of these three models. A medium’s symbol-carrying capacity can be manifested in a number of ways. For instance, the medium can be more or less able to convey the values of an organization’s culture. A relevant example would be if a company has “daily interpersonal contact” as one of its core values, a very formal e-mail will not enable the sender or the source to personalize a message reflecting the personal atmosphere of the organizational culture, as opposed to an informal stop by the office for a talk. In this case, face-to-face communication has strong symbolic value, and may be the best way to communicate. In conclusion, this model indicates the importance of communication technologies as symbols and carriers of organizational values.

Miller (2009) states that organizational media choices probably are determined by a combination of all of the factors mentioned in these three models: task ambiguity, media richness, the social information provided by others in the organization, as well as the symbolic value of the medium.

Perrow’s Model of Technology and Structure

This framework distinguishes between the analyzability and variability of the tasks in order to determine the appropriate kind and amount of coordination and communication (For illustration see Table 2). Task variability refers to the number of exceptions a worker encounters during the day, while task analyzability refers to the degree of search activity required to solve a task or a problem (Provenmodels.com, 2015). Both dimensions stretch

from low to high, providing us with a two-by-two matrix. According to Perrow, all organizations belong in one of these quadrants. In short, in organizations where the tasks have few exceptions, and where employees know exactly what needs to be done, it is not necessary to have coordination mechanisms requiring extensive communication. In such cases, the task solution can be programmed and communication can be minimized. However, for organizations in the other end, the tasks are often ambiguous (as in research and development, non-routine organizations), and reducing the communication is not good as people may not know who has the information needed, and how to use the knowledge once they manage to get a hold of it (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014). Consequently, such organizations depend highly on interpersonal communication.

		Task Variety	
		Low	High
Task Analyzability	Low	Craftwork	Non-Routine Research
	High	Routine Manufacturing	Engineering Production

Table 2: Perrow's Model of Technology and Structure (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014)

The Impact of Communication Technology In Organizations

First of all, communication technology has an effect on content. Many communication media have the disadvantage that people miss out on cues (for instance vocal cues and nonverbal cues) that would have been available in face-to-face interactions. Second, there are effects on the patterns of communication. There is a tendency for new technologies to be used in addition, and not instead of, existing technologies. Thus, the amount of communication increases, and people may feel that there is an “information overload” and that they are “drowning” in material. Third, communication technology has an effect on organizational structure that is, how work is structured and how organizations are designed (Erlie, 2006). Today, communication technology allows people to work together across time and space, posing both opportunities and challenges.

Not only is communication technology itself increasingly being developed, but the role and the impact of the various media also change. An example of the latter is the use of e-mail. During the last decade, e-mails have moved on from being perceived as an informal way of communicating, on to playing an important, formal role in business. This may be linked to the need for documentation in an increasingly “paperless” society. Another example is the use of video-conferencing. Today, a virtual meeting is likely to be perceived as important as a physical face-to-face meeting.

COMMUNICATION IN TEAMS

In an organization we may find various types of teams, such as working teams, leader teams, and project teams. These teams vary with respect to the type of tasks they solve. Working teams tend to do routine work, whereas leader teams and project teams work on tasks of a more complex and innovative character. Seeing that these various kinds of teams work and solve tasks with differing levels of predictability, they will experience different communication challenges. In leader and project teams, where the tasks tend to vary and be quite unpredictable, members depend highly on mutual communication. The members’ varying perceptions and perspectives of the tasks, as well as how they plan to solve them, should be clear to everyone on the team in order to achieve success (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014).

LANGUAGE IS POWER

A great part of communication between humans, thus organizational members, requires the use of language. In an organizational sense, the term language is usually used as an umbrella term for the three layers presented in Table 3. These layers are interconnected, there will often be a combination of everyday language intermingled with ‘company speak’ and technical terminology. This combination can create barriers and miscommunication (Piekkari, Welch & Welch 2014).

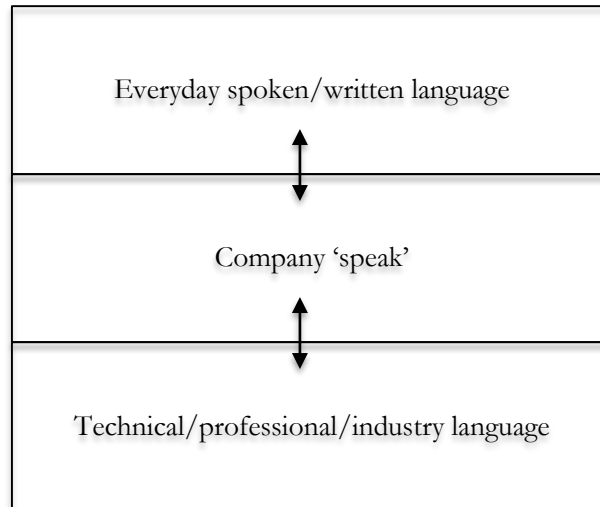


Table 3: Layers of Language (Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 2014)

In the sense of language and career path, Piekkari, Welch & Welch (2014), draw a parallel with the so-called glass ceiling; the invisible barrier preventing women in climbing into top positions. They use the terms *language ceiling* and *language wall* in order to refer to the invisible barrier that proficiency in a language may pose on careers. This ceiling slows or prevents vertical career opportunities (for instance becoming a manager), while the wall may stop people from horizontal career moves (for instance moving to another department or go on an international assignment). Women may face both language and gender-induced barriers in today's international business environment. However, the language barrier could be lowered due to the prominence and use of the English language.

English in International Business

Statistics regarding the numbers around the world on who speak English is unreliable, partly due to the difficulty of defining an "English speaker." However, almost a quarter of the total population on the globe can understand English and have at least some proficiency in it written and spoken. Approximately 5.7 percent of the world population has English as their first language, while approximately 12.14 percent speak Mandarin Chinese as their first language (Thehistoryofenglish.com, 2015). Despite this, most people would probably agree that English is the de facto main language of international business today. For instance, it is quite common to have English as the company language (especially in companies above a certain size and if it is a multinational) even though it is not necessarily the first language in either the parent or the host country. Thus, mastering English may be crucial for international knowledge workers.

Another example of the role of English in international business can be illustrated by the language spoken in meetings between two parties of different languages. It is quite common that it tends to be English.

The term English as Lingua Franca (ELF) refers to the use of English in communication between people having different first languages. We interpret ELF users to include both those who speak English as an additional language, and those who speak English as their first language. For example, if person A speaks English with person B who speaks English as an additional language, they are both users of ELF, regardless of English being person A's first language or not.

Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen (2013) focused on the concept and development of the term Business English as Lingua Franca (BELF). They argue that there is an increasing tendency for this abbreviation to rather refer to English as Business Lingua Franca, reflecting the domain of use rather than the type of English being used. According to them, grammatical correctness is not nearly as important for BELF speakers as the knowledge of their own specific field of expertise, involving a shared understanding of why, what, how and when to communicate. In today's global business environment, professional competence involves communication know-how as an integrated part of business know-how, and competence in BELF is necessary.

Harzing and Puldelko (2013) distinguish between four country clusters based on the level of English language skills and the importance of the local language in business worldwide (as illustrated in Figure 2). The clusters are Anglophone, Asian, Continental European and Nordic countries. Anglophone countries include the UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland, which have English as native language advantage. Asian countries (with some exceptions) are characterized by a relatively low level of English language skills, and local languages are becoming increasingly important worldwide (signalized by the arrow). Continental European countries include, among others, Germany, France, Italy and Spain. In this cluster, English language skills are reasonably high, and the importance of respective local language is declining (signalized by the arrow). Nordic countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Netherlands usually have excellent English language skills, and English

is extensively used for business purposes. The use of local languages outside these countries is not widespread, thus the importance of these languages worldwide is very low. It is crucial to note that these clusters are based solely on language, not on geography or culture. Considering the role of language is significant in a multicultural context, we must also discuss intercultural communication in general.

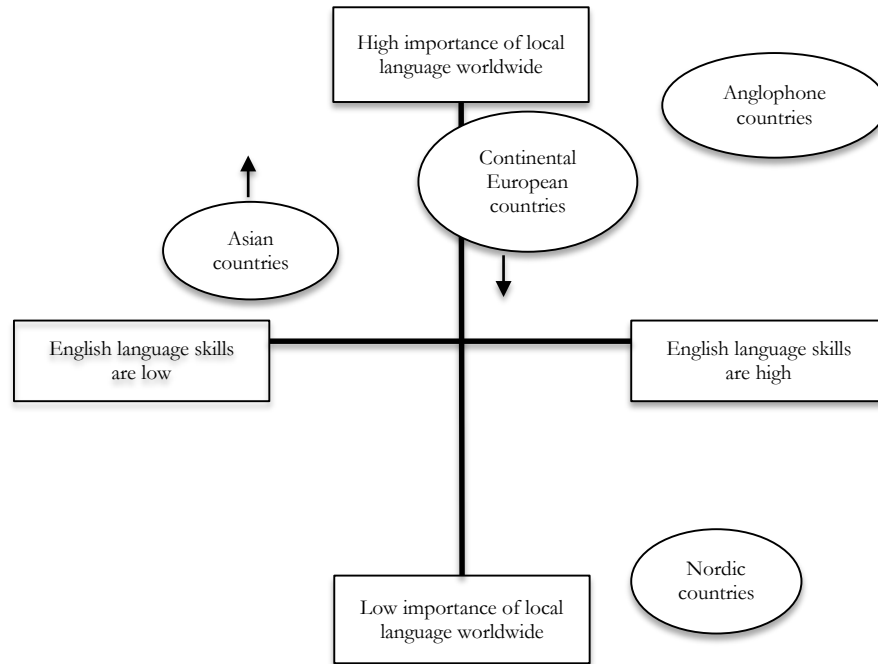


Figure 2: Four Country Clusters (Harzing and Pudelko, 2013)

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

As previously illustrated, the final component of the communication process is context (Jandt, 2010), which can be defined as “the environment in which the communication takes place and helps define the communication” (p. 43) (see Figure 1). In addition, Jandt (2010) further divides the various contexts into international, global, cross-cultural, and intercultural communication. Throughout this paper our focus will be on intercultural communication. Jandt (2010) states that this generally refers to face-to-face interactions between individuals of diverse cultures. Considering this paper focuses on the intra-organizational level and communication between colleagues stemming from different cultures, this description is the optimal fit for our research purposes in addition to the definition of communication mentioned earlier.

Warner-Søderholm focuses on Norway on both the intercultural and intracultural communication level. The differences within a single society or culture (intracultural) and the differences between two or more societies or cultures (intercultural) are discussed (Warner-Søderholm, 2010). We will attempt to identify any intercultural barriers on the intracultural level. That is, exploring communication barriers between people from different cultures working within the same company. Examples of this could be the formality in which they address superiors or subordinates, level of socializing with colleagues or how one gives feedback.

In order to make decisions, communicate policies and procedures, and to coordinate across units, organizations must process an array of information (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). How this information is collected, how it circulates, and what selection of information is shared with which people is contingent on the culture which the individual stems from. Preferences concerning hierarchy, formalization and participation are typical examples of culturally contingent aspects of an organization.

Based on LaRay Barna's (1997) we recognize the six most common intercultural communication barriers: Anxiety, assuming similarity instead of difference, ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudice, nonverbal misinterpretation, and language. Throughout this research, we will focus on language and how the British perceive the other differences based on their own personal experiences, meaning from a British point of view to the degree that is possible. Our research wishes to assess whether there exist any language or cultural barriers and if so, which are the most significant for individuals stemming from Britain working in Norway. Therefore, the manner in which we analyze cultural differences will be essential.

CULTURE

Throughout this thesis, we will use the terms cultures and societies as synonyms. Defining culture is somewhat difficult due to its complexity and the relevance of multiple definitions simultaneously. As previously mentioned, we assume national culture to affect organizational culture. Considering research regarding national culture is so clear and strong, we see it as applicable for our thesis. Thus, we first need to clarify what defines a national culture in order to illuminate aspects of organizational culture, as the latter is our area of focus.

- Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values (Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 86).
- Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes member of one group or category of people from another (Hofstede, 2001, p. 9).
- Culture is a way of life of a group of people, the configuration of all the more or less stereotyped patterns of learned behavior which are handed down from one generation to the next through means of language and imitations (Adler, 2002, p. 16).
- Culture is a set of parameters of collectives that differentiate the collectives from each other in meaningful ways. Culture is variously defined in terms of several commonly shared processes: shared ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting; shared meanings of identities; shared socially constructed environments; common ways in which technologies are used; and commonly experienced events including the history, language, and religion of their members (House et al., 2004, p. 15 and 57).

National culture consists of the values, beliefs, norms, and behavioral patterns of a national group (Leung et al., 2005) which is shaped by, amongst others, ecological factors, history, language, wars, and religions (Bik, 2010). For example, there are clear parallels between Confucian ethics and collectivism in China (Ralston et al., 1999). Culture might run over national borders, but it may also differ within borders.

There are parallels which can be drawn between national culture and organizational culture but they should not be used interchangeably. It is important to remember that cultural dimensions represent oversimplifications and continuously differ. Söderberg and Holden (2002) argue that there is a greater need for studies that acknowledge the need for more knowledge on the inter- and intra-organizational connections and identities not merely national cultures.

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

There are a number of theorists who have established generalizations of a population or group of people and labeled them “cultural dimensions.” Some of these theorists are Fons Trompenaars, Shalom H. Schwartz, Edward T. Hall, Geert Hofstede, and the more recent GLOBE project consisting of several researchers. For an overview of what we deem the most common cultural dimensions and their meaning, please see Appendix 4.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner focused on explaining cultural diversity in a business setting by using seven dimensions: Universalism vs. Particularism, Individualism vs. Communitarianism, Neutral vs. Affective, Specific vs. Diffuse, Achievement vs. Ascription, Sequential vs. Synchronic, and Internal vs. External Control (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Hofstede (2001) argues that the questionnaire designed by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner only measures a variation of inter-correlated norms of individualism. In fact, the two researchers admit that the number of independent dimensions supported by their data is in fact debatable (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Schwartz’s dimensions have been critiqued for assessing values rather than the practices or behaviors of a nation (Bik, 2010). The respondents needed to reflect on their values which could lead to them choosing a more utopian answer, which could be inaccurate and may not be reflected in their behavior (Dahl, Not Dated, p. 19). Therefore, Conservatism (Embeddedness) vs. Autonomy (Intellectual and Affective), Hierarchy vs. Egalitarianism, and Mastery vs. Harmony are not the most applied theories (Schwartz, 1999).

Edward T. Hall’s dimensions focus on three issues, cultural differences in interpersonal communication in addition to personal space and time (Steers & Nardon, 2005). He referred to these dimensions as High-Context vs. Low-Context, Proxemics, and Monochronic vs. Polychronic. Hall’s dimensions are not scaled, and therefore according to his research, a nation can only be placed in one dimension or the other. His research has also been criticized for being somewhat ambiguous, which is due to the lack of statistical data available to identify each country’s placement within his dimensions (Warner-Söderholm, 2010). In addition, he does not discuss the potential changes that can happen in a country, for example moving from being a high-context to a low-context culture. Then again, neither do any of the other researchers.

Geert Hofstede's six dimensions, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Indulgence vs. Restraint, and Masculinity vs. Femininity, and is probably the best known cross-cultural study (Hofstede, 2001). His work has been criticized for reducing culture to an oversimplified set of six dimensions, only using data from a single multinational corporation, failing to capture the malleability of culture over time, and ignoring the intracultural level (Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001). In the later years, it has been highly critiqued for its representativeness. This is due to the questionnaire used to base the research on was not originally designed to measure cultural differences (Bik, 2010).

GLOBE PROJECT

The GLOBE Project has been conducted continuously over the past 10 years by a number of researchers. Culture, organizational practices and values, and leadership are the three major constructs of interest for the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004). Here, GLOBE stands for Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness research program and it refers to "a worldwide, multiphase, multimethod (...) programmatic research effort designed to explore the fascinating and complex effects of culture on leadership, organizational effectiveness, economic competitiveness of societies, and the human condition of members of the societies studied" (House et al., 2004, p. 10-11). House and the other researchers (2004) used a quantitative questionnaire of 17,300 middle managers in 951 organizations and used other qualitative methods in order to support their findings (Grove, 2005). According to Grove (2005) the project has three phases: Phase 1 involved the development of the research instruments; Phase 2 assessed nine fundamental attributes, or the cultural dimensions of both societal and organizational cultures and explores how these impact leadership; and Phase 3 primarily studied the effectiveness of specific leader behaviors or subordinates' attitude and performance. Considering the study uses both qualitative and quantitative data, has the most up-to-date data, measures both cultural practices and cultural values, and also addresses clear limitations of other studies we deem this the most appropriate frame of reference for our research.

Considering the GLOBE Project will be our focus from a cultural perspective, we will now describe their dimensions in a greater detail. Based on their research they have then created nine major attributes of culture (see Appendix 4 for dimension definitions). Our research

focuses on the “As is” practice scores rather than the “Should be” value scores for both Norway and Britain. The nine attributes of culture as defined by the GLOBE Project are:

- Power distance
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Assertiveness
- Institutional Collectivism (I)
- In-Group Collectivism (II)
- Future Orientation
- Performance Orientation
- Humane Orientation
- Gender Egalitarianism

Power distance “reflects the extent to which a community accepts and endorses authority, power differences, and status privileges” (House et al., 2004, p. 513). Societies with a higher Power Distance score are to a certain extent societies differentiated into social classes based on various criteria; clear power is seen as one offering social order and there is relational harmony and role stability which is accepted by the members of the group, and democracy does not ensure equal opportunities. Societies with a lower Power Distance tend to have a larger middle class; power is seen as a source of corruption, coercion and dominance; civil liberties are strong, and there is a lower chance of corruption (House et al., 2004). However, Hofstede (2001) measures Power Distance using different components compared to House et al. (2004).

“The uncertainty avoidance value construct focuses on the extent to which people seek orderliness, consistency, structure, formalized procedures, and laws to deal with naturally occurring uncertainties as well as important events in their daily lives” (House et al., 2004, p. 166-167). Cultures with a higher Uncertainty Avoidance tend to show a stronger desire to establish rules and have less tolerance for breaking the rules, tend to take less risk, and contracts are of significant importance. Where there is a higher tolerance for risk-taking and breaking the rules, more of an oral contract rather than written contract and a lower focus on maintenance of records there is generally a lower Uncertainty Avoidance score.

Assertiveness is the “degree to which individuals in organizations or societies are assertive, tough, dominant, and aggressive in social relationships” (House et al., 2004, p. 395). Cultures scoring high on Assertiveness tend to value competition and believe that anyone can succeed if he or she tries hard enough, in addition to valuing direct communication and results more than a relationship in a bargain. Cultures that value modesty, tenderness, cooperation, people, and warm relations tend to score lower on Assertiveness. They also tend to emphasize the importance of saving face and indirect communication.

“In organizations, Institutional Collectivism (I) likely takes the form of strong team orientation and development. To the extent possible, tasks and rewards are likely to be based on group rather than individual performance. Personal independence has low priority in institutionally oriented collective societies. The notion of autonomous individuals, living free of society while living in that society, is contrary to the norms of societies that embrace institutional collectivism” (House et al., 2004, p. 165). Societies in which self-reliance and having an independent personality is accepted tend to score higher on Institutional Collectivism (I). In cultures or societies where conformity is more necessary, such as in Confucian Asian societies, there is generally a higher score.

In-Group Collectivism (II) “encompasses how individuals relate to an in-group as an autonomous unit and how individuals attend to responsibilities concerning their in-group” (House et al., 2004, p. 165). In this dimension, there is an emphasis on the degree of collaboration, cohesiveness, and harmony within a group. Group pride is important and there is a strong sense of group identity in addition to affective identification toward the family, group, or community.

The GLOBE definition of Future Orientation is “the extent to which members of a society or an organization believe that their current actions will influence their future, focus on investment in their future, believe that they will have a future that matters, believe in planning for developing their future, and look far into the future for assessing the effects of their current actions” (House et al., 2004, p. 285). Cultures scoring low on this dimension tend to be more spontaneous and live more in the moment and they are usually free of past, present or future anxieties. In these cultures, instant gratification and immediate rewards are more valued and organizations tend to have a shorter strategic orientation. When organizations have a more

long-term strategic orientation and the gratification is based on long-term success they receive a higher score. In this case, a good leader is capable of seeing patterns in the face of chaos and uncertainty.

Performance Orientation focuses on the degree “to which a society is reported to encourage and reward performance excellence and improvement” (House et al., 2004, p. 164). “Individuals with high need for achievement tend to achieve pleasure from progressive improvement, like to work on tasks with moderate probabilities of success because they represent a challenge, take personal responsibility for their actions, seek frequent feedback, search for information on how to do things better, and are generally innovative” (House et al., 2004, p. 240). Cultures that value education, learning, and initiative taking, emphasize results and set high performance targets generally have a stronger Performance Orientation. Those with a weaker Performance Orientation value social and family relations, loyalty and traditions, sensitivity, seniority and experience and indirect language.

Humane Orientation is the “degree to which individuals in organizations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others” (House et al., 2004, p. 569). This concerns both the way people treat one another and social institutional programs. In short, there is an emphasis on public morality either expressed through laws or cultural norms and maybe both. In societies where people are urged to provide social support for one another, offspring are expected to provide for their parents in old age and there is an increased importance of others if there is a higher Human Orientation. A lower score is given to cultures where self-interest is important and people are expected to solve personal problems on their own.

Gender Egalitarianism reflects “societies’ beliefs about whether members’ biological sex should determine the roles that they play in their homes, business organizations, and communities” (House et al., 2004, p. 347). In more Egalitarian societies you tend to find less gender inequality as these continuously seek to minimize these differences and they are to a greater extent better tolerated than in other countries. Thus, cultures with a higher Gender Egalitarianism tend to have a higher percentage of women in the workplace, there are more women in positions of authority, and women are accorded have a higher status. Cultures with

lower Gender Egalitarianism normally have a lower percentage of women in the workplace and thus have fewer in positions of authority. Here, there is a greater tolerance for inequality.

CRITIQUE OF GLOBE

The status of the GLOBE Project has led to several critiques by other researchers. The intensity of the questionnaire used (116 items per respondent) does lead to a challenge in terms of the sufficient and valid response rate. Having to discard some of the responses due to their questionnaires not being completed could provide difficulties when calculating and analyzing the results. In addition, another limitation with this study is the same as with both Schwartz' and Hofstede's research: the dimensions are designed at the aggregated level of analysis and thus individual level analysis could be problematic.

Graen (2006) provides an extensive critique to the GLOBE project where his most significant critique is that GLOBE researchers “claim too much cross-cultural ecological and construct validity and generalizability” for their research findings and recommendations to date (p. 95). Graen (2006) also states that they used inadequate sampling and that the responses were based on social desirability. He does not agree with the labeling of GLOBE's leadership types and claim they are “dysfunctional” (Graen, 2006, p. 99). The GLOBE team has responded to all of the critiques presented by Graen and claim they his arguments are invalid and misrepresent the project. For example, their response regarding social desirability was that they instructed their respondents “to indicate the way things are” (Warner-Søderholm, 2012, p. 62).

NORWAY

Researcher Gillian Warner-Søderholm of BI Norwegian Business School has been spearheading the GLOBE study in Norway. In 2010 she completed the research focusing on Norway in a Scandinavian context in order to clearly differ between Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. Warner-Søderholm highlights the differences while qualitatively and quantitatively analyzing Norwegian national and organizational culture. She stresses the point that some dimensions could be more superficial as they focus more on practical elements of etiquette or give very general advice (Warner-Søderholm, 2012). The study concludes that the subtle varieties between the Scandinavian nations are as important as the greater differences. The study provided the “As is” results presented in Table 4 and illustrated in Chart 1.

CULTURAL DIMENSION	SCORE
Uncertainty Avoidance	4.31
Future Orientation	4.48
Power Distance	4.13
Institutional Collectivism (I)	4.07
Humane Orientation	4.81
Performance Orientation	4.18
In-Group Collectivism (II)	5.34
Gender Egalitarianism	4.03
Assertiveness	3.37

Table 4: GLOBE Cultural Dimensions Norway summarized (Warner-Söderholm, 2010).

Norway

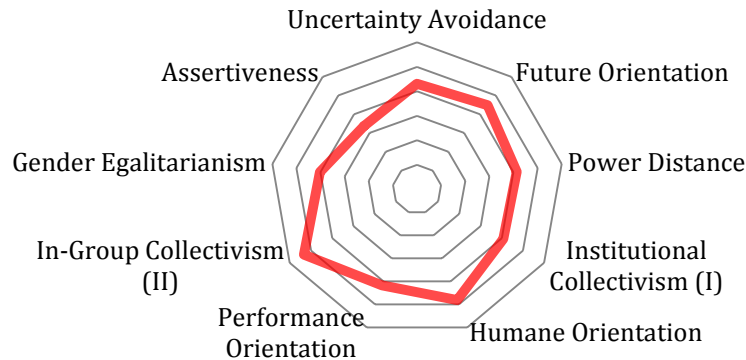


Chart 1: Cultural Dimensions – Norway

Dimensions

The low Power Distance score can be justified by the restricted use of formal titles, dress codes, and egalitarian practices in the workplace. This dimension could also be compared to other dimensions such as Humane Orientation and Gender Egalitarianism. House et. al., (2004, p. 544) show that there is a significant correlation ($p < 0.01$) between Power distance and Gender Egalitarianism where $r = -0.17$. For example, if you have a low Power Distance, one can expect the Gender Egalitarianism to be high. In Norway, one generally addresses a

superior by their first name despite their rank in the company or position in the family. It is also customary that everyone shares a canteen and are expected to get their own food; meaning there are no separate dining areas for the executives or managers. In short, no one is to be deemed unequal or below another individual.

Examples of Uncertainty Avoidance can be found in the “high value placed on the comprehensive welfare system with generous social security payments for sick leave, long-term disability, unemployment, maternity, and paternity pay” (Warner-Søderholm, 2010, p. 146). In addition, the social norm with regard to time is that good time keeping is key in most situations, such as social dinners and meetings. It is however acceptable in some certain social settings (for example when meeting a friend) to be 10-15 minutes late, but as a courtesy to the person you are meeting to notify them that you will be late.

Assertiveness discusses the “degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others” (House et al., 2004, p. 30). Foreigners often perceive Norwegians as cold and fairly distant because they are not very open with their feelings. In Norway, one keeps to oneself and does not make eye contact as this could be seen as threatening. Warner-Søderholm (2010) states that a Norwegian’s isolated or cold approach does not mean that they do not have emotions but that it is an “indication of the sense of order and of keeping control in an interdependent society such as Norway” (p. 141). It would be rare to take part in or see a heated argument both in the workplace and in a social setting. At a young age one is taught to wait patiently in line and get a sense fairness.

The moderately high score Norway receives for Institutional Collectivism (I) could be explained by its societal concern for individual interests, its tax levels, and focus on volunteering (Warner-Søderholm, 2010). In Norway, the majority of workers are in some sort of union. This high membership could represent the ethos of support in the collective interests in a society. The high tax level in Norway also shows that the public has concerns and takes responsibility for services such as education, care of the elderly, pensions, social insurance, and pre-school child care. Finally, the social aspect of “dugnad” in Norway is important as well. These are compulsory cleanup projects for sports clubs, apartment complexes, schools or even accepting a place on a non-paid committee for any of these. You are expected to show

up and do your part to help the local community and it is frowned upon if you do not participate or do your part.

With regard to In-Group Collectivism (II), the high score could be due to the national and individual pride and again the national taxation system. Individual pride can be seen in parents' pride in their children's achievements in extracurricular activities. Usually, in countries with a high In-Group Collectivism (II) score they tend to care for sick or elderly family members in the home of the children and grandchildren. Likewise, children tend to live at home until they themselves create a family. In Norway, this is different yet leads to a high score; the taxation system supports a comprehensive welfare system that cares for the elderly. Thus, there is a collective responsibility rather than specific to each family or home to care for elderly family members.

Once again the Norwegian welfare system has a great effect on Norway's moderately high score on Future Orientation. The welfare system has mandatory pension schemes to provide guaranteed pensions or disability payments to cover the future financial needs of the population. This is in addition to any personal saving done by individuals in the nation in order to secure financial stability in the future. In addition, Norway has the Government Pension Fund Global (Norges Pensionsfond Utlandet) that pays approximately 4% of its real return of the fund to improve, for example, schools and public infrastructure in order to plan for the future. Norway also has an interesting state organized saving system for the holidays. A portion of an individual's salary and taxes is retained until the month of June and be paid out as "Holiday money" or *feriepenger*.

The boundaries of Performance Orientation have been softened by the somewhat collectivistic values in Norway reflected by the welfare system. There is a focus on performance, but this is often measured in teams rather than on an individual level. McClelland (1961) claims that a culture may express its pre-occupation with achievement within imaginative folk tales and stories for children (House et al., 2004). This is true with regard to Norwegian "eventyr" such as Askeladden, who goes from rags to riches where the story focuses on his achievements. The "Law of Jante" or Janteloven is a cultural phenomenon that greatly affects Performance Orientation in the manner that it encourages modest behavior by abiding by ten tacitly accepted laws (Sandemose, 1933). All ten laws can be summarized by:

don't believe you are better than anyone else. This, in short, could lead to Norwegians being observed as humble and reserved in certain contexts. They will not boast over individual results or point out others flaws.

Considering Humane Orientation is described as the “degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others” (House et al., 2004, p. 30), many of the arguments provided for the previous dimensions will be rendered in this section as well. The welfare state and the civic duty of a “dugnad” helps lead to a high score on this dimension due to the utilitarian view by the society. Meaning, the greater good for the society is emphasized in the Norwegian national culture. Finally, Norway is known for its generous support to aid work, refugee programs and as being a broker in peace negotiations (Warner-Söderholm, 2010).

Norway has been one of the most active workers toward gender equality in both the public and private sectors. This has led to 35.7% of managerial positions being filled by females in Norway in 2013 (Egge-Hoveid, 2015). Even so, Norway has a law that states that a minimum of 40% of seats on a company board must be dedicated to women. Now, it is important to note that there have been certain discussions around this law stating that it could lead to under-qualified women sitting on the board rather than qualified men sitting there. This is not the only problem; some females feel that they are merely a part of the company's female-quota rather than a qualified individual. The maternity and paternity leave is also an example of the Gender Egalitarianism in Norway, as the two partners choose themselves how they wish to distribute their 46 weeks of 100% salary (or 56 weeks at 80% salary) amongst themselves (O'Leary, 2010). Finally, the GLOBE team discovered that the relationship between economic development and the status and roles of women in societies was more equivocal than scholars originally envisioned (House et al., 2004, p. 364). There were three indicators: government support for prosperity, societal support for competitiveness, and world competitiveness index (Gross National Product – GNP). Norway has been at the top of the United Nation's Human Development report throughout the past years. This illustrates that the economic health of Norway reflects the well-being of a country which in turn correlates with the high scores in Gender Egalitarianism found in Norwegian “As is” society values (Warner-Söderholm, 2010).

BRITAIN

CULTURAL DIMENSION	SCORE
Uncertainty Avoidance	4.65
Future Orientation	4.28
Power Distance	5.15
Institutional Collectivism (I)	4.27
Humane Orientation	3.72
Performance Orientation	4.08
In-Group Collectivism (II)	4.08
Gender Egalitarianism	3.67
Assertiveness	4.15

Table 5: GLOBE Cultural Dimensions Britain summarized (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House, 2009).

Britain

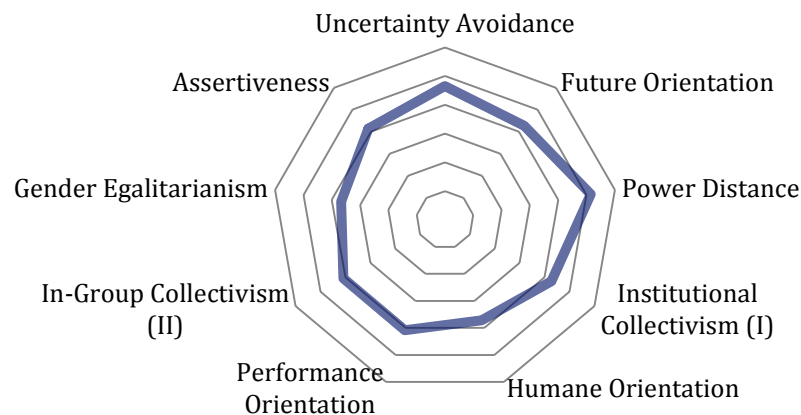


Chart 2: Cultural Dimensions – Britain

The characteristic differences in practices and values of Norway and Britain has led to dissimilar GLOBE scores and thus placing the two in different clusters (See Appendix 1 for cluster overview). In Table 5 and illustrated in Chart 2, you will find the “As Is” or practices scores of Britain (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House, 2009). However, the qualitative analysis of Britain will be based solely on England due to the lack of qualitative research of Britain as a

whole. Chhokar, Brodbeck & House (2009) reflect over a cultural change that has taken place in England within the previous 60-70 years leading to the construction of new meanings and identities affecting the actions of both individuals and organizations.

England has been known for its high degree of Power Distance, especially with regard to aristocracy. However, after the Second World War there has been a decline in the rigidity of this system. Despite our research focusing on the GLOBE dimensions, it is important to note that with regard to Hofstede's research, Norway and the United Kingdom receive a similar Power Distance score (Hofstede, 2015, B.). England is also known as an individualistic society, in a survey, only 36% would obey the law if it clearly went against their conscience, whereas 57% would follow their conscience rather than the law (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House, 2009). To date, only 27% of the English population thinks that the wife should be the homemaker rather than work. Meaning, there has been a shift in the Gender Egalitarianism.

There is generally a good health care service but there are still those using private health insurance. The voluntary sector is strong in certain situations, such as the special needs area. However, their score is still relatively low. Due to their inadequate welfare state safety net, this may explain a relatively low Future Orientation score (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House, 2009). In England, the majority of companies have some form of performance measurement system for monitoring and appraisals, which correlates with their relatively high Performance Orientation score.

KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

We assume that some national and organizational cultures better facilitate for knowledge workers. The manner in which knowledge workers communicate could differ from other workers. The information needed, and thus the communication channels, may vary according to the type of knowledge work conducted. In the following section we will present literature concerning knowledge workers.

KNOWLEDGE WORKERS AND KNOWLEDGE WORK

Thomas Davenport introduced the term "knowledge worker" in the late 1950s. This was an era where the world started to move away from manual labor to work requiring knowledge, expertise, education, and experience (Mindtools.com, 2015). There are no official agreed

definitions and no standardized measures regarding the term “knowledge work.” One of the problems in defining knowledge work has been the difficulty of defining knowledge itself as well as distinguishing knowledge from information. Knowledge is a matter of cognitive capability enabling people to do and reflect. By contrast, information is passive and meaningless to those who lack the suitable knowledge (Brinkley, Fauth, Mahdon & Theodoropoulou, 2009).

However, most definitions of knowledge work have inherent characteristics such as job complexity, autonomy, information processing, problem solving, non-routine work, intangibility, flexibility, multiple skills and in-depth knowledge. Sandvik (2011) chose to define knowledge work as “a set of work characteristics containing job complexity, information processing, problem solving and a diversity of skills. The work takes place in an autonomous context” (p. 57) [See Appendix 2 for translation]. Hence, “knowledge workers have high degrees of expertise, education, or experience, and the primary purpose of their jobs involves the creation, distribution or application of knowledge” (Mindtools.com, 2015).

In traditional work, one can impose routines to be followed, thus control an individual’s performance. According to Lines (2011), knowledge work differs from traditional work in two major ways. First, it is only the knowledge worker themselves who knows best how to perform a task or process. Second, they create value through activities that are impossible to supervise, impose routines on, or measure. Examples of such activities are knowledge sharing, individual learning, and providing help and support to colleagues. To which degree such activities are exercised, may depend upon the motivation of the individual knowledge worker.

A part of a knowledge workers’ value creation is based on tacit knowledge. If they are to use and share this kind of knowledge, it is voluntarily. In other words, this knowledge may be withheld without the organization being able to easily sanction this (Lines, 2011).

MANAGING KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Lines (2011) portrays the level of value creation by the individual knowledge worker as capability by motivation. Hence, he claims that there are two ways in which the level of value

creation can be affected: an increase in capability or an increase in motivation. Here we will stress the aspect of motivation.

According to Lines (2011), motivated knowledge workers are crucial for productivity. As the degree of knowledge work increase, the productivity varies with motivation. In addition, knowledge workers seem to be more loyal than other groups towards their profession, and less loyal towards their organization or employer. Seeing that the productivity level and turnover of knowledge workers may have a significant impact on the bottom line of companies, managers must know how to motivate their employees. We assume that proper communication, including information and knowledge sharing (vertically and horizontally) is of huge importance for motivation, and that motivation, in turn, has consequences for communication and activities that are difficult to measure.

Even though knowledge workers is an umbrella term for various professions, they usually have in common that they prefer some level of autonomy, including not being closely supervised, but rather having their way cleared by their managers in order for them to work productively (Mindtools.com, 2015). Concerning physical work environment, knowledge workers tend to appreciate workspaces that allow them to interact with their colleagues in order to collaborate and share knowledge and ideas. However, they also tend to appreciate having the chance to withdraw to a space where they can think in private without distractions (Mindtools.com, 2015). As previously mentioned, professional identity is of particular importance for knowledge workers. This identity is strengthened and maintained by interacting with members of the same profession (Lines, 2011). Thus, interacting with co-workers in general may not always be sufficient in order to obtain and maintain an individual's motivation.

Many knowledge workers will need information concerning the reason why something should be done as much as they need to know what should be done. By knowing “why”, they may feel more connected to a project or the company, thus increasing motivation (Mindtools.com, 2015). Lines (2011) confirms this.

Different professionals have different value systems. This may be due to their personality combined with a self-selection into the professions, as well as a socialization process during

their education. As their value systems differ, they will be motivated by different elements of the job. For instance, engineers seem to be motivated by challenging tasks, while scientists are more motivated by job autonomy. However, they are both motivated by access to resources. It is likely that professional affiliation has a great impact on how different knowledge workers respond to various decisions and leadership styles (Lines, 2011). Knowledge workers are in general motivated by personal development, autonomy, task achievement, and financial compensation. The latter is less important than the first three components. Concerning rewards, this should be based on meritocracy and fairness (Lines, 2011).

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Knowledge workers are highly dependent on technology in order to keep track of everything they know. Reasons for this are, among other things, that they do not have to create everything themselves, or waste time looking for information that they do not know whether exists or not. Thus, one important criterion that has to be fulfilled in order for them to perform their best is access to the appropriate technology, as well as knowledge of how to use it (Mindtools.com, 2015).

Level of Independence	Collaborative Groups	Integration Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic, repeatable work • Highly reliant on formal processes, methodologies, or standards • Dependent on tight integration across functional boundaries 	Collaboration Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvisational work • Highly reliant on deep expertise across multiple functions • Dependent on fluid deployment of flexible teams
	Individual Actors	Transaction Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine work • Highly reliant on formal rules, procedures, and training • Dependent on low-discretion workforce or on automation 	Expert Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment-oriented work • Highly reliant on individual expertise and experience • Dependent on star performers
		Routine	Interpretation / Judgment
Complexity of Work			

Figure 3: Knowledge worker categories (Davenport, 2011)

According Davenport (2011), various types of knowledge workers within the same organization often have different requirements with regard to knowledge and information. They will be in need of different degrees of structured provision tools and free-access tools. Structured-provision tools include information portals, business rules, document- or content-management systems, business process management- and monitoring systems, and collaboration tools. Free-access tools include, among other things, the Internet, social media, e-mail, spreadsheets, presentation tools, and organizational knowledge-management system. He divides knowledge workers into four categories in a two-by-two matrix, based on the level of interdependence and the complexity of their work (See Figure 3).

Knowledge work requiring a relatively low amount of collaboration and judgment (such as administrative-intensive roles) is found in the transaction cell of the matrix. For these workers, structured provision tools are commonly used. The integration cell describes knowledge workers within a more collaborative context, where free-access tools are widely available. Work will often be circulated by e-mail and voluntary collaboration, and less by structured-provision technologies. However, there are some exceptions where semi-structured tools are used, like within engineering and product design and development. Knowledge workers within the collaboration cell, usually work in an iterative and unstructured way. The tools that succeed in such contexts are typically those used voluntarily by the worker, and that provides free access to information. Finally, we find knowledge workers within the expert cell. These workers apply expert knowledge to tasks and problems. The relevant knowledge tends to be stored in the expert's brain, but at times it needs to be supplemented with online knowledge. Thus, free-access tools are commonly used, while structured provision may be used in some areas.

The free-access approach has been especially common among autonomous knowledge workers with high expertise. The information technology is easy to implement, as for instance the Internet and social media are readily accessible to anyone. The model presumes that knowledge workers, as experts, know what information is available and can search for and manage it themselves. Providing knowledge workers with autonomy in their work process is likely to increase retention and job engagement. However, the problem with this approach is that even though workers may know how to use technology tools, they may not be skilled at

searching for, using, or sharing the knowledge. This may lead to productivity losses (Davenport, 2011). The structured provision approach has productivity as the major benefit. However, these technologies have a downside as workers who use them may feel as they have too much structure and too little autonomy in their work (Davenport, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The theory from this chapter will be used to guide the manner in which we proceed in answering our research question. The literature review is the backbone of this research. Seeing as there is a strong relationship between organizational communication and organizational culture, it is necessary to assess our research question from both perspectives. Communication within organizations takes place between individuals and in groups, thus it is difficult to avoid making associations to individual and group level communication, in addition to organizational communication. Despite the situation, internal and interpersonal communication is essential in our research. English has a prominent position as a Lingua Franca in the world of international business, and the world can be separated into different clusters based on English competency level. Communication is affected by culture, therefore it is essential to include an assessment of relevant cultural dimensions. Throughout the thesis we will use the GLOBE Project in order to interpret the respondents' perceptions of the Norwegian national and organizational culture. Now we will discuss the methodology used to assess how the British knowledge workers view communication challenges in a Norwegian working milieu.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the method used to answer our research question and we aim to justify the methodological choices made. In order to thoroughly assess the cultural barriers perceived by foreign knowledge workers in the Norwegian working environment, we must conduct research methods to get a greater in-depth understanding of the motivation, attitudes and experiences of the respondents. In this section, we will describe the methods utilized to get the required insight to fully answer our research question.

In this chapter we will describe and discuss the background and reasoning for our choice of research design, approach, method, and strategy. Then we will go further in depth to discuss data collection and how to assess our findings. Finally, the methodological strengths and weaknesses will be determined by evaluating the validity, reliability and ethics behind the method. As a reminder, our research question is:

What are the main cultural and communication challenges perceived by British knowledge workers with regard to the Norwegian working environment?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design provides a framework for data collection and analysis. Considering the selection of research design is dependent on the research question and purpose of the study, this should be clearly stated and be the basis of the research. A research design should be effective in producing the wanted information within the constraints put on the researcher, for example time, budgetary and skill constraints (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010, p. 54). According to Bono and McNamara (2011) the fundamentals of good research design are as follows: match your design to your question, match construct definition with operationalization, carefully specify your model, use measurements with established construct validity or provide such evidence, choose samples and procedures that are appropriate to your unique research question. The three forms of research design are; exploratory, descriptive, and causal research design.

In exploratory research, the problem is not well understood and fairly unstructured (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). There is little knowledge that has already been developed and a part of

the purpose is to further develop the problem and to further explore it. In descriptive research, the problem is structured and well understood. This form of design is less complex and has some prior information from which one can make relevant comparisons. Structure, precise rules, and procedures are part of the key characteristics of descriptive research. Causal research design is structured and less complex. Here, the researcher is confronted with “cause-and-effect” problems and the main task is to isolate the cause(s), and tell whether and to what extent the “cause(s)” result(s) in effect(s) (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010).

With regard to our research question, the most fitting design would be exploratory. Seeing as our desire is to further develop the research problem and explore it, exploratory design is meant to examine exactly that (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). There is a constant search for supplementary and new fragments of information within this research area. However, exploratory design requires certain skills such as the ability to observe, collect information, and construct explanations or theorizing.

RESEARCH APPROACH

A deductive approach tests theory, while an inductive approach builds theory. As the goal of our research is to build and supplement theory, an inductive approach will be best suited. These are the two ways of establishing what is true or false and how to draw conclusions. They are mutually exclusive, meaning one uses either one or the other. Through deduction one draws conclusions through logical reasoning and the researcher builds hypotheses from existing literature and empirical evidence in order to accept or reject these hypotheses (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). However, with induction we are able to draw general conclusions from our empirical observations (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). The general research process for this approach tends to start with observations that lead to findings and then move towards theory-building and potential future research.

Considering we will be utilizing exploratory research, it is known that inductive approach will be the most useful. This is because, together “they can lead us to hypothesis building and explanations” (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010, p. 106). In an inductive approach, the analysis stems from the data or what we observe, while a deductive approach is used when the research originates from existing theory.

RESEARCH METHOD

The main difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that quantitative researchers employ measurement and qualitative researchers do not (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). In quantitative methods there is a focus on testing and verification while in qualitative methods there is an emphasis on understanding the problem. Our research problem fits well into a qualitative use of methodology, rather than a quantitative one.

Reichardt and Cook refer to qualitative methods as more of a social process, with emphasis on understanding (as stated in Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). Meaning, we want to understand the situation from the respondent's point of view. Concerning this method, the perspective is holistic, with an explorative and flexible orientation, we have closeness to the data, and we may generalize by comparison of features and contexts of the individual. This calls for a qualitative approach to our research question. (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010)

The main focus of qualitative research is to construct explanations or theory by gaining insight. The data collection and analysis are typically conducted simultaneously in an interactive way, where data is analyzed, then initiating new questions, which again initiates further data collection. A potential pitfall in qualitative research is that we may end up being overwhelmed by the masses of data, and portions may be irrelevant (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). One single agreed-upon approach to qualitative data analysis does not exist. However, there is a common understanding that qualitative data analysis entails data reduction, data display, and verification and concluding (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

Qualitative data analysis concerns interpretation. Hence, the skills and the experience of the researcher play an important role when analyzing the data. This is due to qualitative research consisting of both rational and intuitive, in addition to, explorative aspects (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). While interpreting, one attempts to understand by grasping the meaning of an idea, an experience, or a concept in the respondent's perspective. One also tries to seek patterns in meaning (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). Interpretation gains clout by creating limitation. Within this method, in order to define the limitations of the research certain assumptions must be accepted and others may continuously arise throughout the process. By applying the decisions made earlier in this chapter regarding design, approach and method, we can now assess the most applicable strategy.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Considering we have an explorative design and a qualitative approach, the most frequently used strategy will be in-depth interviews. In this strategy, both primary and secondary data is used. When using this strategy, data collection tends to come from sources such as verbal reports, personal interviews and observations as primary data sources. We believe the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews is the correct choice of primary data collection for this thesis. However, when utilizing an exploratory design, secondary data sources are needed to achieve additional insight and comprehension. Initially, the secondary data will be able to provide supplementary background information surrounding the topic. The data sources available are, amongst others, websites of different companies and organizations, census reports on income levels, industry statistics from branch organizations, as well as theses and reports written by other students. Bearing in mind that data collected by others is obtained for a different purpose, we need to ensure that we inspect and evaluate the data and measurement procedures used (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

Primary Data

We will conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews, spanning of approximately one hour in the natural setting of the respondents. Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010) state that the advantage of in-depth interviews is that it makes it possible to gain a more accurate and clear picture of a respondent's opinions and behavior. The interviewer can ask open ended questions in addition to ask them to elaborate further if this might be necessary. Theory also states that this method of data collection is highly suitable for exploratory and inductive types of studies, which is exactly the design and approach appointed (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

When preparing for an interview, Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010) suggest we should:

1. Analyze the research problem
2. Understand what information we really need from the interviewee
3. See who will be able to provide us with that information

In order to achieve a successful research interview, it is essential to avoid asking leading questions. We will frame the interview similar to a conversation, and we can be persistent without being perceived as aggressive. From own experiences, we are aware of the importance

of the interviewer showing enthusiasm and keeping eye contact. According to Morrison, Haley, Sheehan & Ronald (2011) a good interview should be:

- Conducted by a prepared and sensitive interviewer. He or she should know the facts of the area involved, be calm, empathetic and not judgmental. Build trust
- Structured. It should have a beginning, middle and an end. The introduction should put the interviewee at ease
- Clear. The interviewer must be clear, the questions should be short
- Gentle. Give the respondent the time they need in order to say what they want to say, do not cut them off. This may lead to the loss of valuable information
- Open and flexible. Respond to the interviewee's potential questions
- Steering. Remember the purpose of the research, stay on track
- Balanced in the sense that the interviewer should not talk too much. A rule of thumb is that the respondent talks at least 80 percent of the time
- Ethically sensitive

They also suggest beginning with general questions before moving to more specific and personal questions later on. There should not be too many topics involved if we wish to get a deeper understanding of them. It is also useful to occasionally provide a summary throughout the interview and ask if anything else comes to mind or if the interviewees have supplemental opinions.

A strength of this strategy encompasses a comprehensive understanding around the subject focusing on what, why, and how. One theorizes by observing, collecting information and constructing an explanation.

One of several weaknesses is that interviews require us to remain unbiased, which is difficult. Also, qualitative data cannot be synthesized or reduced into tables, which means we must be creative when illustrating and presenting our data (Bansal and Corley, 2012). However, it is possible to quantify our information without completing complicated statistical calculations. An additional challenge with interviews concerns the demand for a skilled and cautious interviewer. The data from the qualitative interviews will only be as good as our skills in interviewing and interpreting the data. The type of interview we are planning on doing,

demand concentrated attention and an open mind when analyzing them, which is another limitation of this method. Additional weaknesses of primary research in general are that it is time consuming, it can be difficult to gain access, and the researcher is fully dependent on both the willingness and the ability of the respondents. (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010)

Secondary Data

Secondary data is “information collected by others for purposes that can be different from ours” (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010, p. 90). This form of data can help the researchers gain a greater understanding of the subject matter, it can help in solving and explaining our research problem. In this case, we will use it as all of the before mentioned in addition to utilizing it as a supplement for analysis.

The primary advantage of secondary data is the cost and time savings as the researcher only has to go to the library or search online for sources. This will be extremely helpful seeing as though we have a limited timespan and budget for this thesis. The robustness of some of these sources is also an advantage, as this could strengthen the reliability and validity of the thesis. In addition, “secondary sources also facilitate international research, as it is easier to compare similar data from two or more countries” (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010, p. 94).

Despite having several positive aspects, there is a significant disadvantage of secondary data. The drawback is that “these data are collected for another study with different objectives and they may not completely fit ‘our’ problem” (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010, p. 96). Therefore, it is essential to understand why that data was collected for that research, and how it could be compared to our research in the most accurate way possible.

For our study, we will be utilizing mainly external sources rather than internal sources. As we interviewed individuals from eight separate companies, the use of internal reports would be excessive in addition to difficult to access as some tend to be confidential. External sources include published books and journal articles, in addition to data collected by commercial organizations or companies. There are several ways of finding these forms of data, for example by searching through libraries or the Internet. However, it is important to do a systematic search by potentially listing the main concepts and key words for the research problem. These

sources will be applied when gathering supplemental information concerning the population and the industry to describe why we will use the specific population and industry for this thesis.

DATA COLLECTION

In this section, we will present the sample used, how we prepared for the interviews, and finally the implementation of the interviews themselves.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria are chosen for theoretical reasons. In a qualitative study we usually do not aim to achieve statistically valid conclusions, but to understand, gain insights and create explanations. However, this does not mean that sampling issues (such as who and how many should be included) are not important in qualitative research (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). Non-probability samples are very often applied.

Our goal was to get approximately 16 respondents as this is suitable for the scope of a thesis project. We consider this to support both the validity and reliability of our thesis, especially as the respondents should hold certain characteristics. The comprehension and understanding is the main focus, having as many interviews as possible is not the case. After all, our design is built upon quality and not quantity. The optimal sample was approached through random selection and the snowball effect.

The respondents should:

- Belong to the same industry (i.e. oil and gas)
- Hold a bachelor's degree or higher
- Be British
- Work on-location
- Be a self-initiated international

Firstly, as previously discussed in the context section in this chapter, the respondents should belong to the oil and gas industry. This is due to its international properties and that it is one of Norway's main industries. The oil and gas company does not have to be Norwegian, but must operate on the Norwegian continental shelf. Secondly, they should also hold a bachelor's degree or higher, for example being an engineer or a geologist. Thirdly, they should also be

British, meaning born and raised in either England, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales. Fourth, these individuals should also work in a company operating in Norway, thus, being on location. The final characteristic the respondents should possess is that they should not be here on an expatriate contract. Once we had clarified who to contact and why, we could begin to prepare for the interviews.

Assumptions

In order to direct our focus, we held certain assumptions. Some factors leading to expatriate failure are family not adjusting, inability to adapt to a new cultural environment, other family issues, amongst others (Tung, 1987). We expect these causes to have similar effects on internationals. However, the focus of our research is related to aspects on the ability or inability of adapting to the Norwegian culture.

Seeing as the respondents of our research are internationals, we assume that they have a different motivation for remaining in Norway as opposed to expatriates. We believe that the responses would, to a certain extent, differ if the sample consisted of expatriates only. It is also expected that Britons on a Norwegian contract are more inclined to learn Norwegian, and immerse themselves into the culture.

INTERVIEW PREPARATIONS

Before the interview took place, there were certain preparations needed. In this section, we will present the information sheet given to respondents, the consent form they signed, the interview guide used, and the manner in which we approached our population in order to get the sample needed.

Information Sheet

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) it is advisable to send an information sheet to the respondents before conducting an interview. For our project, the content of this sheet included the study background and purpose, practical information about the interview, and information regarding the respondents' anonymity (See Appendix 5 for the information sheet for respondents). There were several reasons for sending this sheet to the respondents. First, the sheet described the sample we were looking for and we were therefore confident that if

they felt as if they did not fit the selection criteria they would notify us and potentially cancel the interview. Second, this assisted in building the validity of the paper and create a personal social rapport with the respondent by explaining who we are, what FOCUS is, and the purpose of the study. Third, the letter politely reminds the respondent of the interview itself. Finally, by providing the information sheet, we gave the respondents an opportunity to withdraw if they were uncomfortable discussing the subject. Thus, strengthening the validity and reliability, which will be discussed later.

Consent Form

In addition to the information sheet, we sent a consent form to the respondents ahead of the interview. This included a description of the FOCUS program, the estimated duration of the interview, asking if they were comfortable with us recording the interview, notifying them of anonymity, stressing voluntary participation, and the reason for data collection. Considering this is a formal consent form provided by the FOCUS program, it contributed a certain clout and authority, which further strengthened the ethical aspect of the thesis. In addition, we provided a paper copy of the consent form for the respondents to sign prior to the interview. For the actual consent form, please see Appendix 6.

Interview Guide

We prepared an interview guide, partly based on our literature review, that should be suited to uncover the respondents' motivational factors, attitudes and experiences. It is very difficult to learn about opinions and behavior without asking questions directly to the people involved. Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010) recommend creating an interview guide or interview questions constantly comparing them to the research question at hand in order to ensure that we actually get answers to our research question. We deemed it useful to divide the guide into sections or categories of discussion for a better overview. Every interview began by repeating the content of the information sheet sent to them a couple of days prior to the interview.

After thoroughly assessing the interview guide, we sent it to our supervisor for review and she assured congruence between the research question and questions in the interview guide. Following the meeting with our supervisor we conducted a pilot study where we tested the interview guide on a respondent to check the understanding of the interviewee regarding the interview questions. The guide can be seen in its entirety in Appendix 7. After the pilot study

was completed, we found it necessary to remove the question regarding their age, as this made the respondent uncomfortable. Once the pilot study was completed and the interview guide was deemed applicable, we could begin conducting the interviews.

Approach

After completing the pilot study, it was time to plan our approach and contact potential interviewees. In the initial stages of our research, we found it difficult to approach organizations of interest in addition to finding those in the company most qualified to assist us. We contacted large, medium, and small companies and within these businesses the point of contact differed significantly. In the smaller companies it was easier to contact first one individual and count on them spreading the word or referring us further to other people and inducing the snowball effect. With larger companies the initial contact was their Human Resources (HR) department and they referred us to persons of interest or those fitting our description. Overall, we contacted a total of 27 companies where 10 had individuals fitting our criteria and could facilitate a meeting. However, due to time restrictions we only had resources to meet eight companies and 16 respondents.

Initial contact was made through the telephone followed by an e-mail containing the information about us, the school, the research, a description of the sample desired, and a reason for them to participate in the research. The content of the e-mail was similar to that of the information sheet. This did provide generally good results, despite the industry being fairly protective as it was undergoing large restructuring. Once the respondents confirmed their cooperation we began planning the time and place of the interview and distributed the consent form and information sheet.

THE INTERVIEW

Locations

We conducted the interviews in the respondents' natural setting, i.e. their workplace. We clearly explained the purpose of the interview and we assured the respondents full anonymity both for them as an individual in addition to their company. The interviews were held in either a meeting room or in the individuals' office. By conducting the interview in the respondents' workplace we hoped this would be more relaxing and encourage candor, which we believe was

successful. Before the interview took place, we introduced. We were always offered a beverage or something to eat, here we took the opportunity to build a social rapport with the respondent so they might become less stressed and see the informality of the interview. This loosened the atmosphere in the room and then we were able to laugh and joke with the respondents prior to and during the interview itself. We also believe that this created a deeper trust or a different relationship with the respondents rather than just getting straight to the point. In addition, we added an extra 30 minutes after each interview in case it ran longer than expected and to transfer the recordings if so needed. For Informant Overview, please see Appendix 8.

Recordings

During the communication with the respondent before the interview, we asked permission to record the interview and continuously reminded them of this through contact. It was important to be clear when communicating the need and desire to record the interviews as this helps the interviewer(s) focus on the responses rather than focusing on logging the responses. However, one of the main disadvantages with recording is that the respondent might hesitate or refuse to answer the question (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010). Therefore, we used both recordings and note taking during the interview; as we were two it was possible for one to conduct the interview while the other observed. The interview was recorded using an iPhone, which we believe only helped to relax the respondent. Seeing as it is a common device to have on a desk or readily available, it is possible that the individual forgot we were recording as their demeanor changed.

Observations

“Observation as a data collection tool entails listening and watching other people’s behavior in a way that allows some type of learning and analytical interpretation” (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 115). Advantages are that we are able to collect first-hand information in a natural setting and interpret and understand the situation more accurately. However, it is extremely difficult to accurately translate events or happenings into scientifically useful information. “This is particularly important when the purpose is to generalize from these observations” (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010, p. 115). Therefore, we merely used observations as a supplement to the interviews and thus only noted body language and changes in demeanor. Seeing as we are two writing this thesis, we were also two during the interview process. We deem this to be

a huge advantage as one could conduct the interview and the other would take notes on some responses and observe the respondents' body language and tone.

DATA ANALYSIS

Considering we have an inductive approach, we have tried to uncover patterns, trends, and relationships in the material that can assist in answering the research question. In order to identify these relationships, we have applied various methods deemed most useful to process this form of studies. First, we will describe the transcription process, followed by the outline of how we analyzed our findings.

TRANSCRIPTIONS

A significant part of the analysis process is the transcription of the data, meaning, to type out the recordings verbatim. The purpose of transcribing the interview was to reproduce the data as accurately as possible in order to increase the reliability of the thesis. Seeing as this is a complex process that requires our full attention, we should not transcribe and analyze too many at a time. A major goal of the transcription process is to give an exact written representation of what has been said by the respondent so quotes appear as they have been communicated without being influenced by the researchers' interpretation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). We transcribed a total of 16 interviews. This was an extremely time-consuming process but it did allow us to listen to the interview once more and reflect in a greater detail over their responses in hindsight.

The names of the respondents and the company they worked for were never digitally written together with the code name we distributed for anonymity. We made a key which was handwritten and we, the writers, are the only individuals who possess this key. This ensures their anonymity on all levels of the research. The code name they were given will be used only if something they say is directly quoted in this paper. In the analysis, we have used quotations from the transcriptions to authenticate or confirm the patterns and trends we have uncovered. In certain instances we have removed "fillers and phrases" that are solely a part of the spoken manner and are not essential for the content of the statement. In addition, we removed thinking breaks. In certain instances it was necessary to add supplemental information to the

quotes in order for the context to be understood properly. Please see Appendix 9 for Interview Transcription Key.

ANALYSIS

Processing, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data can be challenging because transcribed interviews consist of comprehensive, unstructured data. With regard to the presentation of the transcribed information, there is a specific difficulty concerning how to present this in a cohesive manner. As previously mentioned in the Primary Data section, the manner in which we present our data is rather difficult in qualitative research. Therefore, we summarized each transcript by creating an outline and categorizing our findings according to the topics in the interview guide. As many responses provided the same inherent meaning, the manner in which we selected quotations for findings was essential. We selected the most clear and concise quotations. By using the findings, support from literature, and our own reasoning we were able to discuss the results.

In the analysis, we will be using in-depth interviews supplemented by the GLOBE Project results to uncover the perceptions of our British respondents, meaning both primary and secondary sources. This will be compared to the Norwegian GLOBE scores, thus solely secondary sources.

EVALUATION OF METHOD

After discussing the method of the thesis, we will now evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen methodology.

RESEARCHER BIAS

As young, female, Norwegian students, there may be a specific bias assigned to us as individuals and interviewers. Our characteristics and somewhat lack of interview experience could influence the responses provided by the interviewees. In addition, our personal bias as researchers could influence our interpretations and reasoning with regard to the results.

VALIDITY

Validity is an ideal and refers to how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). However, in a qualitative sense, we do not apply measures to concepts in the same way as in a quantitative method. In our research, the questions in the interview guide are the “measures,” and the interview in itself is the “test.” Yin (2003), stresses that the three validity forms commonly used in any empirical social research are construct validity, internal validity and external validity.

Construct validity refers to establishing correct measures for the concepts being studied, and is relevant during the stage of data collection. Construct validity is crucial for meaningful and interpretable findings, and can be assessed in various ways. For instance, in order to reveal responses concerning a certain concept, the questions asked should be reasonable with respect to fitting this construct. In addition, we should assure that a construct is distinguishable from another construct (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010). For instance, if we want to “measure” motivation, we should be sure that this is what we do measure. We deem the use of a pilot study was an effective way of controlling for this uncertainty.

The answers provided by interviewees may be influenced by temporary personal factors, for instance mood, and situational factors such as time pressure. We sought to avoid the latter by signaling that we were not rushing to get the answers, and not cutting them off. In addition, we provided some time between each interview, facilitating for small talk and a relaxed attitude towards time use.

In exploratory research, the researcher relates the empirical observations to his or her knowledge base and conducts mapping between observations and explanations, i. e. theory. If this mapping is done with few mistakes, there is valid mapping implying construct validity. If the study lacks construct validity the findings are meaningless, also destroying the internal and external validity of the findings (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

Internal validity is relevant when analyzing the data. In order to ensure internal validity, we will seek patterns in the data, provide rich and meaningful explanations and address rival explanations. It is important to not include irrelevant information, as well as not excluding relevant facts. Internal validity includes the term interpretative validity, meaning to what extent

the interpretation is good. Do we succeed in inferring meaning to what the respondent intends to reveal?

External validity deals with the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate study (Yin, 2003), meaning to other settings. For instance, seeing our suggested explanation of how British employees cope with language barriers is based on data from firms within the oil and gas industry, can the explanation be generalized to hold true also for Britons working in other industries in Norway? External validity or generalizable validity is relevant in the research design stage, and depends on the proper application of theory and logic. External validity can be problematic in qualitative research as we have a nonrandom sample based on a desire to understand the particular on a detailed level, rather than what is generally true of the many.

A key purpose of our research is to map 'reality.' Exploratory research depends upon the use of concepts and theory in order to arrive at explanations, hence the researcher must possess substantial conceptual skills, and validity must be demonstrated by supporting evidence. It is crucial to report the questions, the responses, the inferences made, as well as what support these inferences. In addition, as stressed earlier, secondary data must be inspected and evaluated (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010).

RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to the stability of a study. Some researchers claim that a study cannot be valid if it is not reliable, thus a demonstration of validity is sufficient to establish reliability (Golafshani, 2003). In a quantitative perspective, the research is reliable if someone else can repeat the data collection procedures and get the same results. However, in qualitative research reliability does not necessarily imply that outsiders should arrive at the same results, but they should be able to follow the researchers reasoning. In this perspective, reliability refers to dependability and consistency. The consistency of data is achieved when the steps of the research are verified through the examination of raw data, data reduction product and process notes (Golafshani, 2003). In order to ensure reliability, we have carefully documented all our procedures with an attempt to make it as transparent as possible.

ETHICS

In qualitative studies, problems may arise concerning the relationship between the researcher and the respondent, the researcher's subjective interpretations of the data, and the design itself. As researchers, we have a moral responsibility towards the reader, as well as towards the respondents, and this responsibility is an ongoing process.

Moral Responsibility

Researchers have to make a moral judgment about how appropriate the research procedures are. The moral responsibility of the researcher concerns social guidelines and restraints in research techniques and measurements. No research findings are final; hence the researcher has to decide whether the evidence is strong enough to draw certain conclusions from the findings, and there is an ethical issue concerning exactly how strong is strong enough. The methods and techniques used must be well accounted for, in order for the reader to make a judgment about the reliability of the findings. It is crucial to be ethically correct when reporting the findings, even if they may conflict with one's own or others' beliefs, interests, customs or religion. Altogether, we are obliged to be honest and as accurate as possible when we point out and find the answers to our questions. We have to explain both the strengths of our method, as well as the weaknesses and reliability of the findings. Being honest and reporting the findings objectively is the most essential aspect of ethics. Any misinterpretation of data will lead to misleading findings, which is a violation of ethics in research. (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2010)

Interview Relationship

According to Eide and Kahn (2008), the development of an interpersonal relationship is critical in qualitative research. The investigator and the respondent engage in a dialogic process that tends to evoke memories and stories that are recalled and reconstituted in ways that otherwise would not occur. When this relationship leads to some therapeutic interaction for the respondent, in addition to qualitative research data, ethical issues may arise. This stresses, among other things, the importance of anonymity.

There are several ethical concerns in the researcher-participant relationship. Churchill (1999) (as cited in Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010) highlight eight areas of ethical issues in this respect:

1. Preserving the participant's anonymity
2. Exposing participant to mental stress
3. Asking participants questions detrimental to their self-interest
4. Use of special equipment and techniques, e.g. tape recorder
5. Involving participants in research without their consent
6. Use of deception
7. Use of coercion to get information
8. Depriving participants of their rights, e.g. of self-determination

Based on these eight bullet points, we deem our research to having taken well care of potential ethical issues, as we will shed light on next. It is crucial to preserve the anonymity of the respondent, which we have emphasized throughout the process. We have aimed to prevent mental stress for our respondents, by for instance providing them with sufficient information beforehand, as well as time for small talk prior to the interview. We avoided asking questions that, to our understanding, could possibly be detrimental to their self-interest.

The respondents were well informed about the interview being recorded. They signed a consent form containing all formalities, and we certainly did not use any kind of deception or coercion in order to get desired answers, or answers at all. A researcher may find it hard to decide upon whether to inform the respondent about the real purpose of the research, as he or she may fear that this will inhibit cooperation or influence the answers the respondents provide. However, in our case we stayed open and honest with the respondents, as they were well informed on our intentions.

We used simple language and avoided the use of specialized terminology in communication prior to, during and after the interview. Being aware of sensitive issues is crucial, and we dealt with this by clearly stating that if there was a question they did not want to answer, that was perfectly fine. In addition, we provided the respondents with an e-mail showing appreciation, assuring they would receive a copy of the final thesis once it is completed.

Finally, our research methodology, with project number 42778, has been approved by NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste). NSD is an institution ensuring that research is conducted in an ethical manner with respect to privacy of research respondents.

CONCLUSION

The use of semi-structured in-depth interviews assisted in gaining insight from the British point of view concerning communication barriers in a Norwegian environment. The use of secondary data will provide supplementary support and insight during the discussion of our findings. Our specific selection criteria concerning the characteristics of the respondents, helps narrowing the focus of our thesis. In qualitative methodology one is not able to generalize findings. However, this is not our intention as we wish to draw conclusions based on our respondents and find areas for potential future research.

FINDINGS

After talking the respondent through the purpose of the interview and reading the disclaimer to them once again confirming their participation and anonymity for the record, we began asking some general questions. This chapter follows the same structure as the interview guide, with regard to sections. For the entire Interview Guide and Informant Overview, please see Appendix 7 and Appendix 8, respectively.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The majority of the respondents seemed relaxed throughout the entirety of the general questions, where we merely asked them about their background and present life situation. When asked if they had researched Norwegian customs and culture prior to their move, the majority said they had not while three had conducted minimal research. Overall, this consisted of relatively superficial information, whereas one had sought practical instructions such as when stores opened, the taxation system, and the price level of various items. Thus, merely two of 16 informants had searched for typical customs or the Norwegian culture.

Only one of the respondents had initiated learning Norwegian before starting their job in Norway, which was due to personal reasons as they have a Norwegian partner.

13 out of 16 respondents mentioned words as nature, mountains, fjords and other “outdoor” references as their beforehand top of mind associations with Norway. However, throughout the interview, all mentioned Norway in association to nature or the outdoors at some point. For example, one respondent stated that he likes driving in Norway to view the scenery.

The respondents’ time span in Norway ranged from three months to 39 years. One respondent explained how he, over time, had come to think more like a Norwegian.

.... Some of us who have been here a long time have sort of a dual mentality. Not a dual nationality, but a dual mentality. More and more we think like Norwegians.

- R5C2

Out of the 16 informants, four have Norwegian partners. Three of these are married and have children. Nearly half have children with non-Norwegian partners and only one is in a common

law partnership with their partner while the others are married. Some respondents have children that are above age of majority and therefore may not live with their parents or have separate lives. The remaining five are single, one of whom has adult children living in the UK.

We asked the respondents to classify their Norwegian language proficiency into one of three separate levels: basic, medium or advanced. This can also be viewed in the Informant Overview in Appendix 8. Five stated their Norwegian as basic, four as medium, and a total of seven stated that their Norwegian was advanced. There are several reasons underlying the varying levels of proficiency. When asked about their colleagues' English language proficiency, nearly all used words as "excellent," "high" or "annoyingly good." However, some pinpointed offshore workers having a more varied competence or willingness to speak English. Yet, these were still deemed functional in an international work context. The offshore workers were not someone the respondents necessarily communicated with on a daily basis or this assessment stemmed from past experiences.

MOTIVATION

All, except two informants, applied for a job in Norway directly rather than being transferred by their employer at the time. One of the exceptions applied for another job in order to remain in Norway and the other signed a local contract rather than remaining on an expatriate contract.

When answering questions regarding their future plans in Norway, the majority stated they had no desire to leave Norway in the foreseeable future. However, one respondent lives and works in Norway periodically, another is a trainee and has an end date to their contract.

When asked to elaborate on a hypothetical situation where they would have to leave Norway and what they would miss the most, repeated phrases were "flat organizational structure," "nature," and the "healthy work-life balance." What they would miss the least were other trivial aspects such as few options at the supermarket and the poor weather. However, some did also mention the price level, the difficulty of establishing relationships with locals, in addition to the Norwegian taxation schemes.

The most common motivational factors inducing optimal performance were the task itself, self-respect, solving problems, knowing that people depend on them, good colleagues, professional pride, and sense of accomplishment. Thus, all respondents mentioned other factors than financial compensation, meaning their base wage and potential bonus.

I think it's fair to say that once you earn enough money to get by.... or be able to do the things that you need to do, anymore than that of course is a bonus, but it's not the primary motivator.

- R13C5

All respondents would praise colleagues if they were successful or had a good idea. Some also mentioned they would purely compliment their colleague if they genuinely performed well. An example provided by a respondent was they told a colleague that they did a good job on a presentation and it covered an interesting subject. The degree to which the praise is expressed verbally varies among the respondents and is contingent on several factors. One respondent mentioned that giving praise could be “tricky” (R13C5), as it may be perceived as inappropriate if it stems from an individual of a lower level in the organization.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONFLICTS

Regarding conflicts, there were several differing responses as they all have various personal experiences. Many respondents did not recall any particular conflicts, but reflected on misunderstandings that may have emerged because of differences in: importance of feedback, humor, level of formality, lack of transparency, blame, language, and readiness to address conflict. However, some had experienced conflicts. These derived from constructive criticism being seen as inappropriate, humor being misperceived, and the significance of labor unions in Norway.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Feedback can be both praise and (constructive) criticism. The constructive criticism could be perceived as a personal attack without that being its intention. Some Britons reacted on nearly solely receiving positive feedback from Norwegians on a presentation and not getting any constructive criticism in order to improve, which in Britain is fairly common. One mentioned they observed Norwegians to be reluctant to receive praise or did not acknowledge the comments.

Respondents also mentioned the different sense of humor between Norway and the UK, particularly with respect to sarcasm and other forms of self-deprecating humor. As observed by us, the use of sarcasm was apparent. Throughout the interviews, some informants continuously made self-deprecating jokes about themselves and us. One respondent, being fluent in both English and Norwegian, reflected upon how they had experienced The British and the Norwegians having formed two separate cliques at the workplace. This was, according to both sides, due to fear of exerting humor towards each other and potentially insulting one another. The respondent took the role of the “middle man,” and spoke to both groups, explaining they should not be afraid of talking and joking with each other. After this, they achieved a great atmosphere at work. As mentioned by some respondents, both the type of humor and the language barrier are sources of humor being misconstrued.

I think I have seen where sense of humor is different sarcasm is a good one. [For example].... in the UK that is often a form of humor and it is not directed to put anyone down or to be offensive, but it perhaps does not translate very well in a conversation. Not generally in business meetings, it is more in social conversations where you can see that that has not really come across the way it was meant to.

- R4C2

The majority of the respondents addressed the high level of formality in the UK, as opposed to their Norwegian workplace. Misunderstandings may arise due to differing levels of formality in a number of ways. One respondent provided an example where a Norwegian colleague had approached their British manager by only his surname in an attempt to be as polite as possible. However, this was perceived as very rude seeing that he did not use an honorific (for example, Mr. or Mrs.) or merely called him by his first name.

Regarding transparency, one informant perceived a lack of openness, a limit of information and felt there were many secrets from managers down. Another respondent, who was a manager, stressed that they themselves will sometimes withhold specific information. This person discusses it with regard to technological difficulty and differences in level of expertise, thus causing them unnecessary additional work if everything is to be explained. The intention is not to withhold essential information. However, these are two separate individuals in separate companies with differing positions, the latter is a manager and the former is not. Yet, some respondents stressed that Norwegian organizational culture is more open with respect

to information than the British. A respondent expressed their desire for more guidance and information when completing their individual task as they could not see how it is related to the overall task of the team.

Two respondents have also discussed the manner in which a country has a “blame culture.” This concerns who will be held responsible in cases where performance is not optimal. One respondent struggled to get straightforward responses when asking what happened in certain situations. Norwegians tend to be less outspoken concerning specific events prior to the incidents thus, hindering future performance and ability to learn from the mistake. Another respondent emphasized that the role of responsibility differs between Norwegian and British organizational culture. In Norway, individuals do not bear sole responsibility if something goes wrong, as opposed to in Britain, where there is a tendency for individuals to be blamed. If something “goes wrong it comes back to us” (R10C4).

Finding the language that limits the risk of misinterpretation is key for clarity, and in most cases this is English. However, there are some instances where some Norwegians are not as proficient in English, thus adjusting to “NorwEnglish.” This means a mix of the two languages. Some respondents mentioned misunderstandings due to Norwegian idioms, metaphors and dialects, despite feeling quite confident in their Norwegian. In addition, how Norwegians differ in their verbal use of numbering systems, for instance “tjuefire,” versus “fireogtjue,” or “fireogtyve,” is another source of linguistic complication. One respondent had experienced what they referred to as “double misunderstandings,” when first learning Norwegian. In order to make sure the information received was correctly understood, they double checked with a colleague, but continued to misinterpret the information.

I did check with people that I had got the drift, but maybe I didn't get the communication back to them properly either.

- R15C7

According to one respondent, work-related miscommunication between individuals is unlikely to be a huge issue as long as they are within the same discipline. In other words, if they speak the same professional language, linguistic misunderstandings will, to a large extent, be avoided.

CONFLICTS

According to several respondents, conflicts rarely occur with Norwegians. Some stated this could be explained by Norwegians being fairly accommodating and conflict averse. They experienced that Norwegians tend not to express their opinion concerning certain subjects both personally and professionally.

.... I feel like people are maybe shy to say something or don't want to rock the boat in this culture

- R15C7

Another confirmed this statement by comparing the British as being more inclined to voice their opinions.

.... In Britain there is more of a culture of complaining about stuff. Whereas Norwegian people if they don't really like it, they won't say anything.

- R6C2

Two of the respondents had been told, several times, to restrict their constructive criticism as it was not the custom or appropriate in their office. One was told that their sharp tongue could be a career-limiting factor. This was apparent in several different companies, especially in offices where the ratio of Norwegians exceeded approximately 50%.

As mentioned, the misinterpretation of humor is fairly common, and this could lead to conflicts as some get offended by sarcastic statements perceived as personal attacks. One respondent observed this happening between a Briton and Norwegian.

Another source of conflict has been the strong presence of unions in Norway with regard to their role and power. Unions are deemed to be a limiting factor for certain processes both onshore and offshore as they, to a certain extent, control what can and cannot be completed.

.... There have been cases where [unions have] caused some conflict or frustration and we have either had to give up on wanting to do something or had to try to find a way to work around it.

- R8C3

Five of the informants unsolicited stated that they perceived most conflicts to be due to differences in personality, and not necessarily culture or nationality. There were also those who

could not recall any misunderstandings or conflicts based on differences in culture or personality.

It is probably one of those things where there are little cases all the time but nothing big enough to kind of stick into my memory.

- R8C3

COMMUNICATION

Merely two individuals felt they did not receive an adequate amount of guidance to perform their daily tasks. These felt as though they needed more follow-up meetings and confirmation that they were on the right track in order to reduce uncertainty. One was content with the level of guidance as of date, but expressed a desire for a potential increase in the future as their role is subject to change.

While the majority stated that their company language was English, there were some who expressed it was Norwegian. Generally, where Norwegian was the company language there was a surplus of Norwegian employees. The four individuals in the Norwegian-speaking companies stated that they mastered the language well.

CHANNELS

The most common medium of daily communication with their on-site colleagues is face-to-face interaction, supplemented by e-mails as needed. In addition, four mentioned the use of an internal messaging system for both on-site and off-site colleagues. In general, the younger respondents stated using this more frequently. One informant working in an office where the most common way of communicating was by e-mail, deemed the use of this medium impersonal. This individual would prefer more face-to-face interaction. Nearly all respondents were members of an on-site team, where formal meetings were quite common in addition to informal individual discussions.

The means of communication varies according to how important, urgent or ambiguous the matter at hand is. For important issues, there was a rather even split between the number of the respondents who would use e-mail and those who would approach people face-to-face. Those favoring e-mail, tended to state that this is due to documentation purposes. One mentioned that they would use e-mail to stress that the issue was official. Those having a

preference for face-to-face interaction justified this by the need to avoid misunderstandings if something important were to be explained. One of them stated that e-mails are only effective if they are sharp and to the point. Another one would approach colleagues verbally in order to signalize that the issue is, in fact, too important to be discussed by e-mail. If the topic was urgent or unclear, potentially needing further explanation, a face-to-face approach was common.

Using a mixture of face-to-face communication and e-mail was also mentioned in some cases. Then one would either send an initial e-mail upon approaching people on the issue or provide a follow-up e-mail afterwards as a documentation of the verbal discussion.

The majority felt that they received an excessive amount of mass messages from the administration, and all messages were in English with the exception of a few. The exceptions were always followed by an English translation in the same e-mail. One deemed an abundant amount of mass e-mails from their company as an attempt to be perceived as transparent. Another expressed a desire to receive mass e-mails in Norwegian in order to learn more. Rather than using mass e-mails, certain respondents expressed an appreciation of the company's intranet.

LEVEL OF FORMALITY

Approximately half of the respondents expressed that they did not adjust their communication style with respect to formality when addressing an individual of a higher position. Five of eight who stated they did not differentiate, were managers themselves. In addition, four of the same cluster of these eight, work in offices with a majority of Norwegians on-site. Yet, six of eight have lived and worked in Norway for more than eight years, and one of the remaining two had lived in Scandinavia for several years. This individual expressed they would not change the level of formality regardless of who is being addressed, even if it is a Briton, as long as they are both located in Norway.

The other half stated they did, to some extent, alter the level of formality when communicating with someone of a different rank. The majority of these eight individuals explained their actions and what they deemed formal communication. Some mentioned the word respect while discussing formality with regard to someone of a higher rank; meaning, respect for the

accomplishments, responsibilities, time allocation, and personality of the individual. They found it essential to evaluate the information and be concise with what is conveyed to those of a higher rank. This was important as these individuals had a more limited capacity to receive and process an abundance of information from multiple employees. Therefore, these respondents were always more concise when communicating with managers, be it face-to-face or by e-mail. Yet, one explained that this was not necessarily a cultural aspect, but general workplace etiquette. Thus, the cultural difference would be that in Norway one can be informal but remain concise when communicating, whereas in the UK it is expected one is both formal and concise.

SOCIALIZING AT THE OFFICE

All but two respondents expressed the importance of small talk around the office, and some wished there was more but at the right time. Meaning, if time and workload allows for it, one could build a social rapport with colleagues. One mentioned that getting to know people on a social level makes it more comfortable to approach them for advice if needed. Two respondents found the stillness of a Norwegian office to be awkward and they could overcompensate by excessive, unnecessary small talk. Another respondent stressed the importance of small talk, but mentioned a lack of surplus time to engage to the extent desired. One mentioned the change in office landscape affecting the amount of small talk conducted. Previously, they had separate offices and the amount of small talk was greater. However, after being placed in the same office space, the amount of small talk had subsided. One thought small talk was too shallow and wished to build a deeper relationship with his colleagues, thus implying that it was insignificant. Another stated the importance of being effective at work and completing his tasks rather than engaging in small talk.

All respondents work in an office where they tend to eat lunch together, however there are some exceptions. One mentioned that they, at times, preferred to have lunch later than others or alone in order to avoid un-stimulating conversations. This is not necessarily due to a cultural aspect nor a language restraint, but to relax at some point during the day or leave early as compensation. The majority of the other respondents stated that they ate with their colleagues on a daily basis. The language that was used differed based on the company, the ratio of

Norwegians to non-Norwegians, personal language proficiency and who they ate with that particular day.

One respondent expressed relief of seeing multiple nationalities around a table during lunch, knowing they would speak English. This was especially the case when they did not have the energy to have a conversation in Norwegian. Two also mentioned the embarrassment of not being proficient enough in Norwegian to engage or contribute in the conversation if it is held in Norwegian. They also felt as though they were a nuisance making others accommodate to their constraint. Some wished to merely observe a Norwegian conversation in order to learn, thus they refrain from contributing to the conversation. However, this was not always easy as the Norwegians tended to quickly revert to English in the presence of other nationalities and therefore limit the opportunity for the Briton to observe.

LANGUAGE

The manner in which the respondents learned, and are continuously learning, Norwegian varies. Some learned it solely in a social context, whereas others learned through schooling and tutors. The companies' policies and the timing of the courses varied as well. Some companies financially supported courses and tutors during working hours, while others covered this only to a certain extent. This could potentially be by only covering the financials but not supplying time or tutors and leaving it to the individual to allocate the time themselves. Today it is, to a certain extent, the individuals' responsibility to facilitate a good learning arena on their own initiative with the financial support of the company.

The individuals who have resided in Norway for more than 20 years, all had a different approach from those arriving in recent years. Previously, they received both a private tutor and were allocated working hours to complete these sessions, which is less common today. One respondent expressed their frustration over this development and desired individual tutoring sessions.

One of the challenges mentioned regarding learning the language was to get Norwegians to continue addressing the Britons in their mother tongue. One informant explicitly told their Norwegian colleagues not to switch to English, but despite this desire, they continued to do so. The respondent reflected this could be due to habit, politeness, and that colleagues were

unsure whether or not the Briton understood the topic discussed. Another exemplified this issue by highlighting the differences in a social and formal, technical context. It was found frustrating that people responded in English rather than Norwegian in a social context, thus hindering an educational experience. However, in a work situation, this was understood as it is critical to minimize misunderstandings. Another challenge concerned the dialects, as it is difficult to follow a conversation with significant variation in dialects, which is quite common.

Beside the obvious advantages of learning Norwegian, such as reducing the risk of miscommunication, respondents have mentioned an improved quality of life, a greater understanding of context and situations, being a better partner of society, access to a greater network, and a mutual respect. A monetary reason for learning the language was also mentioned. One expressed that he could function perfectly fine in a work context without learning Norwegian, but socially he would struggle. Several revealed they felt as an outsider when they could not speak Norwegian. They also described a feeling of mutual respect when they did speak the language and were understood, this aside from being technically competent and having a relationship with the individual.

We were English speaking, in theory, in the office but there was no doubt that if you could speak Norwegian it created a completely different relation or environment. I sense that things always went 20 percent better if you could be both good technically, good in relationships but also speak the language.

- R5C2

SOCIALIZING

Regarding socializing with colleagues outside the office, 12 respondents said that they did. However, in some instances this merely concerned activities initiated by the firm. Those who did not socialize with colleagues, all expressed different reasons for why they thought this was the case. One reason was that Norwegians have a clear distinction between personal and professional life, meaning they kept their social and work life separate. This was discussed by several when describing the differences in pub-culture between the two nations. The aspect of a pub-culture is greatly missed by several British respondents and mentioned throughout the interviews, as this is deeply rooted in British culture.

An additional reason described was that people were in different life stages. Some were single while others had families. It was mentioned that they tended to lean more towards those in a

similar life situation as themselves; those with children arrange play-dates and those without children do other activities. Some are so settled in Norway they tend to only socialize with internationals or locals outside of the workplace, as expatriates are likely to leave. However, the difficulties of getting to know locals was also mentioned by quite a few. While describing Norwegians, one respondent gave their description:

Norwegians are like thermos flasks. So they are hard on the outside but warm on the inside, so you just need to get through the thermos flask, which is good.

- R2C2

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The social differences mentioned in the section above were also touched upon when discussing the most significant differences between the British and Norwegian organizational cultures. Where this was observed the most was the separation between work and personal life thus referring to the non-existent pub-culture with Norwegian colleagues. Being accustomed to having a local pub in Britain where everyone meets frequently, differed when coming to Norway where locals tend to keep to themselves.

Several mentioned the different levels of formality, i.e. Norway being more informal than Britain. When discussing this point, respondents reflected over the dress code, how colleagues address one another, codes of conduct at the office, and humor. Overall, the dress code in the Norwegian offices are much more relaxed, and after a while some needed to remind themselves when returning to Britain that wearing a suit (or a nice dress or blouse) is custom. In addition, they had observed that in Norway, it is accepted to regularly voice their opinions and share ideas during meetings is deemed appropriate. The acceptance of ideas or thoughts from a subordinate to a manager is also customary in the Norwegian workplace, in fact encouraged. In Norway, there is more mutual respect between a superior and their subordinate in addition to a greater focus on team or collective achievements, thus they experience a sense of accomplishment if the team performs. One respondent believed that the informality of a Norwegian organizational culture led to better communication between people. One drew parallels between the level of formality and humor stating that in the UK they are less formal with respect to humor, while still being hierarchical. In other words, being aware of appropriate situations for when to be playful.

The majority of informants mentioned aspects of the workplace by using words as hierarchy, democracy, working hours, and honesty. The word “flat” was used to describe the Norwegian organizational structure by several respondents. When discussing aspects of hierarchy, previous reflections concerning informal speech and approaching managers were continued. A sense of democracy was also more apparent in the Norwegian office, meaning ideas and opinions were encouraged, appreciated, and potentially implemented. There is a tendency that the working hours in Norway differ greatly from the UK. Some respondents described the shorter office hours as surprising as it was something they were unaccustomed to. Several mentioned their appreciation for the healthy Norwegian work-life balance. During these short office hours, the effectiveness of the Norwegians was acknowledged and potentially transferred to their own work ethic. In Norway, it is custom to leave around 16:00 or earlier as need be. One mentioned that in the UK there is a self-imposed peer pressure regarding long work hours. Another stated the expectation to stay until your superior has left the building, which is illustrated by the following statement.

Because I started working in the UK, I can't quite get rid of... If I leave the office before my boss, I feel like I am doing something wrong.

- R8C3

The concept of autonomy plays a greater role in Norway than in the UK. Contents of the definition of autonomy was described by some respondents, stating that in the UK you could expect more direction and being told what to do rather than a superior providing you with the freedom to make decisions. However, the level of autonomy could also, to a certain extent, be due to their profession. This autonomy remained as they had individual tasks while working towards a common goal as a team.

When describing impressions of, and experiences with Norwegians, several respondents touched upon various words related to the cultural phenomenon Law of Jante, for instance “modest,” “quiet,” and “humble.” One experienced this during recruitment of new employees; the Norwegians kept downplaying their achievements while the British exaggerated. Another expressed their frustration over the prominence of the Law of Jante and its influence on organizational culture. They implied that it is detrimental, as it can inhibit new insight and ideas due to Norwegians being more reserved.

.... An American will talk like they worked on the subject for their whole life and are absolutely experts, a Brit will do something similar but be not quite so confident about it, and a Norwegian will refuse to speak about it unless they've got a PhD or an MSc in the subject....

- R12C5

Other words one respondent used to describe the British organizational culture were networks, nepotism, and class structure regarding recruitment and promotions. However, concerning the importance of networks, another mentioned the continuous presence of “Gutteklubben Grei” (a male oriented informal network) in Norway. Thus, maintaining gender inequality or the glass ceiling because people hire people who are like themselves. One respondent discussed how female managers tend to be stricter than males in the same position, as they might feel a need to overcompensate, while another expressed how female managers are “softer,” bringing positive leadership attributes to the table. All respondents stated that there should be an even distribution of male and female in managerial positions. However, they did not necessarily agree with affirmative action or positive discrimination but deem promotions should be based on achievements and capabilities.

There's nothing wrong with women being in different positions, but like men, you gotta have the right personality for the position.

- R11C4

Some respondents acknowledge the simplicity of combining a career and having a family in Norway compared to the UK, as institutions aid the transitions. For example, the maternity and paternity leave in addition to daycare. One respondent stated he does not wish to return to England with his children, as these institutions embedded in the Norwegian society benefit his daughters.

RESPONDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A desire from a couple of informants was to reinstate the Norwegian tutors at the workplace. Despite the majority of Norwegians being excellent in English, many expressed a desire to learn Norwegian. Having Norwegian lessons at the office with a tutor would be more helpful than having to take a class after work with several other individuals. Several mentioned the benefits of team building in one form or another. Trying to get people out of their comfort zones by placing them in teams rather than letting them pick their own teams could encourage

socialization. Socializing through team building events could get people to know each other so they become more relaxed, efficient and more approachable. Having a good social rapport with colleagues could create a sense of commitment to the company by making them feel appreciated. Some respondents expressed the importance of office landscape for communication, as a more open space removes physiological barriers and increases the likelihood of approaching colleagues face-to-face. Receiving clear and concise information is key in order to avoid miscommunication. A manager stated that one cannot force local Norwegians to only speak English, and that the creation of an office culture that allows for differences is crucial.

One suggested that, in order to become more proficient in Norwegian and thus optimize communication in the long run, there could be one day a week where everyone in the office speaks solely Norwegian. Similar examples provided by two respondents considered limiting all communication to one language. However, one suggested that rules and regulations similar to these are neither plausible nor effective.

The majority of the respondents mentioned the effect of individual personality on some of the situations above. In addition, the uncertainty of whether the matter at hand can be assigned a national culture, an organizational culture, or the specific office culture. This, in addition to other items, will be assessed in the following chapter.

CONCLUSION

As a result of 16 interviews in eight different companies, we have been able to seek patterns and find similarities of responses. Thus providing an overview of cultural and communication challenges in the Norwegian working environment as faced by Britons.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we present our interpretations and discussion of the findings provided from the interviews conducted. This chapter mainly focuses on the working environment with regard to communication and culture, where national culture will shed light on the organizational culture. We will begin by commenting on the respondents' answers regarding the general questions. These responses could be moderating effects, thus to a certain extent determine the remaining discussions. Then we will present their motivation for working and remaining in Norway. All respondents seemed content with their current employment status. Next, we will discuss the responses of their reflections with regard to the GLOBE dimensions to find similarities and discrepancies. It is important to note, once again, that we have not interviewed Norwegian workers. Therefore, there is a skew in information collection as we interpret the Norwegian culture based on the British respondent's perspective. We will then assess the formal and informal communication at the office. Finally, we will discuss the role of language and the significance of humor. Thus, this chapter does not follow the same structure as the previous chapter.

The range of the respondent's time in Norway varied from 3 months to 39 years. This could have a rather significant effect on their attitudes, reflections, and responses. For instance, one respondent stated that they did not experience any differences between Norwegian and British organizational culture. This individual had resided in Norway for only three months, thus coinciding with theory regarding the cross-cultural adjustment cycle, explaining that the cultural shock will not necessarily be apparent to the individual in the first three months (Stewart Black & Mendenhall, 1991). Those residing in Norway for several years might have developed a dual mentality, thus experiencing situations from both perspectives.

The age range of the informants could assist in explaining some of the findings as well. Having their ages span from mid-twenties to mid-sixties provides us with a large amount of information from all stages of the career and differing positions in the company. Thus, interviewing individuals varying from a trainee to a lead geologist (manager) contributes to differing perspectives.

It was observed that their family situation most likely had an impact on their social life, for instance to what extent they socialize and whom they socialize with, in addition to language proficiency, and attitudes towards Norwegian culture. As previously mentioned, there were some who had Norwegian or Scandinavian spouses or common law partners. These tended to be very eager to learn Norwegian and immerse themselves into the culture. This could be due to an increased level of commitment and motivation with regard to both the partner and country.

There was one respondent who had been in Norway for three years, first on an expat contract but now on a Norwegian contract, who was still struggling to learn the language. This individual also mentioned that their partner potentially found it frustrating to have to repeat something in Norwegian rather than say it immediately in English, thus not sufficiently facilitating for this individual to practice the language. The desire to learn the language could also be motivated by having children in Norwegian schools. Being able to communicate with their family in Norwegian could be essential. Integrating their children in the Norwegian school system could also assist in altering their attitude towards the Norwegian culture and bureaucracy.

When asked to rate their language proficiency on a three-point scale, a total of seven stated they were advanced in both spoken and written Norwegian, whereas others were more uncertain of their levels (see Appendix 8). However, one respondent had talked to us in Norwegian prior to the interview, speaking it well, later defined his proficiency as intermediate. Thus, there could be incongruence between what is defined as “basic, medium and advanced” language proficiency by the informants and the interviewers.

MOTIVATION

We asked some questions in order to uncover their motivation towards the desire for a career in Norway. Prior to moving to Norway, the country was continuously associated with the words “nature” and “outdoors” by the respondents. In addition, these were repeated when asked what they would miss the most if they had to leave. Yet, they generally used much more time to answer what they would miss the least and the items mentioned were rather trivial. There could be varying reasons for this, one being they enjoy Norway to such a great extent and see no considerable flaws.

All respondents expressed the ineffectiveness of financial incentives as a form of motivation at the workplace. Some clearly stated that as long as the salary is above a certain threshold, they are comfortable and have a liberty to do as they please. As long as their primary needs are covered, everything else is a bonus but not a necessity. This is aligned with a diminishing utility function in basic economic theory. All respondents, except two, are on a Norwegian contract, and thus the base wage is reflective of the Norwegian living expenses today. Those with a financial bonus were somewhat ambivalent to the effect of it, those without did not necessarily desire it. One respondent reflected over its counterproductive nature. In general, there is a three-month notice period in Norwegian contracts, thus unmotivated employees may refrain from giving notice in fear of losing a potential bonus. In addition, if the bonus is based on individual performance, this could ensue unhealthy competition among employees.

Aspects that do motivate the respondents coincides with theory concerning motivation of knowledge workers (Lines, 2011). Sources of motivation mentioned ranged from feedback from colleagues and superiors to the task itself. Thus, if the task was challenging and they felt a sense of accomplishment, this was a significant driver of job satisfaction. Another source of motivation was the working hours and the work-life balance in Norway. Some stated that the healthy work-life balance was what they would miss the most about Norway, and the amount of working hours help create a stable and comfortable lifestyle. This reflects the description of Norway's values and lifestyle compared to the British culture, as explained in the Culture chapter and in Appendix 4 (Cultural Dimensions Overview).

GLOBE DIMENSIONS

In this section, we assess our findings with regard to the GLOBE Project dimensions in order to highlight any similarities or discrepancies (House et al., 2004). In order to find the differences between Norway and Britain, their "As is" or practice scores from Table 4 and 5 are repeated in Table 6 to illustrate the deviation.

CULTURAL DIMENSION	NORWAY	BRITAIN	DIFFERENCE
Uncertainty Avoidance	4.31	4.65	- 0.34
Future Orientation	4.48	4.28	0.20
Power Distance	4.13	5.15	- 1.02
Institutional Collectivism (I)	4.07	4.27	- 0.20
Humane Orientation	4.81	3.72	1.09
Performance Orientation	4.18	4.08	0.10
In-Group Collectivism (II)	5.34	4.08	1.26
Gender Egalitarianism	4.03	3.67	0.36
Assertiveness	3.37	4.15	- 0.78

Table 6: Comparison of Norway and England GLOBE Scores

SIMILARITIES

With regard to Power Distance, nearly all respondents recognized the flat organizational structure in Norway compared to other nations. In addition, the level of formality differed as well. We observed a correlation between the respondents' time span in Norway and how they address others in the organization. Over time, they may have adjusted to the more informal way of approaching colleagues and superiors. Respondents did explain that their version of formality was rooted in a respect for their superior, regarding both their time and experiences. Therefore there is a need to be clear and concise. Based on the GLOBE Project results, there is a significant difference between the two nations, 1.02, thus the findings of our research to a certain extent confirms their findings.

When comparing Norway and Britain with regard to Uncertainty Avoidance, the differences are quite small. Only one respondent mentioned a desire for a greater amount of transparency but several discussed the need for more clarity with regard to assignments and tasks at the office. Having a greater amount of clarity and more transparency lowers the possibility of an assignment failing and gives an individual a greater amount of control, thus lowering general risk. Managers in Norway, regardless of nationality, may withhold information in a failed attempt to protect and reduce the uncertainty perceived by the employee. The managers themselves could lack sufficient information regarding the subject as well. However, the

volatility of the current market situation of the oil and gas industry has led to greater concern regarding job security, thus the transparency issue could be a result. Norwegians could, to a certain extent, feel the same concerning job security, yet the internationals could still feel more uncertain as they are not nationals. In addition, many British lowered the risk of misunderstanding by learning Norwegian or at least having the desire to learn the language. Based on our findings, it seems plausible that Britain has a slightly higher Uncertainty Avoidance score.

All, except two, had taken an individual initiative to work in Norway. When we excluded expatriates from our research, we held an assumption that our respondents had self-initiated their move to Norway, which was strengthened by their responses. As we interpret it, this signals a greater motivation for remaining in Norway. This was further confirmed by statements concerning nearly all being reluctant to leave within the foreseeable future, and some refused the thought of leaving Norway altogether. Norway has, in general, a three month notice timespan which could be seen as a component for planning for the future as it is longer than some countries. Norway scoring marginally higher on Future Orientation than Britain is not significantly notable through this research.

The differences in Gender Egalitarianism is fairly low, meaning they should have moderately similar views on gender roles in the workplace. Despite Norway being recognized for its Gender Egalitarianism in theory, one informant discussed the remaining presence of the Norwegian “Gutteklubben Grei” in the oil and gas industry. Another discussion concerned some female managers’ need to overcompensate with masculine leadership characteristics. Yet, several respondents stated they had previously had or currently have female managers to whom they ascribe positive leadership characteristics. Regardless of this candor, all respondents stated there should be an even distribution of male and females in managerial positions, but this should be based on merit and desire not affirmative action. Norwegian institutions were also mentioned when discussing the facilitation of retaining female employees. Combining these findings, Norway’s high Gender Egalitarianism score is to a certain extent confirmed.

DISCREPANCIES

Concerning the cultural dimensions Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Future Orientation and Gender Egalitarianism, there were little discrepancies to the theory referred to in Chapter 2. However, the remaining dimensions did have additional information which could be necessary to contribute to existing theory.

Collectivism I

The majority of the respondents were members of a team in the workplace, thus there is a pressure to perform as a group. In addition, respondents mentioned they felt proud if a member performed well because then the team performed well. However, within this industry there is a great sense of autonomy and independence within these teams. But some Britons also stated there is generally more autonomy in Norway compared to Britain despite being within the same field. The aspect of autonomy was reflected upon in a positive light, they seemed to appreciate the “freedom.” There have been discussions concerning the amount of talk around the offices, and to begin with, some respondents thought the offices were very quiet, both in terms of small talk and general noise. After some time, they figured it was due to the individual tasks, especially geologists handling large quantities of data. Based on our findings, one of the reasons for Britain scoring higher within the Institutional Collectivism I dimension could be due to their expectations regarding guidance and feedback.

Collectivism II

The amount of autonomy in teams also affects the level of In-Group Collectivism II. Again, as most respondents worked in teams, they did explain the majority of the tasks conducted were individual. The Norwegian “blame culture” is also of significance. The responsibility lies within the team to perform well, not purely on the individual tied to a specific task. A single individual is not at fault if the project is not successful, it concerns the entire team. Thus, the British seem more individualistic than Norwegians who take collective blame. The teams rely on each other to perform to the best of their ability and have both formal and informal meetings if one needs feedback or other input to complete the task. The British have a desire for more feedback, preferably in the form of guidance, relatively more than what is demanded by Norwegians. Therefore, to a certain extent, our findings support theory regarding In-Group

Collectivism II but struggles to find extensive reasoning behind the degree of the differences between Norwegian and British culture.

Humane Orientation

As for Humane Orientation, the difference of 1.09 is quite substantial (see Table 6). There are several aspects with the Norwegian organizational culture which is of significance within this dimension. Respondents mentioned some of the social institutions as discussed in the theory section, such as maternity and paternity leave and daycare. The majority of employees return to work after leave because they enjoy the job and as the government assists in facilitating daycare, they can return at their own pace. Having the ability to return whenever is comfortable for the individual relieves the pressure of having to go to work and wanting to return. Thus, the welfare state aspects of Norway are noticed and enjoyed by respondents.

The healthy work-life balance has continuously been described as an attractive but different aspect of the Norwegian organizational culture. People enjoy the freedom of leaving around 16:00 and having the remaining afternoon to their disposition. According to theory, Norwegians have been described as slightly reserved and cold, but friendly. The analogy of the thermos flask was fairly descriptive of Norwegians, difficult to get close to, but once you do they are friendly. Respondents said it is difficult to get to know colleagues on a private, social level as they clearly separate work and social life. They still state that they realize this fact and some have come to understand that colleagues are different than friends. However, they seem to enjoy the milieu at the office. Therefore, the Norwegian office environment and Norwegians are perceived as fair, friendly, generous, and caring, thus confirming the result of a relatively high Humane Orientation as stated in the Literature Review chapter.

Assertiveness

Key words in the term Assertiveness are tough, dominant, aggressive, result oriented and direct communication (House et al., 2004). Some of these terms are not synonymous with what would describe Norwegians or their culture. The differences in score are quite significant as Britain scores 0.78 higher than Norway. Respondents also discussed their own need for clarity when evaluating a task, thus insinuating there might be less direct communication in Norway relative to Britain. One stated the informal culture facilitated better communication, as informality lowers the threshold for approaching colleagues.

The most crucial discussion stemmed from asking about conflicts. When asked this question, the majority of the respondents took quite some time to reflect, and we continued to broaden the question by asking if they had experienced situations where they felt uncomfortable rather than there being a clear conflict. Respondents stated they had never experienced a conflict with a Norwegian or explained that these rarely occurred, at least to the extent the British are accustomed to. Bearing this in mind, Norwegians were seen as conflict averse and that they would rather refrain from asserting themselves, especially in the workplace. To a certain extent, greater conflicts are generally resolved through the Norwegian labor unions. When pushed, Norwegians did notify the British when they stepped over a line and were perceived as offensive.

Norway's high score in Humane Orientation could also help illuminate aspects of Assertiveness (House et al., 2004). The fair, generous, and caring features of this dimension contrast aspects of the tough and aggressive essence of Assertiveness. The Law of Jante contradicts a high Assertiveness score as Norwegians are taught to be modest, not to brag or stand out from an early age. Since this dimension focuses on being assertive, tough, and dominant, the backbone of Norwegians does not comply with a high Assertiveness score. Based on aspects mentioned above, our findings support the low Assertiveness score attributed Norway in the GLOBE Project.

Performance Orientation

Performance Orientation consists of encouragement and rewards, seeking improvement, challenging tasks, feedback, learning, and taking initiative (House et al., 2004). According to Warner-Söderholm (2010) and House et. al. (2004), the difference between Norway and England with respect to this dimension is a mere 0.1 points. The extent to which praise, in the sense of feedback, is provided to and by colleagues varies among the respondents. This variation can be explained by several reasons, for example the personality and the rank of both individuals, previous experiences, office etiquette, as well as the situation at hand. However, Norwegians are not generally receptive to positive feedback or comfortable providing negative feedback as this in a way contradicts the Law of Jante. Based on our findings, the British prefer encouragement in the form of feedback and desire more constructive criticism in order to improve and learn. In addition, the British prefer individual feedback rather than being

evaluated as a team. As they prefer more individual feedback than what is currently provided, one can assume that this is lower in Norway than in Britain. However, as Norwegians seem uncomfortable with this, this can explain the difference in Performance Orientation observed.

As Norwegians are perceived to be conflict averse and avoid voicing their opinion, this may lead to detrimental consequences. For instance, if an employee is unhappy in the current job situation and does not thrive, or they feel a lack of clear guidance and do not notify their manager, the manager may be oblivious to the problem. Norwegians, as the British, do wish to deliver an exemplary product to the customer and to their superiors. Despite the work-life balance and shorter working hours, a respondent did mention that Norwegians are more effective than they were accustomed to back home. They complete an equal amount of work in a shorter time period compared to Britons. Bearing this in mind, we expect the low Assertiveness score to have a greater impact on the Performance Orientation than GLOBE's current results imply.

We assume the tasks and the level of difficulty will remain somewhat similar in Norway as in Britain. As knowledge workers, they tend to strive for moderately difficult and varied tasks and thus this aspect of Performance Orientation may provide a similar score for both. However, with regard to the overall Performance Orientation score we find somewhat of a discrepancy. Compared to the quantitative results from the GLOBE Project, the difference is a mere 0.10 (see Table 6), meaning they should be fairly similar. Yet, the respondents' responses provide a different conclusion. Overall, we suspect that the impact of the Law of Jante and other aspects have been underestimated with regard to Norwegian national and organizational culture. As culture and communication are interrelated, we will now assess our findings with regard to communication theory.

COMMUNICATION

FORMAL COMMUNICATION

According to Perrow's Model on Technology and Structure (Arnulf & Brønn, 2014) the type of knowledge workers in our research belong to organizations where they depend on interpersonal communication in order complete the task. This is due to a high level of task variety and a relatively high level of task analyzability.

Face-to-Face Communication

Most respondents stated that daily communication with on-site colleagues was mainly through face-to-face interaction, potentially supplemented by e-mail. This can partly be explained by their profession and thus how they work together, individual personalities, different languages, the size of the office, the office landscape, the social environment and corporate culture, in addition to the communication media available for the employees.

Davenport (2011) stated that information knowledge workers need may vary according to the complexity of the work and their interdependence. The category of knowledge workers in this research are characterized by a high complexity of work and fit into either the expert or the collaboration category. According to theory, free-access tools are commonly used in both cases and occasionally structured provision tools for workers in the expert category. This is aligned with our findings.

The individual's personality may also influence the choice of communication media. An outgoing individual may be more inclined to approach colleagues face-to-face. As e-mails can be found to be impersonal, one might prefer to engage with colleagues face-to-face, thus reflecting their personality. However, if one simply is not bothered, one might prefer to write an e-mail as it may be faster and entail less effort.

With regard to language, people may be more likely to approach others face-to-face if they are confident in the language being spoken. Thus, language proficiency may influence choice of communication channel.

The size of the office in terms of employees could also affect the manner in which communication is conducted. In other words, if the office is relatively small, it would be more natural to approach people face-to-face. This can be explained by the atmosphere in the office and that people have a closer working relationship. As expressed by some of the respondents, an open office landscape could be preferred as it removes physiological barriers, thus lowering the threshold of physically approaching colleagues. An appreciation of open office landscapes coincides with the fact that knowledge workers tend to favor workspaces that allow them to interact with their colleagues in order to collaborate in addition to sharing insight and ideas.

The Social Information Processing Model (Miller, 2009) says that the social environment also has an effect on media choice. For instance, if the corporate culture holds values encouraging daily interpersonal contact, or focus on the office being a “family,” this could increase the possibility of face-to-face communication among colleagues.

The choice of communication media, may also, to a certain extent, be influenced by the media available for the employees. If they have an internal instant messaging system, it may be tempting to use this rather than approaching the person involved.

As the ambiguity and importance of the matter increases, the media used to approach colleagues varied among the respondents. Some stated that they would contact people face-to-face in order to be able to explain in greater depth to avoid misunderstandings, while others said they would use e-mail due to documentation purposes in addition to avoid misunderstandings. This signalizes that people appoint different levels of formality to the use of e-mail and face-to-face interaction. The Media Richness Theory (Miller, 2009) predicts that an ambiguous matter calls for a rich media, such as face-to-face, in order for the communication to be effective.

When choosing the appropriate medium for communication, some respondents considered its symbolic value. For instance, one stated that they preferred approaching people verbally in order to signalize that the issue at hand was too important to be communicated by e-mail, whereas another stated that they would use e-mail in order to stress that the matter at hand is official. This aligns with the Dual-Capacity Model (Miller, 2009), saying that a medium carries a symbolic value.

Other Media

As previously mentioned, nearly all respondents worked on on-site project teams, where tasks tend to vary and may be unpredictable. According to theory, members within these teams depend on mutual communication. Formal and informal meetings as well as random discussions help facilitate clarity regarding members’ perceptions and expectations.

Mass messages are an example of communication as transfer, thus one-way communication, which in theory is often deemed ineffective. Most respondents would not mind receiving less mass messages from their respective administration. Information is comprehended only by

those with skills to interpret it, for example language skills. Most administrative mass messages were written in English, meaning the British should be able to understand them. However, if the message is directly translated from Norwegian by a person not perfectly fluent in English, formulations may be wrong, and meaning could get lost.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

An open office landscape may remove physical as well as psychological barriers for approaching colleagues, both formally and informally. However, as one respondent noted, the amount of small talk in their office had declined after moving from separate to shared offices. There can be various reasons for this. It could be more interesting to interact with colleagues they do not see all the time or the desire to avoid disturbing others in the office with their small talk. Also, there could be internal or external factors influencing the overall mood of all employees or it could simply be a coincidence. We believe the amount of small talk, to a certain extent, is contingent on the individuals' language proficiency. An example would be a Norwegian not feeling competent enough in English, thus avoiding a conversation with a Briton who does not speak Norwegian.

The language being used during lunch breaks varied both between companies and within the companies. The number of employees in the office and its atmosphere may influence how people behave and who they socialize with during lunch. If the ratio of Norwegians to non-Norwegians is high, this might increase the probability of the conversation being held in Norwegian, as long as the Briton is able to follow along. Some respondents expressed their embarrassment of not mastering Norwegian well enough to engage in a conversation. This could imply that they wish to acclimatize to Norway, and do not necessarily expect Norwegians to accommodate them. Further, this may signalize motivation towards their workplace and Norway. However, despite a Briton not engaging in a Norwegian conversation or responding in English upon being approached, this does not necessarily imply that they lack motivation towards the workplace or learning Norwegian.

Depending on an individual's level of proficiency, speaking Norwegian may be tiresome. This is especially the case if the Briton must think and formulate a sentence in English before translating it to Norwegian. In other words, the reason why they do not want to speak Norwegian can be assigned to them being tired or stressed. Lunch is usually the time of day

where colleagues get the chance to talk together informally, while it is also the time to relax. Thus, engaging in a conversation could be stressful due to the language being spoken. An individual may also refrain from engaging in the conversation if the matter discussed is deemed uninteresting or irrelevant. However, this may be due to the individual's personality or mood, and not the language.

LANGUAGE

In this section we will touch upon professional language, before discussing reasons for learning or not learning Norwegian, as well as the potential challenges in the learning process. Unless stated otherwise, the term language refers to national language.

PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE

A knowledge worker tends to operate with a specific professional language. Within a discipline, there are industry specific words that outsiders might not be able to assign meaning to. Piekkari, Welch & Welch (2014) stress how the different layers of language, everyday language, company jargon and professional language, are interconnected and could cause misunderstandings. The composition of different professions at the workplace might influence the variety of technical languages, potentially causing misunderstandings in communication between, for instance, an engineer and a geologist. If they, in addition to this, speak different languages, the potential for misunderstandings may further increase.

Some respondents have never worked in the UK, as they were directly employed in Norway after completing their education. Through their work experience in Norway, and potentially speaking Norwegian at work, there is a risk of not recalling or simply never having learned the English translation of a technical expression. This can cause confusion once they apply the words in an English conversation or meeting. As reflected upon by one respondent, a great deal of the technical language offshore is likely to be in English due to safety precautions and regulations. In these circumstances, it is crucial the entire crew has the same understanding of instructions and terminology in order to avoid misunderstandings and detrimental consequences.

LEARNING NORWEGIAN

We believe that the motivation for learning Norwegian was and is higher among Britons who are not expatriates. Fourteen of our respondents are permanent residents, and they may be more inclined to learning the language as they have a relatively permanent time horizon in Norway. The remaining two respondents stand out from the rest with respect to their time in Norway. One lives here only for shorter periods at a time, and the other one is a trainee in Norway within a restricted time frame. As with expatriates, these two may not have the same incentives for learning Norwegian.

We observed a shift in the extent to which companies provide Norwegian training for their employees. Today, it is less common to readily provide language classes and tutoring in the office as opposed to some years back. This can be explained by the excellent English level of Norwegians and a more internationalized working environment. In other words, the need and requirements for the British learning Norwegian has changed. In work contracts written more than two decades ago, it was more likely to state a Norwegian language requirement.

In addition to potential job requirements, learning a language is likely to be a combination of both motivation and personal competencies. Some individuals are more motivated due to personal reasons, for instance feeling embarrassed over lack of language proficiency, and some are simply more receptive to learning new languages. If a Briton struggles learning Norwegian, this may decrease their motivation for continuing the learning process, potentially giving up. This may be one of the reasons why some Britons have not advanced in Norwegian despite having lived in Norway for many years. Other explanations for not having learned the language can be time constraints, a lack of practice in social contexts, or uncertainty surrounding their remaining time in Norway. For instance, if they initially came to Norway without plans to stay more than a year, maybe they did not see the value of learning the language. It is not unusual that people initially plan to stay in a country for a year, but then the year goes by, and they plan to stay for yet another one. Suddenly they may find themselves having lived in the country for several years, all the time having a plan to leave within the foreseeable future, thus not seeing the value of learning the local language. We assume the city in which the respondents reside affects the potential of learning Norwegian. For example, in cities with a heavy expatriate milieu, they may be less inclined to learn Norwegian, as this may not be the main

language spoken in social and professional contexts. Socializing with Norwegians, or having a Norwegian spouse facilitating for practicing the language will probably increase the likelihood of learning.

Many foreign knowledge workers work in an international environment and the degree to how internationalized this environment is, might influence the incentive and potential of learning the language in the country one currently resides in. For instance, the ratio of Norwegians to non-Norwegians at the office, as well as the English level of Norwegian colleagues may also influence the motivation and need for learning Norwegian. If the office consists mainly of Norwegians and their English level is somewhat low, the pressure of learning Norwegian is probably likely to increase. If there are many foreigners in the office, and the English level of Norwegian colleagues is fairly high, the British can, to a greater extent, avoid learning Norwegian. Some Norwegians may enjoy speaking English and thus the Britons miss an opportunity to practice.

For some Britons who wish to practice their Norwegian, they may prefer that Norwegians do not switch to English upon contact. If the Norwegian counterpart is quite competent in English, it can be tempting for an impatient individual to let the conversation continue in English, rather than slow down and wait for the Briton to find his words. In addition, if the Norwegian struggles with English and wants practice, they may avoid steering the conversation towards Norwegian.

Harzing and Puldelko (2013) state that there is a high English level and an extensive use of English in business in the Norway. Bearing this in mind, we believe that there are three consequences for Britons with respect to learning Norwegian. First, the high English level of a Norwegian could simplify the process of communicating with a Briton, with limited Norwegian skills, in order to facilitate learning. Second, it can be a challenge for the British to practice and learn Norwegian, as Norwegians will respond in English. Finally, a Briton may perceive the utility of learning Norwegian as low, thus not initiate learning it.

OFFICE LANGUAGE

It was mentioned that an office should not force different nationalities to speak solely one language all the time. Having one exclusive office language, be it English or Norwegian, can

be counterproductive for various reasons. First, people may be demotivated by not being allowed to speak their own language. Second, it can be quite exhausting having to speak a foreign language throughout the working day. Third, linguistic barriers can cause misunderstandings, which at worst can be fatal.

Having all the formal, written communication in one language may be more feasible and efficient as consistency is important in this respect. Imagine how frustrating it can be for a Briton receiving a forwarded message in Norwegian they do not understand. Or even worse, they may misinterpret the information in the belief that they master the language. For offices in Norway with foreign employees, we believe that the consistent written language should be English. Considering the high level of English proficiency among Norwegians, its widespread use for business purposes, and its role as a Lingua Franca worldwide we deem this to be achievable.

COMMON LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES

Misunderstandings due to linguistic barriers are almost inevitable. Some respondents mentioned difficulties with respect to Norwegian dialects, idioms, metaphors and expressions, although they characterize themselves as advanced in Norwegian. Norway has a considerable amount of various dialects, and pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary tend to differ between them. This is likely to be a source of confusion when a Briton is learning the language, and misunderstandings may occur continuously after fluency in Norwegian is achieved. Idioms are often specific to a certain language and culture, and even though one knows each word the meaning altogether may not be obvious. Likewise, metaphors and certain expressions often derive from culture and its history. Despite a Briton mastering Norwegian well, they may miss out on the overall meaning or on significant details, due to the lack of a contextual knowledge.

ADVANTAGES OF LEARNING NORWEGIAN

In some cases, being able to speak Norwegian is a requirement (either directly or indirectly) for climbing the career ladder. For instance, if we assume that becoming a manager increases the wage, this implies a monetary incentive for learning the language, as mentioned by one respondent. In other words, language proficiency may pose an invisible barrier on careers, as stressed by Piekkari, Welch & Welch (2014).

In most companies and offices above a certain size in Norway, a Briton could probably perform their tasks perfectly fine without speaking Norwegian. However, there is an important element of job satisfaction of going beyond the task and what is expected, including for instance a social aspect. Learning the language may increase an individual's comfort and sense of belonging to the workplace.

Speaking the language of the country one resides in will undoubtedly make the individual feel more integrated. One becomes more observant of details and gains a greater understanding of sociocultural contexts. Being able to read the newspaper and watch Norwegian TV-shows are likely to improve the quality of everyday life.

Learning Norwegian can potentially be a door opener to a greater network. As previously mentioned, Norwegians tend to be reserved with regard to their private, social network. We find it reasonable to believe that once a Briton is competent in Norwegian, the chances of gaining access to a Norwegian social network increases. This can be assigned to both practical and psychological reasons. Not all Norwegians are able to, or comfortable with, speaking English, thus potentially inhibiting a social relationship. Once a Briton has learned, or is continuously learning, Norwegian this signals a commitment towards Norway implying that they may plan to stay. For many people, it is natural to seek friends without immediate plans to leave the country.

HUMOR

The difference in what we can refer to as “Norwegian humor” and “British humor,” is generally assigned to culture. Humor can easily be misunderstood or misconstrued, even within the same culture and in the same language. The problem obviously increases when it involves differing cultures and probably even more if one of them is not proficient in the language being used. Humor does not always translate well and exerting this without considerations can be a pitfall. Misconstrued humor can create uncomfortable situations and can be a source of personal conflicts.

Based on our observations, the chances of misinterpreting humor are less prominent among Britons and Norwegians if the Briton has resided in Norway for many years. As previously mentioned, they may have a “dual mentality,” in the sense that they have developed a

Norwegian way of thinking. As they understand the culture, speak the language, and understand expressions and metaphors, misunderstandings caused by the use of humor or not are less likely to occur. In a work context, misunderstandings due to differing humor are more likely to arise in an informal situation than in a formal situation. Meaning, the use of humor is more expected when conducting small talk around the office than in a business meeting. This is due to humor being deemed inappropriate in formal situations.

Regarding the communication process and its components, a misunderstanding of humor may be caused by various instances, such as encoding, channel, noise, decoding, and context. First, when the sender encodes their idea, the choice of words or symbols may not be suitable (for instance if idioms are used), and the message is expressed in a different way than what was intended. The sender may not be aware of this. Second, the communication channel chosen may not be appropriate for conveying the message. If the message depends on body language or facial expression in order to be properly interpreted, then e-mail is probably a source of misunderstanding. Third, there may be external, internal or “semantic” noise that distorts the signal. Other colleagues talking loud, making the receiver unable to pay attention to what the sender is actually saying is an example of external noise. Internal noise could for instance be that the receiver has an inherent feeling that the sender does not like him, thus having a personal bias. Semantic noise could be that the message is formulated in a language in which the receiver is not fluent, increasing the possibility of the receiver being distracted by alternative meanings of the words. Fourth, the receiver may simply decode the message in a different way than the sender intended it to be decoded. Fifth, the context plays its part. For instance, if a joke intended to be ironic is being exerted in a formal meeting, the receiver may not get the humorous effect.

CONCLUSION

Through 16 semi-structured in-depth interviews, we were able to get a better understanding of some cultural and communication challenges faced by British knowledge workers in Norway. As a result, the most significant challenges seem to be establishing a social network with locals, the role of feedback, perceived delegation of responsibility, and learning the language.

Norwegians are described as “thermos flasks,” difficult to approach but caring once you get to know them. As there is a lack of pub-culture in Norway, some Britons stated they were unsure of where to approach locals if not at the office. Considering Norwegians tend to keep their work and private life separate, this could be a barrier to establishing a social network. The language proficiency of both nationalities, the Norwegians’ English and the Britons’ Norwegian, could be essential when creating relationships.

Britons clearly favor feedback more than Norwegians, and it can be frustrating not receiving it to the extent desired. In addition, not knowing the appropriate situation to provide feedback to a Norwegian colleague is unclear. According to the cultural phenomenon of the Law of Jante, one should not expect an “excessive” amount of positive feedback or exert negative feedback in order to be more humble and reserved. With regard to the cultural dimensions, we find the role of the Law of Jante to be underestimated as some respondents were unaware of its existence. The lack of awareness could be detrimental to the integration of British internationals.

In Norway, there is a greater focus on collective achievements rather than individual. With regard to responsibility, this also applies. Britons are generally more accustomed to bearing sole responsibility, and thus receive individual praise and constructive criticism. Therefore, this skewedness provides a challenge as to who is responsible and who is to “blame.”

To date, the pressure to learn Norwegian is on a more social scale rather than a prerequisite from the company. The manner in which they learn the language is generally in a social context rather than in classes and by tutors. However, some expressed their desire to have the same opportunities as those who arrived in the 80s and 90s.

Challenges when attempting to learn the language will entail the role of English as *Lingua Franca* and the average English proficiency of Norwegians. If a Briton finds little value in mastering Norwegian, due to Norwegians' English skills, they may not have an incentive to learn. In addition, practicing and learning Norwegian could prove difficult for the British as Norwegians tend to revert to English. It is relatively common for Norwegians to do so in order to avoid misunderstandings. This can be due to politeness or a desire to avoid repeating their statement toward a Briton less proficient in Norwegian. In short, one would assume the high English level of Norwegians would facilitate and simplify the process of the British learning Norwegian. However, this may not necessarily be the case as the high English level of Norwegians could also be counterproductive as the threshold of reverting to English is low. Further research could potentially assess the significance of language barriers concerning foreign knowledge workers in an a purely Norwegian or international work environment.

With regard to similarities and discrepancies cultural dimensions in accordance with the GLOBE Project, we compared our findings to certain aspects of cultural dimension theory. Concerning Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Future Orientation and Gender Egalitarianism, we found little to no additions to theory. However, with regard to the remaining five dimensions, Collectivism I and II, Humane Orientation, Assertiveness and Performance Orientation, we found additional aspects that could be applied to the analysis of the Norwegian culture.

In our opinion, the role of the Law of Jante is underestimated with regard to several dimensions. This aspect could affect the Institutional Collectivism, In-Group Collectivism, Assertiveness and Performance Orientation scores. The degree to which the Law of Jante is rooted in Norwegian culture may not necessarily be a revolutionary thought, but the scope of its effect on office culture in a multicultural context is of interest. Further research to assess the extent to which this holds could be intriguing, in addition to an assessment to the extent the Law of Jante is diminishing with respect to generation changes. The Law of Jante could be seen through a Norwegian's desire for feedback, conflict aversion, how ideas are shared, and who should take responsibility. This might influence the manner in which individuals communicate in a multicultural working environment.

With regard to Humane Orientation, Norway had a higher score than Britain, but some aspects contradict the significantly higher score. As mentioned, Norwegians are known for being rather reserved and less approachable, which could lead to a lower score. However, the effect of the healthy work-life balance could readjust the score.

LIMITATIONS

As our research is of a qualitative nature without hypotheses and a probability sample, we are not able to draw statistical conclusions or generalize our findings. We are aware that our personal biases influence our interpretations and thus the validity throughout the entirety of this thesis. In addition, our findings are based on informants' responses and thus could be influenced by the characteristics of the industry, individual personalities, or the manner in which operations are run. For example, the international characteristics of the oil and gas industry might affect the perspectives, attitudes and experiences of the respondents. The influence of our respondent's personalities raises the question of what is innate and what is due to culture.

Regarding data collection, there is a limitation as we only interviewed Britons without conducting equivalent data collection on Norwegians. Thus, there is skewedness in perspectives as we have both secondary and primary data from the former and solely secondary regarding the latter. However, our research question did not directly compare these two cultures, but sought to assess this from a British perspective.

Finally, our respondents were both male and female. In order to answer the research question, we did not take gender differences into account as we did not observe any clear discrepancies in their responses. However, this could potentially be a moderating effect and could be utilized for future research.

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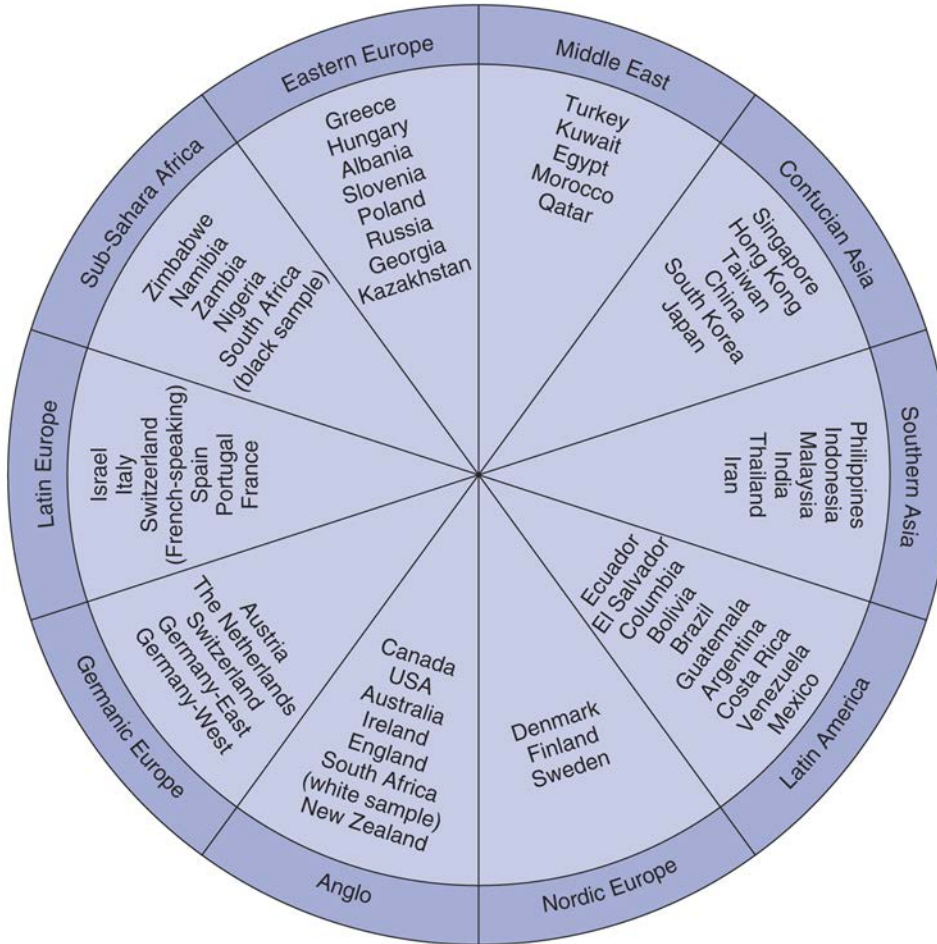
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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: GLOBE CLUSTERS



APPENDIX 2: TRANSLATED QUOTES

Quote 1

Norwegian

(Med intern kommunikasjon mener jeg) *Informasjonsflyten og utvekslingen av ideer og synspunkter mellom ledere og medarbeidere, og også kommunikasjonen mellom enkeltpersoner og grupper på forskjellige nivåer og i ulike enheter eller deler av organisasjonen* (Erlie, 2006, p.17).

Translation

“The information flow and the exchange of ideas and viewpoints between managers and employees, as well as the communication between individuals and groups at different levels and in various units or parts of the organization” (p. 10 in text)

Quote 2

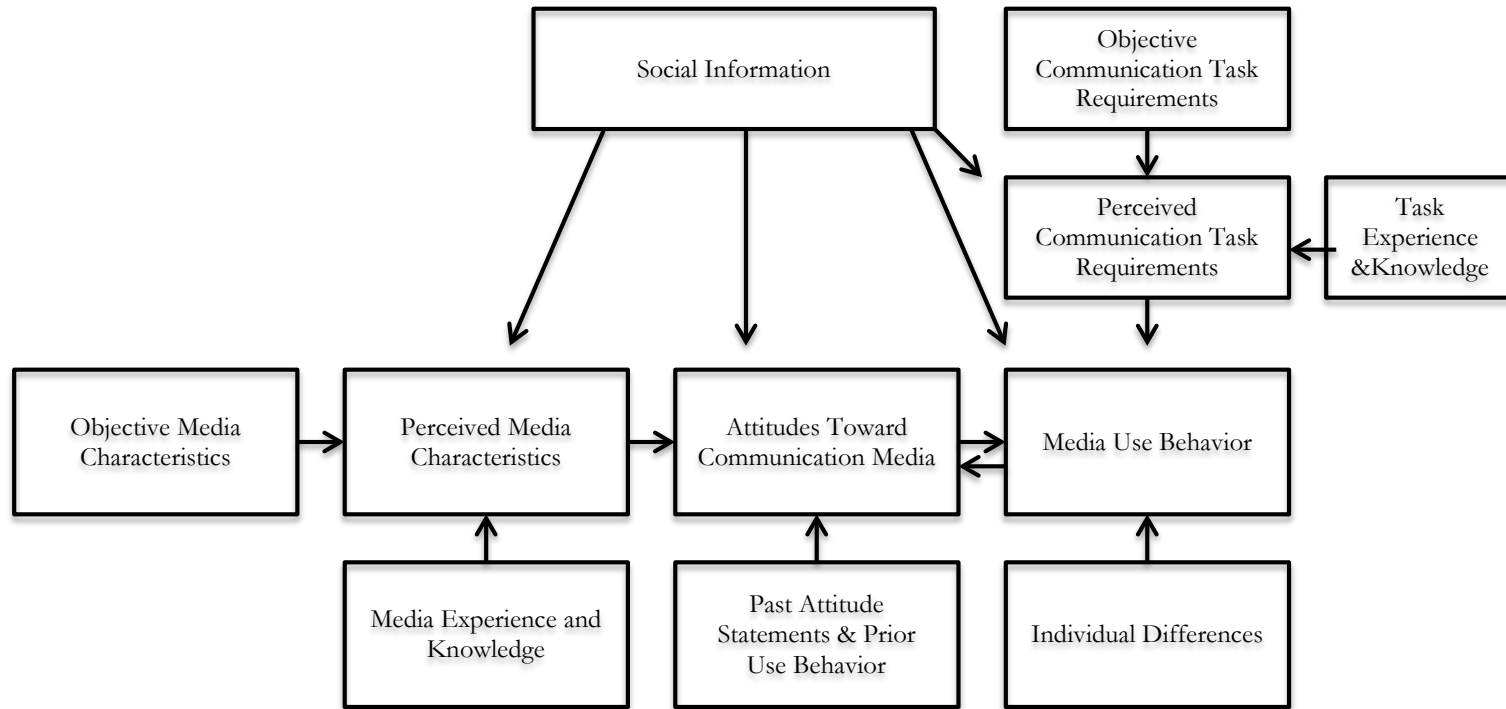
Norwegian

[Jeg velger å definere kunnskapsarbeid som] *et sett med karakteristika ved arbeidet, bestående av jobbkompleksitet, informasjonsprosessering, problemløsning og mangfold av ferdigheter*. [Videre foreslår jeg at] *arbeidet foregår i en kontekst som er autonom* (Sandvik, 2011, p. 56).

Translation

“a set of work characteristics containing job complexity, information processing, problem solving and a diversity of skills. The work takes place in an autonomous context” (p. 36 in text)

APPENDIX 3: SOCIAL INFORMATION PROCESSING MODEL



Figure

Social Information Processing Model (Miller, 2009)

4:

APPENDIX 4: CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Dimension	Meaning
Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) p. 8-10	
Universalism vs. Particularism	The universalist approach is roughly: "What is good and right can be defined and always applies." in particularist cultures far greater attention is given to the obligations of relationships and unique circumstances. For example, instead of assuming that one good way must always be followed, the particularist reasoning is that friendship has special obligations and hence may come first. Less attention is given to abstract societal codes.
Individualism vs. Communitarianism	Do people regard themselves primarily as individuals or primarily as part of a group? Furthermore, is it more important to focus on individuals so that they can contribute to the community as and if they wish, is it more important to consider the community first since that is shared by many individuals?
Neutral vs. Affective	Should the nature of our interactions be objective or detached, or is expressing emotion acceptable? In North America and northwest Europe business relationships are typically instrumental and all about achieving objectives. The brain checks emotions because these are believed to confuse the issues. The assumption is that we should resemble our machines in order to operate them more efficiently. But further south and in many other cultures, business is a human affair and the whole gamut of emotions are deemed appropriate. Loud laughter, banging your fist on the table or leaving a conference room in anger during a negotiation is all part of business.
Specific vs. Diffuse	When the whole person is involved in a business relationship there is a real and personal contact, instead of the specific relationship prescribed by a contract. In many countries a diffuse relationship is not only preferred, but necessary before business can proceed.
Achievement vs. Ascription	Achievement means that you are judged on what you have recently accomplished and on your record. Ascription means that status is attributed to you by birth, kinship, gender or age, but also by your connections (who you know) and your educational record. In an achievement culture, the first question is likely to be "What did you study?" while in a more ascriptive culture the question will more likely be "Where did you study?" Only if it was a lousy university or one they do not recognize will ascriptive people ask what you studied; and that will be to enable you to save face.
Sequential vs. Synchronic	The way in which societies look at time also differs. In some societies what somebody has achieved in the past is not important. It is more important to know what plan they have developed for the future. In other societies you can make more of an impression with your past accomplishments than those of today. These are cultural differences that greatly influence corporate activities.

Internal vs. External Control	An important cultural difference can also be found in the attitude to the environment. Some cultures see the major focus affecting their lives and the origins of vice and virtue as residing within the person. Here, motivations and values are derived from within. Other cultures see the world as more powerful than individuals. They see nature as something to be feared or emulated.
Schwartz (1994)	
Conservatism	Includes values that are important in close-knit harmonious relationships. These values are mainly concerned with security and tradition.
Intellectual Autonomy	This value is likely to be important in a society that views the individual as an autonomous entity pursuing his or her interest. Intellectual autonomy places an emphasis on self-direction and flexibility on ideas
Affective Autonomy	This value places an emphasis on hedonism and enjoying life
Mastery	Stresses active mastery on the social environment through self-assertation. This value promotes active efforts of people to modify their surroundings and get ahead of others
Hierarchy	Accentuates an entity's hierarchical role in society. It reflects wealth, social power and authority.
Egalitarian Commitment	This group of values concerns voluntary commitment to helping to improve the welfare of other people.
Harmony	Lays emphasis on harmony with nature - protecting the environment, the world of beauty, etc.
Edward T. Hall	
High-Low Context	In a high-context culture the majority of the information to be communicated is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. In a low-context society, this is communicated in a more explicit manner. (Hall, 1959)
Proxemics	Proxemics means the personal space bubble we are culturally used to. In The Hidden Dimension Hall argues that the human perception of space is molded and patterned by culture. (Hall, 1966).

Monochronic vs.
Polychronic

Polychronic is used to describe the ability to attend multiple events simultaneously, while monochronic describes individuals and cultures that tend to handle events more sequentially. (Hall, 1959)

Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 2015, A)

Power Distance

This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The fundamental issue here is how a society handles inequalities among people. People in societies exhibiting a large degree of power distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. In societies with low power distance, people strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power.

Uncertainty Avoidance

The uncertainty avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The fundamental issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

Individualism vs.
Collectivism

The high side of this dimension, called individualism, can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families. Its opposite, collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we."

Masculinity vs.
Femininity

The masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented. In the business context Masculinity versus Femininity is sometimes also related to as "tough versus gender" cultures.

Time perspective	Every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. Societies prioritize these two existential goals differently. Societies who score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future. In the business context this dimension is related to as "(short term) normative versus (long term) pragmatic" (PRA). In the academic environment the terminology Monumentalism versus Flexhumility is sometimes also used.
Indulgence vs Restraint	Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

GLOBE (Table 3.1 in House et al, 2004, p. 30)

Power Distance	The degree to which members of a collective expect power to be distributed equally.
Uncertainty Avoidance	The extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedure to alleviate unpredictability of future events.
Humane Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others.
Institutional Collectivism (I)	The degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.
In-Group Collectivism (II)	The degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.
Assertiveness	The degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others.
Gender Egalitarianism	The degree to which collective minimizes gender inequality.
Future Orientation	The extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future.
Performance Orientation	The degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.

APPENDIX 5: INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESPONDENTS

Study Background and Purpose

Our names are Kristiane Notøy Rødland and Charlotte Vorkinn. During the spring of 2015, we are writing a master thesis within intercultural communication at Norwegian School of Economics (Norges Handelshøyskole – NHH). We are part of the research center Future-Oriented Corporate Solutions (FOCUS) at the school, and our research concerns intercultural communication barriers that may inhibit information flow and knowledge sharing internally at the working place. We wish to interview foreign knowledge workers (individuals with a higher education), working in the Norwegian oil and gas industry. The aim of this interview is to map potential communication barriers between the Norwegian and British organizational culture.

To date, there is a limited amount of research on the intra-organizational field concerning intercultural communication barriers in Norway. Thus, we hope that this study will provide a significant contribution to the current literature and to help map some essential barriers to communication in addition to kick-start additional future research.

The Interview

The duration of the interview is expected to be approximately one hour (1 hour). Throughout the interview, we would like to get an overall understanding of the participants' experiences of working in Norway. To begin with, we will ask some general questions followed by some questions concerning motivation and communication. If there are some questions the respondent does not wish to answer, we will respect their wishes and continue to a different question. However, we hope to gain the most amount of insight into what they might see as cultural barriers to communication.

Anonymity

It is important that the participants are aware of the anonymity of their name and company. We will give you a code name in our paper and this will only be used when we directly quote you on a statement. The recordings will be transcribed and saved until we have received the grade on the thesis. This is due to the prerequisite from our school. The recordings will only be available for Kristiane and Charlotte, the examiners, and our supervisor Anne Kari.

Our work is done with the assistance from our supervisor Anne Kari Bjørge, associate professor at the Department of Professional and Intercultural Communication at the Norwegian School of Economics. She has extensive experience within this form of research.

We hope you will find this research interesting and we are excited to work with you during the interview. If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Best Regards,

Kristiane Notøy Rødland and Charlotte Vorkinn
Students at Norwegian School of Economics

APPENDIX 6: CONSENT FORM

Informed consent form – FOCUS research program

NHH Norwegian School of Economics

The FOCUS-program is a collaboration between NHH Norwegian School of Economics and six Norwegian-based multinational firms. One goal of the research program is to develop knowledge on the topics of international integration and change capacity.

We invite you to participate in an interview lasting approximately 1 hour. The interview will be recorded and notes will be taken during the interview. The interview will then be transcribed. Any information that could identify individuals will be removed (e.g. your name). Only persons participating in the interviews will have access to material that can identify informants. Five years after the project is finished, all information identifying informants will be destroyed and data will be entirely anonymized.

Participating in the project is voluntary. You can withdraw at any time. The researchers in the FOCUS program will have access to the transcribed interviews, and they have signed confidentiality agreements. In some cases a follow-up study will be carried out. If so, you will receive new information and a new invitation to participate.

The data will be used for research, i.e. production of scientific articles and reports.

By signing this form you consent to participate in the study. If you have any questions regarding this invitation, or you wish to be informed about the results of the study, please contact me at the address below.

Kristiane Notøy Rødland
E-mail: kristiane.rodland@student.nhh.no
Tlph: +47 46 76 12 62

Charlotte Vorkinn
E-mail: charlotte.vorkinn@student.nhh.no
Tlph: +47 47 90 63 62

Informed consent form:

I have received written information and I am willing to participate in this study.

Signature Phone number

Printed name.....

APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Disclaimer

Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to talk to us. It is greatly appreciated. The aim of this interview is to map potential communication barriers between the Norwegian and British organizational cultures. For instance, linguistic issues, management issues, roles in a process, tacit knowledge, professional culture, and the use of communication technology. As previously discussed, we are aware that you have a background within both British and Norwegian organizational cultures and could help us uncover some of the issues related to intercultural communication. Bearing this in mind, we are eager to learn more of your experiences. The interview is expected to take approximately 1 hour. Finally, we would also like to confirm that you will be held anonymous throughout this research as will your company.

Just to begin with we would like to ask you a couple of general questions. When we spoke earlier I know you agreed to participate in this interview. I just wanted to confirm that this is still correct?

Are you comfortable with us recording the interview?

Also, if you want to stop at any time or take a break you are perfectly welcome to do so. In addition, if I was to ask a question you are uncomfortable answering, please just let me know and we will skip that question. That is no problem whatsoever.

As we have mentioned earlier, the interview is for research purposes, is this ok for you? We will give you a code name in our paper and this will only be used when we directly quote a statement from you. The recordings will be transcribed and saved until we have received the grade on the thesis, this is due to the prerequisite from our school. The recordings will only be available for our supervisor, the examiners, and us.

Do you have any questions for us before we get started?

General questions

- Name, company, position (*Will be anonymous, this is just for us*)
- Educational background? (*School, title etc.*)
- How long have you been in Norway?
- Through X amount of years in Norway, have you stayed with the same company or have you been with different companies?
- Before moving to Norway, did you research Norwegian customs and culture? Learn some of the language? Or did you focus on immersing yourself into the culture/country upon arrival? Or did you consider these issues irrelevant for performing your job?

- What impression did you have of Norway before arriving? How did this correspond with your experience of Norway?
- Relationship status? (*Family, single etc.*) Are they in Norway?
 - *If single:* how often do you return to Britain?
 - *If family:* Did they come with you to Norway?
 - *If no:* How often do you return to Britain to see them?
- How would you describe your Norwegian proficiency (basic, medium, advanced; spoken/written)? If you have not learned Norwegian, why did you make that choice? If so, did you initiate learning the language or was it a prerequisite for the job? What about your Norwegian co-workers, how is their English?
- Do you interact socially with your colleagues outside of the office? If so, in what kind of contexts? In general, what are the nationalities of the people you socialize with in your spare time?

Motivation

- Did you apply for a job in Norway, or did your British employer offer you a job in Norway? (*ask to elaborate why, how*)
- Are you in Norway within a given time frame?
 - If you had to leave tomorrow, what would you have missed the most about Norway? (Food, places, climate, politics, working conditions, government policies etc.)
 - What would you have missed the least?
 - *If family:* What do you think that your family would have responded to these questions?
- Hypothetical question: If you could work wherever you want (country, position, company) with the same education, where would you then be today?
- What motivates you to perform to the best of your ability? (*Financial bonus, the task itself, sense of accomplishment, feedback from client and/or boss, inspiring leadership*)
- If your company has a bonus scheme, could you tell us a little bit about it? Is it based on individual or collective performance? How do you feel about that?
- How do you feel when a co-worker is successful? How do you feel when a teammate has a good idea? Do you give them praise and feel proud? Or are you a bit ambivalent?
- Could you educate us on your firm's vision and mission, and how do these align with your personal values and goals?

Conflicts due to miscommunication

- Can you recall a certain conflict that, in your opinion, emerged due to a misunderstanding between two or more nationalities? (*Preferably with a Norwegian included*) (*If he/ she can not recall a conflict, how about an unpleasant or confusing situation?*)
 - Why did the situation emerge?
 - How?

- In your opinion, was the conflict dealt with successfully? Why or why not? Could you elaborate?
- In your opinion, could the conflict have been prevented? How?
- Can you recall a conflict that, in your opinion, emerged due to failed communication? (Like misunderstandings, the message was not received, etc.) (*If he/ she can not recall a conflict, how about an unpleasant or confusing situation?*)
 - By which means did you communicate?
 - Why did the situation emerge?
 - How?
 - In your opinion, was the conflict dealt with successfully? Why or why not? Could you elaborate?
 - In your opinion, could the conflict have been prevented? How?

Communication

- Do you feel that you receive adequate guidance in order to be able to perform your daily work?
 - *If not:* why is the guidance you receive insufficient to meet your needs?
 - Could you elaborate with an example?
 - *If yes:* What makes the guidance you receive sufficient/successful?
 - Could you elaborate with an example?
- What is your company language? What language do you use when talking to your coworkers? (English, Norwegian, or both?)
- On a daily basis, what is the most common way you communicate with your colleagues? Talking to them face-to-face, email etc.? (*Written/ spoken; emails, texts, reports, memos, presentations, meetings, negotiations*)
 - Do you distinguish between written and spoken communication with regard to the importance of the matter at hand?
- Regarding written communication, do you receive a lot of mass messages from the administration?
 - Are they sometimes written in Norwegian?
 - If you receive a message you do not understand, how do you deal with it? Ignore it? Ask a colleague? Use Google translate?
- In general, which language do people talk during lunch breaks?
 - Do you have lunch with your colleagues?
 - Would the fact that they speak a language you don't understand keep you from engaging in a conversation during lunch, or even keep you from going to lunch in the first place?
- How important do you find small talk? Does the small talk help to build a social rapport with some of your co-workers? Is it adequate (too much or too little)?
 - *If yes:* could you please elaborate?
 - *If no:* Why not? Do you feel that more informal social interaction/communication is needed?

- Do you work on team projects?
 - How often? (On a daily basis?)
 - How big is the team?
 - Which nationalities and genders are included on your team?
 - By which means do you communicate with each other?
- Does the rank of the individual you are talking to influence the way you communicate? (*Level of formality, choice of communication channel*)
 - What are their nationalities?
 - How does this make you feel? Is it uncomfortable? Has this changed for you since you first started working? Has this changed since you started working in Norway?
- In your opinion, does the flow of formal company information exceed what is necessary? (*Both mass messages and information pertaining to you individually regarding policies, procedures, instructions etc.*)
- Do you have any recommendations for how a company can optimize communication between its co-workers focusing on a multinational workforce?
- What do you find to be the most significant differences between British and Norwegian business culture?

Extra

Extra questions for female participants:

- Norway has only 35.7 % (in 2013) women in managerial positions despite its focus on gender equality. What are your thoughts on this?
- Do you feel that being a female in this industry is challenging? If so, why?
- Do you feel that the predominance of male workers in the industry is a barrier for you to grow in the company/industry?

Extra questions for the male participants:

- Norway has only 35.7 % (in 2013) women in managerial positions despite its focus on gender equality. What are your thoughts on this?
- Why do you think there are so few females in this industry?
- Why is it male-dominated? What makes it male dominated?

Final Question

Do you have anything else to add or feel that we have not covered? Or do you have any questions for us in general?

APPENDIX 8: INFORMANT OVERVIEW

Code	Approx. Age	Norwegian Proficiency	Company	Title	Years in Company	Years in Norway	Date of Interview	Time Span
R1C1	40-50	Basic	C1	External Training Manager	15	Off and on 14	16.03.15	00:24:20
R2C2	30-40	Basic	C2	Geologist	6	3,5	19.03.15	00:47:47
R3C2	20-30	Basic	C2	Geoscientist	1	3 months	19.03.15	00:39:22
R4C2	30-40	Medium	C2	Technical Assistant	1	12	19.03.15	00:26:13
R5C2	50+	Advanced	C2	Lead Geologist	7	39	19.03.15	01:05:19
R6C2	30-40	Medium	C2	Senior Explorationist	4	7	19.03.15	00:54:15
R7C2	50+	Advanced	C2	Lead Geologist		30	19.03.15	00:15:43
R8C3	30-40	Advanced	C3	Principle Construction Engineer	6	11	19.03.15	00:54:45
R9C4	30-40	Advanced	C4	Manager	9	9	20.03.15	00:47:36
R10C4	30-40	Basic	C4	Senior Production Geologist	2	2	20.03.15	01:00:12
R11C4	50+	Advanced	C4	Senior Facility Engineer	7	31	20.03.15	00:56:30
R12C5	50+	Medium	C5	Geologist	2	8	20.03.15	01:10:03
R13C5	50+	Basic	C5	Technical Applications Support Specialist	2	9	20.03.15	01:02:41
R14C6	30-40	Medium	C6	Principal Consultant	3	3	09.04.15	01:24:59
R15C7	30-40	Advanced	C7	Senior Explorationist	1	11	09.04.12	00:59:51
R16C8	40-50	Advanced	C8	Support and Development Surveillance	20	20	13.03.15	01:22:35

APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW SYMBOL KEY

Transcriptions

@@ – Laughter

(xx) – Poor audio

... – Thinking and interruptions

Quotes in Text

.... (x4) – Text removed

... (x3) – Thinking break

[text] – Supplementary text for context