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## **Cultural Awareness and International Business:**

**Low on Context – High on Stereotypes. How Cultural Awareness affects International Management Relations**

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# Summary in Dutch

Onzin.

De aanleiding voor deze analyse van scripties die tussen 2010 en 2018 zijn geschreven voor de BA-opleiding IBL aan de RBS van de Hogeschool Rotterdam waren de onzinnige stereotypen met die ik als docent geconfronteerd werd. Enkele jaren geleden, gaf ik een vak waarin studenten de opdracht hadden een product van Duitsland naar Nederland te importeren. Uitgaand van de stelling dat een Duits product niet zomaar op de Nederlandse markt gebracht kan worden, waren zij gevraagd rekening te houden met de invloed van culturele verschillen op de waarneming van producten. Mijn verbasdheid over de dingen die in deze context werden uitgekraamd leidde tot vragen aan de studenten die verwezen naar Solomon en Schell en Hofstede als bron voor hun stellingen. De genoemde auteurs kenden zij uit de overeenkomstige lessen.

Als scriptiebegeleider zag ik later veel scripties die terloops of in een separaat hoofdstuk ingingen op de impact van culturele verschillen op de internationalisering van mkb. Meestal werden de stereotypen die hierbij werden verkondigd onderbouwd door een verwijzing naar Hofstede. Ik heb toen het boek van Solomon en Schell en een van de boeken van Hofstede gelezen. Als cultuurhistoricus met een gedecideerd interesse in nationale stereotypen had ik nog nooit van hen gehoord. Om verschillende redenen verschenen hun stellingen dubieus – stuitend zelfs. Snel ontdekte ik dat ook anderen kritiek hadden op m.n. Hofstede. Ik constateerde dat de onzin die in schrift en woord werd uitgekraamd door studenten aantoonde dat de voor de studie geformuleerde Programme Learning Outcomes voor interculturele professionaliteit niet of alleen ten dele werden bereikt. Dit leidde tot de voorliggende analyse van uitingen die in IBL scripties zijn gemaakt over culturele verschillen.

De analyse is doorgevoerd op basis van een kritiek op Solomon en Schell en Hofstede. Hierbij vormden mijn academische en ook mijn persoonlijke achtergrond het uitgangspunt voor het ingenomen perspectief. Ik ben ervan overtuigd dat culturele verschillen niet begrepen kunnen worden zonder historisch besef en kennis en begrip van historisch geconstrueerde, collectieve, publiekelijk erkende zelfbeelden. Als docent, in de gegeven context nadenkend over didactiek en agogiek, meen ik dat het tot aanbeveling zou strekken keuzes te maken t.o.v. het curriculum: minder is meer. Het is beter bij minder onderwerpen de diepte in te gaan dan in de breedte van de oppervlakkige beschouwing het overzicht te verliezen.

## Preface in Dutch

Het onderzoek dat Sven de Roode heeft gedaan m.b.t. IBL-scripties is een exercitie die, zoals hij zelf zegt, is voortgekomen uit persoonlijk ongenoegen als het gaat om intercultureel onderwijs. Sven verbaast zich over het feit dat studenten binnen dat intercultureel kader Hofstede aanhalen, terwijl dat niet uit het curriculum als zodanig blijkt. Hij zet ook grote vraagtekens bij de theorie van Hofstede, niet alleen vanuit Svens vanuit Svens bi-culturele context en academische achtergrond als cultuurhistoricus. Bovendien vindt Sven dat een intercultureel raamwerk niet kan zonder de historische context van culturen.

Met betrekking tot de exploratie van IBL-scripties kan ik zeggen dat mijn (her)beoordeling van IBL-scripties tijdens de laatste (her)accreditatie van IBL aantoonde dat die culturele insteek ook niet gevraagd werd van studenten. Centraal stond het schrijven van een exportplan waarbij terloops culturele aspecten naar voren werden gebracht. Ten aanzien van Hofstede vinden we voor- en tegenstanders. Echter, naast alle mogelijke modellen en theorieën [Bennett, Trompenaars, Meyer, Brinkmann, Lewis, etc.] al dan niet voortbordurend op het werk van Hofstede, is duidelijk dat ook de specifieke situatie en context leidt tot ervaringen en gedrag die interactie bepalen [Nakata, 2009]. Niettemin is het goed om naast alle kritiek op Hofstede ook het artikel van Beugelsdijk, Maseland en Van Hoorn, Are scores on Hofstede's dimensions of national culture stable over time? A cohort analysis, *Global Strategy Journal*, 5: 223-240 (2015), eens na te lezen.

Het onderzoek waaiert uit naar wat cultuur is en wat het betekent. Dat is een persoonlijke zoektocht. Een kritische reflectie op wat interculturele sensitiviteit en cross-culturele competentie voor onze studenten betekent, is een gesprek dat zeker gevoerd moet worden. Te beginnen met een reflectie op hetgeen Sven de Roode naar voren brengt.

Leo Klienbannik  
Lector Internationalisering

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# 1. Introduction

This study aims to show that the approaches to culture and cultural differences usually referred to in IB courses at RBS are misleading in many ways. It aims at animating managers, teachers, and students of international business to develop an understanding of a different 'culture' that surpasses a superficial awareness of different usances and collective inclinations to specific behavioural patterns that goes beyond references to scores on scales reliant on antipodes such as collectivism and individualism that serve as universal explanation for anything that is different. Whereas this implies the intention to provide a general route to understanding and accessing different 'cultures', this paper does explicitly not aim at developing another dubious model to assess cultural differences. Neither does it aim at developing quantitative parameters to create easily accessible schemes and graphs, allegedly allowing for the evaluation of cultural differences at a glance when doing business internationally. On the contrary, the starting point of this study begins with the conviction that only a hermeneutical, qualitative approach and a constructivist perspective can allow for the understanding of 'cultures', including collective habitus (Pierre Bourdieu) and social graces.

From the recipient's perspective, such an approach is more demanding than the average model. Such an approach will not result in a recipe that can be applied universally. It will not result in a manual for correct behaviour. It is supposed to be a foundation on which to build on. It is supposed to be a foundation based on which the interested party can elaborate and deepen his/her understanding. In order to develop a deeper understanding of a 'culture', some time-intensive investment in terms of study cannot be avoided. Here is the banal, yet apparently crucial problem: managers, more often than not, do not have the time to do some serious study and dive into books. That is why they endorse models and quantitative approaches that seem to enable them to gather some understanding of a 'culture' before getting into touch with international prospects and partners. The truth is that also a lot of students of IB courses do not have enough time to study. The inclination to rely on models and graphs as a tool of complexity reduction is cultivated as a standard in the discipline: management studies in general make abundant use of visual features. Whereas displaying interdependencies in a graph, table, or model is certainly useful at times and generally a helpful tool to foster an understanding of complex issues, it cannot replace texts whose ability to penetrate and reveal the essence of

things is indefinitely higher. Admittedly so, texts also have a higher potential to obscure meaning (on side of visualizations and quantifications, in turn, this is matched by the impact of omissions). In short, the restriction to a cursory glance at some graphs and tables accompanied by some explanatory paragraphs is likely to result in misunderstandings. It seems that the effect of such a superficial approach remains limited to the gathering of some rudimentary, encyclopaedic knowledge about a country, and the habitus and social graces of its people – what is the capital, what is the highest mountain, should I smile, or should I bow, should I shake hands and should I make a compliment or not – as well as some useful words from the dictionary: *merci*, *grazie* or *tak så mycket*.

There is no doubt, it is useful for students, future managers and entrepreneurs to acquaint themselves with social graces of countries of their interest – even if such effort remains limited to the surface. And the discipline has a long tradition: early examples of the analysis of social graces and interpersonal behaviour, include accounts such as the book of Adolph Freiherr von Knigge whose name became proverbial in Germany in allusions to social mores. There are still courses on Knigge for upcoming managers and others on their way up through the social strata of society and in need of learning how to behave themselves in settings unknown to them. Knigge courses have of course not very much to do with the original account. They are a business themselves and in order to keep the business going, the rules are changed every now and then. It is amusing to see that saying ‘bless you’ is mandatory in one year, whilst it needs to be refrained from the next. I doubt fundamentally though, that it suffices to put forth that a simple and direct causal relation between collective values and behavioural patterns (of members) of nations exists, as dominant accounts of global marketing that deal with cultural differences do. To begin with, this claim neglects intra-national heterogeneity, the existence of different societal groups whose behavioural patterns may be influenced by sexual orientation, by ethnic affiliation, or by religious and ideological convictions. Collective values that are endorsed by a dominant societal majority or minority are contested, they are challenged by societal minorities and they are never endorsed by all. To imagine nations as homogenous entities is a delusion. To fail to explain sufficiently where the alleged collective values come from and to fail to elaborate in sufficient detail on the emergence of such collective values in specific settings, is a fundamental flaw which opens the door to simplifications and essentialist thinking. It results in conclusions such as: ‘members of this nation are prone to behave like this, because they endorse that value/because they score higher

on that scale'. The explanatory power of such an approach is very limited, in fact, it is deplorable. Such statements stimulate the recipient to imagine nations as organically grown entities with an ontology that instils its members with an inclination to endorse certain values and to behave in specific ways. It results in convictions such as 'you are German therefore you are ...' or 'you behave like this because you are French', or 'only a national of a country can fully understand the national 'culture' of that country'. Corresponding approaches are likely to result in wrong oversimplifications.

This paper starts from the assumption that attempts to understand cultural differences and national 'cultures' must approach the issue from a constructivist perspective and by making use of hermeneutical, qualitative methods. I argue, that attempts to international expansion of SME can gain from a more thorough understanding of cultural differences than is provided by the reception of Hofstede, or Solomon and Schell and the like. Besides, the discussion below will make it clear that the programme learning outcomes (PLO) regarding intercultural proficiency of the IBL study course at RBS are not met by teaching Hofstede or others that base their approaches on Hofstede, Lewis, Hall or Trompenaars. Regarding intercultural proficiency, the PLO of the IBL study course did not change much in the recent past years. They include the goal to teach the student how to "[m]itigate the pitfalls of cultural differences in business and social contexts" (1) and to "[u]se appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication in an intercultural setting" (2) as well as to enable the student to "[d]isplay willingness to work with people from other cultures and to work in countries with different cultural backgrounds" (3) and to "[a]ssess the effect of cultural differences upon organisational behaviour and strategic choices" (4). Arguably, the IBL study course can be considered successful only with regard to aim (3). The analysed sources show clearly that aim (1), (2) and (4) are not reached.

The concrete situation around lessons about cultural differences is a symptom of more fundamental flaws of the higher education systems in Europe as Eelco Runia has shown for the Dutch case (Runia, 2019): a system that requests lecturers to tailor courses (modules) towards PLO deprives lecturers of their autonomy and self-steering capacity as professionals who collaborate with their colleagues in relationships based on mutual trust. In his general critique on neo-liberalism, Ewald Engelen makes the same point (Engelen, 2021). In Runia's, alas realistic, vision the educational system is described as having degenerated into a piping system that is build towards the aim to pipe through as many students as possible as fast as possible. Students



that go through this system do not gain the insights necessary to deal with situations that are not pre-structured. They neither gather knowledge (the knowledge they gather, they learn for exams and that content is usually and on average forgotten after a week or two), nor do they develop professional and academic competencies (which are, in any case, hardly operationalizable, and measurable). Following Bryan Caplan, Runia describes how diplomas degenerated into mere (yet reliable) signs of employability: a diploma shows that the student is intelligent enough to meet the requirements of the study (with the annotation that also students who actually do not meet that requirement, can be successful – if they are willing to make use of the possibility to do exams over and over again, if they ask for being given the opportunity to compensate with complementary assignments, if they use their charms, or refer to illness, to family circumstances, to doing top-sport or to being dyslectic, or, more antagonistic, by appealing to the exam board or by threatening with going to court) (Runia, 2019, p.153). Next to being sufficiently intelligent, a diploma shows that graduates are disciplined enough to meet the procedural requirements of the study. Lastly, it shows that graduates are conformist enough to recognize and comply with what is being expected: a diploma, thus shows that a graduate is employable (Runia, 2019, pp.190 ff.). Ending in a more conciliatory tone, Runia makes constructive proposals to put the self-steering professional at the center again to the benefit of the students.

Regarding the courses given on intercultural competence and cultural sensitivity, another highly problematic aspect is that they transmit information that is based on a specific world-view, a political-ideological outlook that is put forth as right apodictically, without putting it to discussion. Whilst an educational organization in Europe may ask its members and affiliates to endorse fundamentally western values such as human rights and democracy, it should not teach a specific political-ideological world-view that is deemed correct. It does not matter in this regard how desirable inclusiveness may be: an educational institution is not a political organization and should refrain from ideological schooling. If lessons need to address political-ideological issues, these should be addressed as such and students should learn to discuss them: achieving this, is ultimately the goal of the proposal for an adjustment of the curriculum below.

I claim that in order to understand a national 'culture', the 'culture' of a dominant national minority or majority, it is necessary to get acquainted with the national master narrative, the predominant historical narrative(s) about the common national past, the elements of which are essential to national self-imaginings. Without such a historical contextualization the



determination and analysis of social graces, habitus, commonly shared beliefs and values is meaningless. The contextualization through historical analysis is a prerequisite of understanding national 'cultures' and differences between them. Before a theoretical conceptualization is presented, the paper discusses some fundamental points of critique of the accounts used for teaching 'culture and management' in the educational setting of IBL at RBS in the past 15 years: Solomon and Schell's *Managing Across Cultures* and Hofstede's *Allemaal Andersdenkenden* as well as *Culture's Consequences*. After the presentation of the theoretical conceptualization and methodological approach, the paper sets out to investigate if and how students referred to 'culture' as a factor in IB theses that dealt with internationalization between 2010/2011 and 2017/2018. This content analysis of theses written at RBS evaluates if and how students considered cultural differences as a factor impacting internationalization of SME. The analysis aims at finding out if and how national stereotypes impact students' conceptualizations of doing business internationally. The examination of source material is followed by a cursory overview of some empirical examples of factors that impact national self-images.

## 2. The Cultural Void and Attempts to Fill it. Hofstede, Solomon and Schell: a Critique

The accounts used to teach cross cultural management in the past 15 years at the IBL study course at RBS are Solomon's and Schell's *Managing Across Cultures* as well as Hofstede's *Culture's Consequences* and *Allemaal Andersdenken*, a Dutch version of *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* of 1991, a revised version of which was published in 2005. Reason for including *Allemaal Andersdenken* is that this account is used to prepare lessons at RBS. This information I retrieved in personal conversations with teachers who give or gave these courses. Judging from my own experience, most students refrain from reading either of Hofstede's accounts and limit themselves to the consultation of the website.

In *Managing Across Cultures*, the authors set out to explain the impact of 'culture', as well as to show how deeply rooted "cultural values and beliefs are" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.19). In the opening pages, the authors are clear about their pretence, namely to "provide a blueprint – a guideline – that enables [the reader] to translate and interpret behaviors so that [he/she] can respond in an effective way" in different cultural settings (Solomon & Schell, 2009, xviii). The authors claim to have developed a model (the 'Cultural Wizard') that enables users to identify seven characteristics of societies and provides guidance regarding interaction with people of different cultural backgrounds (Solomon & Schell, 2009, xviii). The authors claim that "[c]ultural behaviors are the outward signs of deeply held values and beliefs that have built up in a society over time" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.19). In their book, Solomon and Schell provide the following definition of 'culture': "The visible behaviours and invisible values and beliefs that are unique for each society. These value systems are deeply rooted in the society and passed from generation to generation." (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.20). A couple of pages further on, they provide another definition: "The visible and invisible values and beliefs that underly behaviors and are unique to each society." (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.37). It is immanently apparent: the conceptualization of 'culture' as presented by Solomon and Schell opens wide the doors for essentialist thinking. They essentialize 'culture', as well as societies as representatives and bearers of national 'cultures'. The authors state apodictically that there are essential national 'cultures' that distinguish people from different countries since they are instilled with unique values and

beliefs that are passed on from one generation to another. Consequently, this implies that there are primordial nations – ‘cultural’ communities whose individual members share common traits because they are member of the respective collective. Even without being a fundamentalist constructivist who refuses the idea of a reality that exists independent of human perception, the oversimplifications of the approach of Solomon and Schell seem improper. The question how a causality between values and behavioural patterns can be established is not discussed. Concepts such as the nation and society are used interchangeably and concerning the former, there is no reference whatsoever to the debate about that topic (which fills entire libraries). One can imagine that discussing primordialist and constructivist approaches to the nation would go too far for a volume that sets out to create an “easy-to-understand cultural model” for managers of global organizations in whose working environment “cultural awareness has become a fundamental business prerequisite” (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.xvi). Of course, their book is not a scholarly account – the authors approach ‘culture’ from what appears to be a popular science perspective (which raises the question why it is used in an institution of higher education). Nonetheless though, the implicitness with which an essentialized understanding of supposed national ‘cultures’ is presented, is dubious not only from a scholarly perspective, but also from a didactical point of view. After all, the book is used as educational material and students are likely to endorse the views outlined in the volume which they are required to buy. Considering their age and educational level, IBL students at RUAS are generally neither likely to be inclined nor in the position to reflect on input such as the following: With reference to Fons Trompenaars, Solomon and Schell describe cultural attitudes as *invisible, yet powerful, deeply held beliefs* whose existence often goes unnoticed – usually, so do they claim, these hidden layers of ‘culture’ are not reflected upon, they supposedly are as *natural* as walking or breathing (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.30 – italics: SdR). The apodictic definition of ‘culture’ as “invisible, powerful, natural beliefs” displays the tendency to essentialize ‘culture’ somewhat less implicitly.

As so many marketing textbooks, the volume is full of examples from the field – there is a vast amount of anecdotal evidence that supposedly goes to show that organizations are “strong manifestations of their national cultures” (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.27). By implication, the authors suggest that individuals – who are necessarily members and representatives of a nation – behave in a specific way *because* they are members of supposedly homogenous national cultural communities, which comes close to the corresponding claim of Hofstede in *Culture’s*

*Consequences.* Instead of providing a conceptual demarcation of the concept 'nation', the authors implicate a congruence between society and nation. The authors set out to show that behavioural patterns are induced by national affiliation (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.65). That the implied causality between national affiliation and behavioural patterns as a consequence of endorsed values and beliefs is dubious becomes apparent by imagining the implication of the notion: if that would be true, an unemployed, non-educated, soft drugs using Caucasian white woman aged 28 from the Appalachian Mountains, would endorse the same beliefs and values and show the same according behaviour as a middle-aged Afro-American man of 45, from Chicago, who is an academic and works as a solicitor at a governmental institution – because they are both American. Whereas politicians, journalists and managers may be excused from such oversimplifications, it seems inexcusable when it comes from a number of scholars. The conceptual unclarity opens the door for all sorts of misunderstandings. In the first instance, it implicitly supports the (unjustified) idea of the existence of 'national characters' and corresponding 'national identities' (which shall be discussed below in more detail).

Since it is presumed that 'values and beliefs' are at the core of 'culture' and the decisive driver of behaviour, a discussion of these concepts and the presumed reciprocal impact and causality would have been desirable. Instead, only a couple of sentences that define 'culture' are provided. The conceptual fuzziness is hidden behind semantic prattling. The usage of these concepts by Solomon and Schell exemplifies what Uwe Pörksen (1992) in his examination of public discourses called 'connotative stereotypes' – concepts that mean "everything and nothing but sound scientific" (Niethammer, 2000, p.20).<sup>1</sup> Connotative stereotypes do not have to be explained. They are blanket terms that can be (and are) applied in any context as a key to everything – visual art, economics, politics, religion, literature, music, social sciences, humanities – the 'semantic molluscs' (Pörksen) 'culture' and 'identity' are omnipresent. The concepts abstract from a variety of phenomena and reduce that variety to a formula that lacks content and eventually no longer represents a meaningful concept since it is applied to any context: the possibilities are endless. Their possible meaning covers an extensive range which narrows down the actual content to an empty commonplace. Because of that quality Pörksen calls them 'plastic words' (Pörksen, 1992).

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from German. In case not indicated otherwise, all translations are mine. SdR

Solomon and Schell camouflage the interminableness of these connotative stereotypes behind the appearance of scientific determinedness and, at the same time, surround themselves with an aura of awareness and insight: "[t]he only way to deal successfully with people from a different country is to be aware what's going on beneath the surface and use that knowledge to shape your own behavior and expectations" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.36). In order to understand the "deeper standards of thought and conduct", the "hidden layer of culture, values, beliefs", it takes "time, study, and observation". The "invisible culture", so they claim, "harkens back to the essence of innermost beliefs about universal, nonnegotiable truths". 'Culture' results from "influences absorbed since childhood: religious ideas and ideals, the nation's history and mythology, its heroes, its landscape, and stories handed down and retold generation after generation. 'Culture' is created by myriad factors such as history, religion, mythology, and the climate and geography of a country" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.48 f.). This almost esoteric sounding hint at a row of complex concepts that supposedly form the basis of 'culture' is not elaborated upon. It surely is a confusing if not meaningless read for managers and certainly young students in their first or second year at a university of applied sciences. The authors cannot be bothered though. They set out to show (future) managers a way to manipulate individuals that are defined by their membership of a collective that is called 'nation'. In other words, the authors confirm the prejudiced view of management studies as a prostituted version of social psychology, a discipline that randomly borrows concepts from other disciplines (in this case, next to social psychology, from history, philosophy, sociology and anthropology) without being bothered about their complex meanings, and with the one aim of enabling its students to manipulate other people. It should be ironic that this kind of content is taught at institutions that pride themselves with the endorsement of often rigid ethical codes regarding interpersonal conduct on site. In Solomon and Schell's account, 'culture', 'values' and 'beliefs' have lost their spatial and chronological historicity as phenomena of the social in time (in spite of the incidental acknowledgement of the importance of history). Yet, that is what they are and therefore – if the result is to be meaningful – they need to be analysed hermeneutically, with the historical-critical method.

According to Solomon and Schell, a common descent and 'nature' allegedly results in common behavioural standards (of which the individual may deviate, which is coined 'personal cultural style' by the authors): it is absurd flim-flam that camouflages all that that is questionable

and uncertain in these statements. The authors imply that these factors are 'there' simply – sui generis, and that they cannot be changed. The authors conclude with yet another apodictic, essentialist and somewhat cryptic remark, describing 'culture' as "the fundamental assumptions on which the whole society is built" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.49), another pompous insinuation that seems to cover up a lack of insight.

The volume continues with the introduction of the ominous 'Cultural Wizzard' model, a tool that is supposed to help managers to analyse 'cultures', to understand behaviour and attitudes (another complex concept whose meaning is not elaborated upon) of people from other nations (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.50 ff.). Although they make above statement on the supposed 'personal cultural style' of individuals, sub-national regional cultural diversity as well as trans-national, cultural cross-border overlaps are neglected in favour of supposed 'national norms' or 'national characteristics'. Whereas the authors cautiously emphasize that "all people are different", they plead in favour of generalizations as a necessary and "handy" tool to define "nationally based behavioral patterns" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.65).

The 'Cultural Wizzard' model presents seven dimensions or characteristics of 'cultures' which are immanently reminiscent of Hofstede's dimensions. The first dimension 'hierarchy and egalitarianism' corresponds to Hofstede's 'power distance'. The second characteristic, 'group focus', corresponds to Hofstede's dimension 'individualism and collectivism'; the dimension 'time orientation' corresponds to Hofstede's 'long- versus short-term orientation' and the dimension 'change tolerance' corresponds to Hofstede's 'uncertainty avoidance'. Solomon and Schell's dimensions 'relationships' and 'communication styles' correspond to different aspects of a number of Hofstede's dimensions such as 'masculinity and femininity', 'power distance' as well as 'individualism and collectivism' (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.53 ff.; Hofstede, 2001, pp.79 ff.). In the model, each dimension is evaluated by several questions, the answers to which result in scores that are calculated in order to create a 'cultural profile'.

The authors claim that the "best way to begin to understand values and attitudes [of people from different 'cultures'] is to watch for easily recognizable behaviors that give you clues to the deeper belief system that drives a society" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.69). To be sure, it seems acceptable to presume that behavioural patterns are, amongst other things, expressions and indicators of 'cultures'. Stating that such indicators provide clues to the "deeper belief system that drives a society" (Solomon & Schell, 2009, p.69) may sound very interesting, yet on a closer

look is nothing but an essentializing and misleading oversimplification. The fundamental flaw of reasoning back from behaviour to 'culture', 'values' and 'beliefs' is that it puts the cart before the horse: in order to understand behavioural patterns as expressions of 'culture', one must understand the prevailing 'culture', 'values' and 'beliefs' first. Following Solomon and Schell's approach comes down to confusing the symptom with the cause, the appearance with the essence.

The following chapters of *Managing Across Cultures* discuss the dimensions one by one, providing a range of examples from the business world that are supposed to show the behavioural effect of different positionings on the dimensions in question. The apodictically claimed causal relationship between 'national culture' and 'behavioural pattern' is thus allegedly proved by random and anecdotal evidence from 'real life'. Such an approach is prone to result in oversimplifications that foster misunderstandings and wrong interpretations of behaviour. It is necessary to gather an understanding of a 'culture' first – only then, subsequently and as a supplement, knowledge of mores, perspectives on nurturing, discipline and the like that are dominant in a society and that may be reflected in specific behavioural patterns can be contextualized and understood. Whereas the volume of Solomon and Schell is not used anymore in current classes on cross cultural management in the IBL study course at the RUAS, the situation did not necessarily change fundamentally. Cultural differences are taught now based on the textbook *Intercultural Competences* (2019) of Patrick Janssen of TIO, a University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. Similar to the volume discussed above, Janssen discusses models for understanding and framing culture and attempts to explain how to deal with intercultural communication based on examples from the field. In Janssen's textbook, one exclusive chapter is spent on Richard Lewis and another one on Hofstede whose work he endorses affirmatively. According to Janssen, "[t]he measurement and categorization of cultural differences is necessary to find out which universal problems are the most important ones in a society and which basic assumptions and values this society has identified as the best way to deal with these universal problems....Values are a stable factor within a culture and therefore form an excellent basis for measuring cultural differences. In order to identify cultural differences, it is necessary to get a good picture of what universal problems are within all societies. ... Hofstede's model is good way to compare countries / cultures with each other. ... Countries can be classified using Hofstede's six dimensions" (Janssen, 2019, p.89). Without going into detailed discussion of such



partly dubious statements and their implications, it may be established that Hofstede is acclaimed here as an apt way to understanding culture. The following paragraphs shall have a closer look at Hofstede's own work in order to show that there are reasons to doubt that.

Next to the account of Solomon and Schell, the work of Geert Hofstede is most referred to in IBL courses at RBS that deal with 'culture' and marketing. To be sure, to my knowledge students are mostly referred to the website [www.hofstede-insights.com](http://www.hofstede-insights.com) and, if at all, only abstracts of his accounts are read and discussed – to the effect described above. A random look at accounts that tackle cultural differences in international marketing suggests that Hofstede's has been one of the dominant theoretical approaches to 'culture' in international marketing in the past decades. This is confirmed by a systematic literature review of Cheryl Nakata: "Hofstede's framework [is] the dominant 'culture' paradigm in business studies." (Nakata, 2009, p.3). It is striking though that this outstanding popularity seems to be limited to management studies. In other disciplines of the social sciences and the humanities that deal with 'culture' as a topic, Hofstede is largely unknown as randomly browsing through the bibliographies of various accounts of different disciplines such as cultural history, cultural anthropology, social psychology and organizational psychology shows which is odd, to say the least. The following paragraphs will shed some light on the possible reasons for this blind spot or rather deliberate omission. In the following, Hofstede's approach is discussed and put into the context of the present study. This discussion is largely based on his *Culture's Consequences* (2001), but it will also refer to *Allemaal Andersdenken* (2019).

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov describe *Allemaal Andersdenkenden* as a simpler book that is explicitly written for students and interested lay persons and refer the reader with scholarly interests to *Culture's Consequences* (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2019, p.11). And indeed, in comparison – also to Solomon and Schell – Hofstede's *Culture's Consequences* has a more solid theoretical foundation. And yet, there are several issues with the approach, some of which are discussed by Nakata et al. who, in a volume with the telling title *Beyond Hofstede. Culture Frameworks for Global Marketing and Management*, propose several appositions to Hofstede's approach that are supposed to take the study of cultural differences in marketing further by adopting perspectives from other disciplines. Hofstede describes 'culture' as 'collective mental programming', a 'software of the mind', which supposedly distinguish the members of one group from those of another. In his conceptualization of 'culture', Hofstede identified five supposedly

universal values that are allegedly determined by 'culture'. These 'cultural dimensions' are 'individualism and collectivism', 'masculinity and femininity', 'power distance' (low vs high), 'uncertainty avoidance' (low vs high), and 'long- vs short-term orientation', which are supposed to occur in every country to different degrees. Hofstede collected survey data that informed about the position of individuals on these dimensions. The data, collected from individuals, was generalized and consequently interpreted as to be enlightening with regard to corresponding dispositions of national collectives. These dispositions in turn, are supposed to be instructive with regard to alleged national behavioural patterns and collective inclinations.

This approach leads Hofstede to partly absurd conclusions, such as the following statement about the presumed correlation between a nation's position on the gender dimension and its attitudes towards religion. In countries whose 'culture' is Christian and masculine, people would be inclined to endorse the first of two commandments which in Matthew 22:37 are indicated by Jesus as the two most important commands; in more feminine countries, on the contrary, people would rather tend to endorse the second of these commandments as the most significant of all commands. Thus, whether love of God or love of fellow human beings is considered more important by a nation, correlates with the position on the masculine-feminine dimension (Hofstede, 2001, pp.328–330). Next to the direct implication that Germans rather obey God, whilst Dutch rather love their neighbours, Hofstede infers from this a number of differences between 'cultures' concerning attitudes and behaviour as well as social graces et cetera. In tendency, e.g., sex among the more masculine Germans is "primarily for procreation" whereas the more feminine Dutch also do it for recreation (Hofstede, 2001, pp.328–330). Whilst Hofstede in his work induces insights from the individual to the collective, and thus fosters the emergence of stereotypes in the minds of his readers, he explains at the same time that deduction, "the application of stereotype information about a group to any individual member of that group" is unfounded (Hofstede, 2001, p.14).

Hofstede's subsequent discussion of 'national characters' creates the impression of conceptual unclarity. Whilst not making explicit what his view on that concept is, he claims that it has been "mostly replaced by the more neutral *national cultures*" (Hofstede, 2001, p.15, italics in original). In this context, Hofstede directs the attention of his readers to the question whether stereotypes contain an element of truth or not – at best, he claims, they are "half-truths", and he recommends that "how much truth they contain should be validated with scientifically

respectable information" (Hofstede, 2001, p.14). He overlooks thus, that the decisive question regarding stereotypes does not concern the alleged 'kernel of truth' that has been distorted by inappropriate generalizations. The stereotype is not a 'half-truth' that has to be analysed in order to find out if it contains 20 or 60% truth. What is the use of establishing that? It is a superfluous undertaking. What is interesting, is that the stereotype is emotionally loaded, that it can neither be questioned nor falsified. Stereotypes are a rewarding object of scientific analysis with regard to the information they provide about those (individuals or groups) that use them, and with regard to their functions: of integration (on the inside of the 'us') and demarcation (of the outside of the 'them') (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, pp.25-29). The weakness of the conceptualization underlying Hofstede's approach, and the generalizing inductions it results in, foster the emergence of stereotypes in the minds of his recipients, at least and surely as far as the young and inexperienced minds of students are concerned who tend to believe what they read if it is presented in a book. For students it must be even more confusing that, at the same time, they are taught (with a strong moral and pedagogic impetus) to recognize and vilify stereotypes and their effects. They should be taught instead, that stereotypes as instruments of complexity reduction are indispensable for the recognition of reality and that, in order to increase and deepen their understanding of the world, they should be comprehended and analysed in above sense.

In combination with his apparent lack of historical knowledge, Hofstede's approach results in statements that suit his purpose, yet that are simply wrong. This is exemplified by the following quote: typically, he claims "[s]ymbolic personalities representing Western countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were remarkably gendered according to their 'culture's' masculinity or femininity: John Bull for Britain and Uncle Sam for the United States, but Marianne for France and the Dutch maiden (called Frau Antje in Germany) for the Netherlands" (Hofstede, 2001, pp.333). A closer look reveals that Hofstede's claim that the gendering of national allegories would correspond to the score of the respective nation on the dimension 'masculinity vs femininity', is not tenable. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and up to the present day, Europeans endorsed allegories of the nation which generally, however, and in contrast to Hofstede's claim, tended to be female. Self-images of an 'awakened' people were overloaded with attributes generally (and stereotypically) regarded as female. They were vulnerable, untouched, emotional, unspoilt and pure (Berger & Lorenz, 2008, p.545). All over Europe, female allegories of the nation were abundant: in England, for example, the nation was imagined as Britannia. It was Britannia who

ruled the waves and not John Bull. Britannia is an allegory that represents imperial might. Her iconography incorporates images of the warrior queen Boadicea who resisted the Romans and is evocative of Penthesilea, the Amazonian warrior queen. In her defiance, Britannia seems to challenge the idea of the nation as a male preserve (Weight, 2002, p.620; Robbins, 2008, p.253, Colley, 2005, p.70, p.133, p.341, Leerssen, 2006, pp.47–48). Germania is an allegory that shows a nation liberated from her chains, holding a sword that shows her feistiness, yet is accompanied by an olive branch that symbolizes peace. In her left hand, she holds the flag of the national movement and on her head, she wears a crown of oak – a holy tree to the Germanic tribes that became a symbol of the alleged morality, genuineness and affinity with nature of the German people (Münkler, 2010, p.155, Reichel, 2005, p.114). The Italian allegory of the nation, Italia turrita, represents virtually all the supposedly female qualities alluded to above, just as the allegory of the Irish nation, Kathleen ni Houlihan, albeit the latter had been depicted by Yeats as Mother Ireland, an older, dignified lady – an image that corresponds to the imagining of the Russian nation as Mother Russia – a “peaceful and long-suffering peasant woman”, who was often referred to during the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Russian writers and poets to refute western European images of sinister imperialist Russia (Tolz, 2001, p.4, p.164). Marianne, the incarnation of the French Republic, always with the Phrygian cap, still stands in every village hall in France. Quite literally thus, she was put on a pedestal – she could be venerated and adored: she was worth to die for and often she was herself depicted in a martial pose, with a sword or gun and tricolour, leading the people in the fight for liberty (Baycroft, 2008, pp.209–210). The other female incarnation of the French nation, Jeanne d’ Arc has been imagined through the ages in varying ways and in a no less bellicose and heroic fashion than Marianne (Winock, 2005). That the Dutch female allegory of the nation, the Nederlandse Maagd (Dutch Maiden) is less belligerent than Britannia and Marianne, corresponds to the power political decline of the Republic after the Golden Age to a second-rate country on the European continent. That national Dutch heroes, even if they had led the country in times of war such as William the Silent or Michiel de Ruyter, were in statues and monuments rather commemorated in a pensive demeanour than in a bellicose pose, is correspondingly owed to the decline of the Republic and its deteriorated power political status (Drentje, 2006). Nonetheless, Dutch heroes as well as the female allegory of the nation served as symbols that were supposed to remind a small nation of its great past (Bloembergen, 2005). Albeit it is not possible in the given framework to elaborate further on this topic, above remarks

show that the essentializing insinuations of Hofstede are untenable. There is no organically inherent femininity or masculinity that made the Dutch, British, French endorse a national allegory of a specific gender. The deconstructionist historical analysis of national allegories reveals a complex, layered development of representations that in different historical periods could be and often was charged with different meanings. *Frau Antje*, to conclude, was never imagined as the Dutch Maiden in Germany – it was and still is an advertisement figure that was developed in the 1970s in order to increase sales figures of Dutch vegetables and dairy products in Germany which, given that she wears the costume of a fisher woman from Volendam, is ironic for the perceptive Dutch who recognizes it (Elspers, 2005).

Shedding the light of historical contextualization can explain much more than essentialist assertions based on survey material gathered from employees of one international company. It is presumed here, that historical contextualization is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of an understanding of a people. Albeit this can and will not result in behavioural manuals it will (in addition to the useful reception of such manuals in order to avoid concrete faux pas in another country) provide a basis for mutual recognition and understanding regarding encounters in the context of marketing across 'cultures'. Being aware that this survey is not written for historians but students of marketing and marketers, it seems relevant at this point to mention that historical science is not restricted to collecting knowledge about a chronology of events and the causal interdependencies between them. 'Cultural history', the sub discipline of interest here, is predominantly occupied with the ways meaning was and is bestowed on (past and present) events, on concepts and things. On the one hand, that implies deconstruction, on the other hand, it implies the investigation of the instrumentalization, of the (societal, political, economic) functions and effects, of such constructs.

Another example that displays the conceptual shortcomings of Hofstede's approach is that, according to him, (collective and individual) ideological orientations result from certain positions on several of his value dimensions such as 'power distance' and 'individualism and collectivism' (Hofstede, 2010, pp.110 ff.; pp.243 ff.). Niklas Luhman, by contrast, established that ideologies are a specification of a ranking of values, which can reinforce each other, even if they conflict (Luhman, 1972, p.62). The core values of the French Revolution that were represented by three abstract key-words, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, might serve as an example of ideological values that were integrated in a consistent order, albeit conflicting to such a fundamental degree

that historian Mona Ozouf, describes them as an 'emblem of the impossible' (Ozouf, 2005, pp.27ff.). Axel Honneth discusses the impact of the tension between brotherhood and individual freedom on the development of socialism as an ideology and shows how early socialists interpreted individual freedom as a form of 'complementing oneself in the Other' which allowed for diminishment of the tension between the trias of values: in an holistic turn, not the individual but the solidaric community became the bearer of the freedom that was to be realized: in that image, equality, brotherhood and freedom did not contradict but complement each other (Honneth, 2020). An ideology is regarded here as a "system of collectively held normative and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular system of conduct, which its proponents seek to promote, realise, pursue or maintain" (Hamilton, 1987). This definition seems to confirm Luhmann's statement that, in order to be endorsed by masses, ideologies need to be conceptualized in an abstract and formal fashion. On the other hand, ideologies segment specific values corresponding to their (alleged) validity. The apparent functionality of such segmenting of values cannot be explained with allusions to an alleged ontological disposition of collectives – that would only be possible in perspective of a thinking that is oriented towards an ontological concept of truth (Luhman, 1972, pp.62-64), which indeed seems to lurk behind Hofstede's approach, and which here, for all its epistemological limitations, is explicitly refused.

Repeatedly Hofstede's statements appear as sheer nonsense. Especially in the Dutch adaptation of his work, the examples are abundant. Given that his work has such a wide-ranging impact on the discipline and especially students, this is quite worrisome. To provide some examples, he claims that in contrast to 'the East', in 'the West' it is not possible that opposites can be true at the same time (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov, 2012, p.204). This leads him to several presumptions about alleged collective dispositions, such as the alleged "superior synthetic talents of Eastern cultures". Apparently, he had not heard of the Greek concept 'antinomy' which was elaborated on by Kant in his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Kant, 1995). In the same paragraph, he apodictically concludes that in 'the West' ethical rules are mostly derived from religion, – thus leaving out classical Greek philosophers, humanism and Enlightenment as a genuine source of thinking about human rights in Europe (as an example of the attempt to formalise universal ethical rules) (Gordon, 1998, pp.4-36). Hofstede's accounts are full of anecdotes that are presented as proof of randomly appearing presumptions and interconnections, all based on the

inductions from the survey data among IBM staff that relate a great variety of different conditions monocausal to different positions on the value dimensions.

According to Hofstede, collective behavioural patterns result from 'stable mental software' that is allegedly shared by collectives (Hofstede, 2001, p.2). The metaphor appears reductionist and in tendency essentialist – it implies that there is no way of escaping the imprinting of an individual by this alleged 'collective software of the mind'. Hofstede continues by claiming that 'there is no objectivity in the study of social reality', subjectivity is inescapable, and social scientists are doomed to "approach the social reality as the blind men from the Indian fable approached the elephant" (who, only touching parts of the animal, never realize what stands before them). The only way to palliate this would be the pooling and integrating of subjective points of view, to be 'intersubjective' (Hofstede 2001, p.2). By referring to metaphors, Hofstede, right at the beginning of his undertaking, indicates that he is not able to provide a more precise conceptual determination of his topic (the metaphor of 'mental software' is a fundamental concept that is used throughout the accounts). He thus admits implicitly that his understanding is flawed and by doing so, puts it up to discussion, at least by implication. Unfortunately, this apparent invitation has been neglected for decades by students of 'marketing and culture' who adhered to his approach without questioning it. Hofstede claims that "when we try to understand social systems...[w]e use models...simplified design[s] for visualizing something too complex for us to grasp" (Hofstede 2001, p.2). Models, he explains, are necessarily reductionist constructs that reflect the 'mental programming' of their creator (Hofstede 2001, p.2). The prime mean of insight, I would disagree, in the humanities and in the social sciences, are words. It is unfortunate and an impediment to insight often rather than an aid, that management studies so heavily rely on graphic displays and visualizations in order to understand interconnections instead of availing themselves of language, and instead of understanding that our relationship to the world is fundamentally linguistic (Gadamer, 1975, p.451).

Whilst Hofstede speaks of 'constructs' regarding his metaphor of 'mental programmes' as well as regarding 'models' as a tool of insight (Hofstede, 2001, p.2), he does not seem to recognise the fundamental constructedness of human existence. *Sui generis*, the human consciousness is dispositioned to imagine insight as acting in pursuance with the object. Objective insight thus implies seeing the object by itself, independent of the subject. Kant demanded that human reason be liberated from the limitedness of this epistemological realism. He demanded that the



object acts in pursuance with insight. According to Kant, the objects of objective insight do not exist *sui generis*, they need to be brought into existence by the subject. Therefore, they must be regarded as phenomena. The dissociation of phenomenon and object limits the possibility of objective insight to the area of possible experience. By implication, both, subjectivity and objectivity root in the same transcendent self-consciousness: Kant postulates the unity of subjectivity and objectivity (Höffe, 2014, p.56, pp.73–76, p.105; Kant, 1995). A consequence of Kant's insight is the recognition of the constructedness of the world as we see it. The metaphor of the elephant shows that Hofstede, on the contrary, remains biased by the epistemological realism of Descartes, whilst – ironically so, the metaphor could also be interpreted as showing that the object is only brought into existence by the subject. The point here is not to claim that outside human perception there exists nothing – there is a 'reality' if this concept is understood as phenomena which exist independent of our own volition. Yet, that it is not possible to grasp the essence of things through complete representations does not mean that objectivity is impossible and that we are doomed to remain blind men as Hofstede puts it. Kant's notion has some implications regarding the possibility of objective insights about social reality – above all, Kant's conclusion implies that as long as phenomena of the social in time, such as 'values' or 'culture', are concerned, their spatial and chronological historicity necessitates the researcher to approach the issue by hermeneutical analysis with the historical-critical method. In this way, objective insights about 'the social construction of reality' (Berger & Luckmann, 1991) are possible.

It has been noted that words do not unambiguously express the essence of things. There is no completely transparent language that bases on an identity of 'words' and 'things' (Foucault, 2006, p.154). That there is no identity between words and things necessitates interpretation of the interconnections between them, i.e. – following De Saussure – between 'the signifier' (*signifiant*), the discernible element, the spoken or written word, and 'the signified' (*signifié*) the notion or concept that is expressed by the *signifiant* (Linke, Nussbaumer & Portmann, 2004, pp.30–47) as well as comprehension of the underlying meaning and sense, i.e. hermeneutical analysis, the comprehension of discourse, or rather: 'the avoidance of misconception', as Schleiermacher put it (Gadamer, 1975, p.173). Interpretation of an issue always depends on a context of meaning, existent knowledge, and the environment of the interpreter. It is distinguished by fundamental non-uniformity which, however, does not imply that it is arbitrary. Interpretation in the humanities and the social sciences needs to start from a historically informed localization of the self, explicitly

with regard to the ethic norms and values that determine the horizon of interpretation (which exceeds the admitting of the situatedness of one's thinking) (Daniel, 2006, p.396). Interpretation in the humanities and the social sciences adheres to a truth-claim, it is rule-governed, and it is based on facts: "[t]he relativity of reason does not indicate her invalidity" (Lorenz, 1998, p.327). To be sure, individuals that put matters into relation are not free of presuppositions and thus bestow sense on the narrative they create. As long though, as the product increases "the relative quality of knowledge" (Lorenz, 1999, p.574), it is objective. Scientific objectivity is not necessarily impinged upon by partiality. Correspondingly, objectivity is not to be understood as opposite of subjectivity but as a consequence of reflected subjective attitudes: objectivity does not point at the results of scientific acts and thinking, rather it describes reciprocal relations between these acts and thinking and its results (Daniel, 2006, pp.390-399).

The self-accusation of Hofstede in the opening pages of *Culture's Consequences* does not come by surprise. The humanities and the social sciences are defamed often because of their supposed lack of objectivity, and often the harshest critics come from their own ranks as the example of post-modern sceptics shows, who deny the possibility of writing more than merely fictional, metaphorical, subjective histories and who deny thus the general possibility of truth and objectivity in history writing (Lorenz, 1994). Yet, to value the findings of the humanities and the social sciences one must understand their idiosyncrasy. Based on Kant's reasoning concerning the unity of subjectivity and objectivity, truth in the humanities and the social sciences can be understood as subjective universality, pointing at the objective validity of universal commonality, as well as at the idiosyncratic. The subjectivity that distinguishes the humanities and the social sciences from natural sciences does not imply arbitrariness – namely the humanities may be quixotic at times, yet they are all but whim and impulse. The methodological approaches of the humanities and the social sciences distinguish them from research methodologies of the natural sciences – and this implies explicitly that their insights are not of a lesser quality (Höffe, 2014, p.273).

Yet it seems that exactly his emphasis on the quantifiable boosted Hofstede's popularity among students of 'management and culture': his framework of five allegedly universal 'values' turned 'culture' from an amorphous entity into "a tractable construct amenable to empirical research" (Nakata, 2009, p.3). Hofstede's approach thus satisfied a desire nurtured by the fetish-status and adoration of the natural sciences and the quantitative in the social sciences. The

uncritical endorsement of the quantitative, which seems to imply scientificity and definiteness, which seems to shed light on everything and supposedly provides security in the dark of lacking insight, is dubious. Its fetish-status fosters the falling into oblivion of its ethical implications, i.e.: statistics need to be interpreted and that implies the bestowing of meaning on the numbers by contextualization, – which is a qualitative process that always is difficult and sometimes problematic: it cannot be considered as simply self-evident. Besides, the data gathered in the social sciences is most often linguistic and thus idiosyncratic. Instead of desperately trying to achieve recognition of status similar to the natural sciences, social sciences should endorse these distinguishing features that underline their kinship to the humanities.

Hofstede's study is representative of the pretence of the social sciences to form an alliance with the natural sciences and convey how ordinary people think and show how dependent, determined and unfree the individual is (Latour, 2016, pp.88-95) – in this case, because of the allegedly inescapable predetermination of collective 'mental software'. The sheer amount of quantitative data collected with a survey of thousands of respondents in a wide range of countries seemed to give credibility to Hofstede's findings. One of the factors that, according to Cheryl Nakata, boosted his popularity most, was that the collected data allegedly allowed to formulate statistically based insights into 'culture'. The framework of values that Hofstede established, seemed to make it possible to describe any 'national culture'. The fact that his approach is theoretically grounded – Hofstede explains his approach towards and understanding of 'culture' based on approaches of different disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology – contributed to the wide acclaim with which it was received (Nakata, 2009, p.3). Whereas Nakata, on the one hand, thus refuses critiques that depict Hofstede's approach as reductionist, she does mention, on the other hand, that it creates the impression of 'culture' as an entity "more fixed and certain than conditions in rapidly transforming markets and organizations around the world indicate" (Nakata, 2009, p.11). She continues to criticise Hofstede for depicting 'culture' in tendency as "independent, coherent, and stable" which would not do justice to the "interactive and mutable nature of culture" (Nakata, 2009, p.10) which indeed is a fundamental theoretical flaw of Hofstede's approach. Nakata bases her critique on a statement about the increased complexity of the post-Cold War world in which nations no longer are "fairly bound, stable, and intact" (Nakata, 2009, p.4). A brief look into the cultural history of nations, shows that this statement is highly dubious and one prone for misunderstanding. In the post-Cold War world,

she continues, “nations have become more permeable and heterogeneous, and are altering through dismantlement (e.g. the former Soviet Union) as well as integration (e.g. the European Union)” (Nakata, 2009, p.4). Whilst her critique presents Hofstede’s conceptualization of ‘nations’ implicitly as essentialist and anyway as overtly simple and inadequate to do justice to the complexity of the present-day world, she undermines her reproach by presenting an equally simplistic understanding which fails to conceptualize ‘nation’ in a theoretically acceptable as well as a methodologically practical way. According to Nakata however, the concept needs no further attention and is omitted as impractical. In the “varied and dynamic terrains of markets, consumers, and organizations around the world”, she claims, “alternative paradigms of culture” are needed (Nakata, 2009, p.5). The justified rejection of a static and in tendency essentialist understanding of ‘nation’ and ‘national culture’ should not lead to the refutation of the ‘nation’ as a conceptual cornerstone in the analysis of ‘culture’. That the abandoning of ‘nations’ as a concept of great explanatory power – also in the context of doing business internationally – may be premature, shall become clear in the conceptualization below.

P. Christopher Earley, states that the “loose and imprecise definition of “culture”” used in cross-cultural research creates “confusion”. According to Earley, Hofstede’s approach to “equate culture with measuring a value orientation characteristic of people from a given nation” (Earley, 2009, p.21) fosters the essentialization of ‘culture’, by implying that most individuals of specific ‘cultures’ comply with certain characteristics and neglecting substantial differences between societal sub-groups (Earley, 2009). Earley conceptualizes ‘culture’ as “meaning we attach to aspects of the world around us” – meaning, which cannot be generalized across societal subgroups (Earley, 2009, p.24). In addition to his conceptual critique, Earley criticizes on a methodological level that “survey data measured at an individual level” is supposed to capture “collective-level constructs” (Earley, 2009, p.27). The proposition to regard “values measured by individual perceptions as indicative of collective culture” is not acceptable (Earley, 2009, p.27). It is difficult to disagree with Earley, when he asserts that learning that one ‘culture’ is more ‘risk averse’ than the other (‘uncertainty avoidance’ being one of Hofstede’s dimensions), does not necessarily increase the understanding of that ‘culture’ (Earley, 2009, p.35). Yet, it is corresponding statements that references to Hofstede often remain limited to in the educational setting of the IBL courses at RUAS, as utterances such as the following show: ‘Germans are more masculine than Dutch, therefore they prefer cars with more PS and larger bottles of beer’. Earley claims that

research on management and 'cultures' should focus on similarities and universals instead of differences (Earley, 2009, p.37) and indeed, it seems as important to understand what is similar and/or universal about 'cultures', as examining the differences between them – looking at both, similarities and differences, decreases the risk of fallacies and misunderstandings.

In their discussion of Hofstede, Steel and Taras explain that cross-cultural business studies were dominated in the past three decades by several apodictic presumptions that have been derived from Hofstede's work. Among the presumptions they name, are the equation of values and 'cultures', the supposed stability of 'cultures', the determination of 'culture' as the root cause and not a factor among other variables of reciprocal impact, the possibility to quantify culture by mean scores and rankings derived from self-response questionnaires, as well as the possibility to demarcate 'culture' by referring to geographical boundaries and the problematic induction from individuals to collectives (Taras & Steel, 2009, p.41). Based on their survey of as many as 136 publicly available instruments for measuring 'culture', the authors conclude that a vast majority of models pay exclusive attention to values, whilst ignoring other possible determinants of 'culture' (Taras & Steel, 2009, pp.42-43). Correspondingly, Nakata and Izberg-Bilgin, based on their examination of global market research, stipulated that the conceptual foundations and theoretical mooring in pertinent work, is either poor, shallow, and not made explicit at all, or – if it is done, it is done only *a posteriori* (Nakata & Izberg-Bilgin, 2009). A common misunderstanding (avoided by Hofstede himself), is the presumption that all values are cultural (Taras & Steel, 2009, p.44). This can obviously lead to wrong conclusions, for example when a performance is not, in the first instance, meant to convey characteristics of the performer (as a member of a collective) but of the task performed (think e.g. of service personnel) (Goffman, 1990, p.83). The view purported by Hofstede and his followers that 'cultures' are stable, uniform and unchanging, is not tenable as Taras and Steel show by hinting at cohorts (Taras & Steel, 2009, p.45) who, based on common experiences, can develop distinctive features – also on a transnational level for which the movement of 1968 is an example (Gilcher-Holtey, 2008).

Imagining 'culture' as the root cause and not a factor among other variables of reciprocal impact, leads Hofstede and his disciples to conclusions (assured, allegedly, by correlations within Hofstede's empirical data-set), for example about the alleged causality between specific values and the emergence of wealth and economic growth, that are evocative of Max Weber's discussion of the impact of Protestantism on the development of northern Europe which are still

referred to often as factual in public discourse (as a random browse through articles of the Wall Street Journal or The Economist confirms). To be sure, Weber did not establish a causal relationship between Calvinism and Puritanism on the one side and capitalism on the other, with capitalism being the necessary consequence of Protestantism. Weber stipulated that if capitalism and work ethos or inner-worldly ascetism coincide it is possible (and thus not necessarily compelling) that modern capitalism as economic system emerges. Contemporary research on Weber refers to his work on the Protestant ethic as an example of historical and methodological fallacies that does not meet standards of validity and reliability. The numerous historical mistakes, wrong quotes as well as the sloppy, selective and suggestive compilation of sources, his logical fallacies and a rhetoric overloaded with metaphors lead Heinz Steinert to assert that Max Weber's idea to present capitalism as an unintended side-effect of religious ascetism is sweet, but historically wrong (Kaesler, 2011, pp.56-59). It may be reiterated, correspondingly, that Hofstede's presumptions about the causal relationship between 'culture' and its supposed effects may as well be reversed. The impact of 'culture' and its supposed effects may be proven to be reciprocal (Taras & Steel, 2009, pp.46-47).

Steel and Taras as well as Nakata and Izberg-Bilgin in the same volume, show that presumptions about a causal relation between country of origin or citizenship and values, as stipulated by Hofstede and his followers, cannot be maintained (Taras & Steel, 2009, p.50; Nakata & Izberg-Bilgin, 2009). That "national cultural traits" are treated as "systematically predictable behavioral patterns", confirms Brannen (2009, p.84, p.89), seems unacceptable from a conceptual and methodological point of view. That national averages may not be representative of the individual becomes apparent when imagining that according to this model, US American citizens with African, Asian and Caucasian ethnic background and with disparate levels of education and income, living in different states, in a city, a village and on a farm, are supposed to score similar on Hofstede's dimensions because they are American citizens. Intra-societal variety between (for example, ideological or ethnic) sub-groups and the values that are endorsed by these groups are neglected by Hofstede's approach. In that regard Hofstede's lists of average scores are utterly meaningless and misleading – and that may be said, without even considering that his sample consisted of employees of one international cooperation only, which may be regarded as a heavily distorting factor. In the same vein, Mary Yoko Brannen criticizes that depicting national 'cultures' as "monolithic entities ... made up of fixed values" does not do justice

to the complexity of the concept and leaves managers “stereotype rich and operationally poor where culture meets context” (Brannen, 2009, pp.81-83). Against the backdrop of significant differences within ‘cultures’ and the multiple identities of individuals, Brannon is right in finding it inadmissible to use “culture” synonymously with “nation”, as “international management literature still does” (Brannen, 2009, p.84). The same point is made by Douglas and Craig (Douglas & Craig, 2009, p.125). Correspondingly, Taras and Steel refer to massively increased migration in “today’s “global village”” (Taras & Steel, 2009, p.51) as the decisive factor for the supposedly decreased explanatory power of national affiliation as a determinant of values endorsed by the population of a region. Similarly, Askegaard, Kjeldgaard and Arnould claim that “in a context of increasing cultural interpenetration, migration, and multiculturalism ... in today’s globalizing environment” (Askegaard, Kjeldgaard & Arnould, 2009, p.109), the nation-state and the nation are of ever more limited use as theoretical concepts that are supposed to inform approaches to intercultural marketing. Attempting to understand ‘culture’ based on the essentialist national paradigm that has been dominant in marketing studies for decades, would not contribute to decreasing the potential for “misunderstandings arising from different cultural backgrounds in a marketing exchange relation or in cross-cultural managerial interactions” (Askegaard, Kjeldgaard & Arnould, 2009, p.101). The authors claim that the “inability of social theory ... to explain transnational phenomena” made “frameworks based on nation-states increasingly problematic”. In the social sciences, they declare, the nation state as point of orientation is obsolete (Askegaard, Kjeldgaard & Arnould, 2009, p.109).

It seems premature, however, to abandon the nation as analytical concept when the majority of Europeans still adhere to the nation as the most important level of identification when asked about their identity, as Eurobarometer polls show year after year (an increasingly affirmative attitude towards the EU does not compellingly imply a decreasing level of endorsement of the nation state): the nation is far from redundant in the eye of Europeans and thus it is far from obsolete as a theoretical concept in the social sciences and humanities whether they are occupied with the past or present. The nation stops to exist only when people stop imagining the nation. Similarly, the nation-state is far from omissible when analysing structural organizational principles. The nation-state is a vital component of systems of multi-level governance such as the European Union (Hooghe, Marks, 2001). With intergovernmentalism, an entire school of thought even claims that the integration process in Europe strengthened rather



than weakened national governments (Rosamond, 2000, Meurs et al, 2013). That a transnational elite of civil servants that is increasingly perceived as remote and bureaucratic, will possibly develop eventually into a European elite, does not take away that the average citizens in the EU's member states imagine themselves as nationals of their country in the first instance, despite of all the attempts of the EU elites to create a European nation by providing symbols such as the flag, a passport and an anthem and inventing European traditions such as the 'Women of Europe Award' - initiatives deliberately very similar and evocative of the nation building processes of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Shore, 2000).

Above authors are right in refuting essentialist implications of perspectives on 'culture' in marketing studies that depict societies as "organically grown" as Hofstede et. al. do (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2019, p.31). Nations are constructs, they are contested, they should be imagined as products of continuous negotiation between societal sub-groups and as such they are products of dynamic interaction (Berger & Lorenz, 2008). The demand to abandon analytical concepts as the nation and nation-states because they are supposedly useless as elements of theoretical conceptualizations that aim at exploring cultural differences, omits that a majority of Europeans still identifies with their respective nation, and that within contemporary multicultural European states, there is usually a societal majority or dominant minority (often representatives of the original population of the region) that sets the standard, that determines values and norms that must be endorsed by anyone who wants to play an active part in that society. Historically speaking, the same is true for periods that preceded the era of post-colonial and intercontinental labour migration. Whereas, before the Second World War, Europe was marked by greater ethnic homogeneity of its societies in terms of the percentage of non-European residents, there were hardly any ethnically homogeneous societies in Europe. The ethnic diversity of especially central eastern European societies created by intra-European expansionism and intra-European migration patterns (Bartlett, 1994, Mitterauer, 2009, pp.199-234), was a major reason for the outbreak of both world wars (Mazower, 1999). In western Europe, the era of relative ethnic homogeneity ended at the latest with the dissolution of empires in the early post-war period and the subsequent labour migration from Southern Europe and South America, Northern Africa and Turkey from the early 1960s onwards (Chin, 2017). In eastern Europe, the relative ethnic homogeneity that was established by ethnic cleansing during and expulsions after the Second World War, still largely exists. Regarding both, the pre- and the post-war period in Europe, it can

be established that societal majorities or dominant minorities determined and still determine publicly acknowledged national self-images, as well as values and norms about any aspect of public societal life. In spite of geographical borders of nation-states being permeable and penetrated by inter- and transnational movements, despite cross-border overlaps, cooperation and exchange, and despite the existence of largely multicultural societies in western (yet not in eastern) Europe, states and nations may still be regarded as useful analytical entities. Whilst essentialist views of the nation are misleading, the post-Cold War decades have shown that the nation and the nation-state have anything but vanished, and neither are they likely to vanish soon as not only the rise of nationalism in the former Warsaw Pact states and the parallel upsurge of anti-Europeanism and populism in the west of Europe show (Moreau, Wassenberg, 2016a, 2016b), but also the turn to the nation of people from the political centre in western Europe, who long for the alleged security and supposed cosiness of a stable world order that was seemingly lost at the end of the Cold War – see the apparent and crucial impact of corresponding perceptions with regard to Brexit, in the independence movements in Scotland, Flanders and Catalonia, and the referenda about a European constitution in France and the Netherlands as well as the Dutch referendum on association with Ukraine. Against the backdrop of the decades following the end of the Cold War, the enthusiastic endorsement of an alleged post-national era appears as naïve, delusive and wishful thinking. It gives evidence of a fundamental lack of historical consciousness which is at the core of a limited understanding of cultural differences in general. Besides, the authors seem to take the expression ‘global village’ quite literally, as if corresponding processes would take place everywhere to a comparable degree. Anyone who visited major cities and the countryside in small Europe alone, would deny that. In terms of a meaningful understanding of ‘culture’ in cross-cultural managerial interactions, a thorough theoretical conceptualization of the nation from a historical-constructivist perspective is indispensable.

As explained above, contextualization is a prerequisite of understanding ‘cultures’ and cultural differences – that very same point is also hammered upon by Douglas and Craig, who focus on three contextual variables, namely the ecological context, the level of societal affluence as well as religion as most relevant for explaining consumer behaviour and understanding inter-cultural management relations (Douglas, Craig, 2009). Apparently, Craig and Douglas are not aware that climate, religion and economy had already been crucial determinants of a country’s

legal system in the eyes of Montesquieu, whose climatological determinism viewed national characters as effects of the physical environment, the climate namely, and who interpreted the political and constitutional organization of nations as reflecting their supposed character (Leerssen, 2006, pp.68-70). Of course, Douglas and Craig's account leaves no doubt that they would oppose the essentialism of Montesquieu and other enlightenment thinkers who endorsed the idea that climate impacts national character traits. Despite their laudable demand for contextualization though, Douglas and Craig fail to recognize the importance of *historical* contextualization. Similarly, Leigh Anne Liu and Claudia Dale recognize that considering a constructivist approach towards understanding 'culture' potentially is rewarding, yet they too seem to suffer from amnesia with regard to the crucial role of historical insight (Liu & Dale, 2009). Historical contextualization is not only instructive regarding the meaning that was bestowed on the world in the past. In a perspective of *longue durée*, historical contextualization can explain the transformations such meaning underwent in different periods and settings which is essential for developing an understanding of the social construction of reality and thus for the understanding of 'cultures' and cultural differences in the present. In other words: the horizon of the present is continuously coming into being, it does not exist *sui generis*, it does not come into being without the past. Understanding is the merging of the horizon of the present with the horizons of the past (Gadamer, 1975, p.289).

### 3. Conceptual Positioning and Theoretical Foundation

As a discipline of the social sciences, marketing studies pretend to examine the 'truth'. It is commonly agreed that truth is what is science-based, verifiable and congruent with the facts. This cognitive interest in 'truth', is based on an ideal of objectivity that presupposes that it is possible and desirable to distinguish clearly the content and the producer of knowledge (Daniel, 2006, p.396). Closely related is the adherence to the postulate of value freedom, the ideal of separating facts and values, the clear distinction of descriptive and normative statements – which is deemed achievable through reflection that compensates the distorting effects of personal, socio-contextual bias. Referring to Agnes Heller, I would add that approaching objectivity necessitates not only the acknowledgement of the limitations of the researching individual in terms of its inescapable situatedness in place and time. As Ute Daniel (2006, p.398) remarked, this has become almost habitual and oftentimes adds to the vagueness rather than to the elucidation of the realm where values and understanding bleed into each other. It is rather common indeed and taught and demanded right at the beginning of the curriculum also in marketing studies in as far as they are concerned with cultural differences. It thus becomes an obligatory, meaningless statement. Approaching objectivity necessitates also reflection about values and norms that results in the explicit formulation of unambiguous, ethical parameters that steer the analytical process and allow for a balanced evaluation of the subjective realities involved (Heller, 1982, pp.128-145): objectivity is not to be understood as opposite of subjectivity but as a consequence of reflected subjective attitudes (Daniel, 2006, p.400). Insofar the understanding of meaning is concerned, the pretence of marketing studies to objectivity reaches its limits. Understanding of meaning is a communicative process (Habermas, 1981, p.197). It does not imply to search for objective facts that can be verified because they exist, it implies the analysis of perceptions and practices that create meaning and thus facts. Correspondingly, facts are not to be understood as phenomena that can be isolated and verified, but as products of the reciprocal impact of the object of interest and the process of theoretical and methodological operationalization undertaken by the researching individual (Daniel, 2006, p.385).

Here is a fundamental misunderstanding of conceptual approaches to 'culture' such as Hofstede's that also guide the design of course content in the educational setting of the IB

courses: 'culture' cannot be understood as a 'fact', an object of investigation that can be isolated and verified. The object of examination is a symbolically pre-structured reality that cannot be accessed through observation alone. It represents structures of pre-theoretical knowledge that constitute the lifeworld which includes speech acts, purposeful action, texts, traditions, documents, artifacts, theories, things, goods, techniques, institutions, societal systems et cetera (Habermas, 1981, p.159). Habermas' approach here resembles essentially what Foucault described as foundational 'archaeological structure'. The *epistémé* that connects *connaissance*, specific corpora of knowledge that explicate the truth of their claims, and *savoir*, knowledge that exceeds rational cognisance and thus includes implicit claims that do not comply with scientific criteria. In the humanities and social sciences, the subject is duplicated as an object, it is – at the same time – the object of knowledge and the knowing subject (Foucault, 2006, p.369, p.428). The researcher in the social sciences and the humanities makes part of the lifeworld (aspects of which) he aims to examine. The collection of language dependent data as well as theory construction compels the researcher in the social sciences and humanities and – with regard to theory construction – also in the natural sciences, to act on both sides of the *epistémé* and use the language of the symbolically pre-structured reality that (s)he is part of. The consequential indeterminacy of meaning, however, does not make all interpretative efforts pointless (Culler, 2008, pp.110–134). Methodologically speaking, 'culture' can therefore not be grasped comprehensively by experiments, observations, not to mention surveys. If represented by statements of individuals, the analysis of the perception of symbolic objects, compels the researcher to take up intersubjective relations with the subject that put forth the statement; in any case, and thus also if the perception of symbolic objects is represented by e.g. a text, a picture or a sculpture, the researcher is compelled to interpret, and aim at the hermeneutic understanding of meaning (Habermas, 1981, pp.163–169).

One of the major problems with Hofstede's approach is that he conceptualized 'culture' as 'values', as a quasi-ontogenetic given, displayed in the succinct metaphoric formula of the 'software of the mind'. Following Hofstede's logic, the intrinsic qualities of symbolic objects are irrelevant, they are mere receptacles of human categories ('values'), a surface on which social desires and interests (largely pre-determined by 'the software of the mind') are projected. Against this backdrop, the question is, how 'culture' can be conceptualized in order to be used as an analytical concept that can help to increase understanding of people from different

backgrounds instead of blurring it by essentializing oversimplifications. A first glance at the possibilities is overwhelming: not only are there hundreds of definitions provided by representatives of different disciplines of the social sciences and the humanities as well as the natural sciences, – the concept resounds throughout the land: it is part and parcel of everyday language and public discourses. When, for example, representatives of the European bourgeoisie speak about (high) ‘culture’ they usually mean art, – painting, sculpture, classical music, theatre, novels, and its counterparts in (popular) ‘culture’: rock and pop music, TV, and cinema – a hybrid, that can fall into both categories depending on the sort of film – film noir and action movies for example. Often, ‘culture’ is understood as a qualitative property of cultivated people – a signifier of good manners and education (Shore, 2000, pp.22–23). ‘Culture’ is also used as a concept in management studies: next to ‘national culture’, it can refer to corporate ‘culture’ or organisational ‘culture’, – a field which is also the second main focus in Hofstede’s work – which points at organisational values and practices that are formulated by management and that are supposed to be endorsed by the employees of a company (Wright, 1994).

Following Thomas Hylland Eriksen, culture can be defined as “those abilities, notions and forms of behaviour persons have acquired as members of society” (Eriksen, 2010, p.3). In contrast to ‘society’ which refers to the social organisation of human life, ‘culture’ thus refers to acquired, cognitive and symbolic aspects of existence. Whereas this definition is practical, it creates the impression that ‘culture’ should be understood as “an integrated [and] sharply bounded whole...a system of meanings that [is] largely shared by a population”, thus neglecting intragroup variety as well as intergroup similarities (Eriksen, 2010, p.3). In the context of the present study, ‘culture’ is, at the same time, understood as a *process*, which “places emphasis on language and power, showing how the terms of discourses are constructed and contested” (Wright, 1994, p.26); a “signifying system through which...a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams, 1981, p.13, in Shore, 2000, p.23); as well as a set of *practices* which are part and parcel of the establishment and reproduction of social relations and thus constitute meanings and values (Jordan & Weedon, 1995, in Shore, 2000, p.24, italics by SdR). According to this definition, culture thus may be understood as a representation of social reality.

The contestedness of social reality implies that political, economic and social power impacts the determination of meaning. The role of power and violence for the attribution of meaning and the organization of knowledge has been emphasized by Jacques Derrida

(Assmann, 2006, pp.350 ff.). The constructedness of social reality necessitates the researcher to examine how meaning is bestowed on concepts, things and events. In their conceptualization of the constructedness of reality and corresponding to Habermas' 'symbolically pre-structured reality' and Foucault's *savoir*, Berger and Luckmann refer to 'common-sense knowledge' as constitutional for the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p.27). On the one hand, this implies that an enquiry into the 'fabric of meanings' of a society needs to consider the 'inevitable historicity of human thought', the 'situational determination' or historical relativity of thought (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p.19, p.25). On the other hand, it implies that it needs to consider the role of 'language [as] objective repository of meaning' (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p.52): "Language is capable not only of constructing symbols that are highly abstracted from everyday experience, but also of 'bringing back' these symbols and appresenting [sic!] them as objective real elements." (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p.55). In other words: constructions of reality can be described as the semantic interpretation of the world which can only be understood when the conditions of the constitution of meaning are described or rather, when the social and cultural context is considered, which implies that it is necessary to pay attention to the question of what is said how, i.e. the content, as well as to the social dimension, i.e. to the question of who is saying it, when and where (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, pp.55-60). Contextualizing and interpreting the interconnections between *signifiant* and *signifié* in above sense thus neither points at a linguistic discussion of the supposed primacy of the signifier, nor at the exposition of the arbitrary nature of the sign (Culler, 2008, pp.189-192).

Whilst the above implies that our relation to the world is fundamentally linguistic, the given conceptualization of social reality, culture, society, nation as human products should explicitly not be misunderstood as a confirmation of the post-modern claim that outside of language, text and discourse, there is no reality or meaningful context. It is thus to refuse the proposition that in order to do justice to the complexity and contrariness of the object of enquiry, i.e., in order to adequately describe the plurality of the world, it is impossible to use what others (including the author) would regard as plain, lucid language and style (for an example of a corresponding approach, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 1999 or Bhaba, 1994). According to Bruno Latour, post-modernity has three fundamental critical repertoires: nature, society and discourse. Latour shows how representatives of each of these repertoires desperately try to demarcate their realms, – and thus 'nature' and 'culture' – of each other. One must agree with Latour's plea for *rapprochement* and



integration of these repertoires. Neither does it seem rewarding to eradicate text and content in favour of a focus on realms of power, nor does it seem worthwhile to neglect societies, individuals and discourse in favour of 'reification', a 'naturalising' perspective that forgets human authorship of the world and puts a world of 'facts' or 'things', seemingly not affected by man, at the centre. Correspondingly, taking in a de-constructivist perspective and asking what effects specific constructions of reality had and have, is here not accompanied by the 'hyper incommensurability' of post-modernism, the attempt to ridicule the belief in a reality that exists outside of texts and independent of our own volition (Latour, 2016).

Hofstede has been criticized above for the reification of 'values' as determinant of behaviour of individual representatives of national collectives by whom these values are shared. Hofstede consequently abets the reification of concepts such as the 'nation' and 'national identity' and thus bestows an ontological and total status on a typification which in essence, is a human product (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, pp.106-109). As long as 'nations' are imagined they exist, and consequently it is premature to claim that it is anachronistic to use the 'nation' as an analytical concept. The proverbial man on the street is triggered to identify with a socially assigned typification such as the 'nation' – he endorses a reified imagination of the 'nation' and perceives himself and others as representative(s) of 'nations'. It seems therefore useful and beneficial to embed the analysis of cultures in the framework of an analysis of 'national self-imaginings'. As mentioned above, the present enquiry does not aim at providing manuals for correct behaviour. Rather, it aims at enabling the recipient to find an analytical access to the understanding of collective, national self-perceptions which, in turn are understood as representations of national cultures. Such an understanding can make the appropriation of behavioural codes, which otherwise risks remaining an empty shell, ethically meaningful because it compels the individual to analyse and reflect on the differences and commonalities of ways in which meaning is bestowed on concepts, events and things. In other words, it compels the individual to question and thus strengthen their ethical worldview (*Weltanschauung*) by making it explicit. In the following, a brief conceptualization of the 'nation' and related concepts such as 'nation-state' and 'national identity' shall occur.

According to above theoretical positioning, the concept 'nation' is approached here from a constructivist perspective. The understanding of the concept was dominated by different paradigms in different eras. Understood as society, the concept points at people that live in a

state and share the same political, social and economic conditions and thus constitute a communication community. Within a cultural paradigm, the concept refers to people that adhere to the same social norms and customs, speak the same language, and share the remembrance of a common history. The racial paradigm imagines a 'nation' as people of common descent whose common culture derives from their blood ties. In practice, such clear-cut distinction is practically impossible, the different meanings overlap each other continuously (Leerssen, 2006, p.16). In 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the emergence of national consciousness on a mass scale was accelerated by socio-political processes of modernization that lasted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that in several cases have been accomplished only after the Second World War. Both, nation-building and state-building are top-down processes that stand in a dialectic relationship: in western Europe, nation-building has oftentimes been preceded and fostered by state building. In eastern Europe state-building processes have often been preceded by the emergence of a national consciousness among a wider public.

State-building processes of centralization, standardization, and integration that favoured the emergence of a national consciousness among a wider public include the centralization of politics and the establishment of a state monopoly of force, the emergence of a modern state bureaucracy; the development of a modern, systematic taxation system, and a state monopoly on taxation; the emergence of the welfare state – the state provided public goods such as social security, community care, health care, housing, education; the emergence of a national infrastructure; the establishment of constitutional states and the rule of law which implied equality before the law, and the appointment of irremovable judges employed by the state, the protection of property, as well as citizenship and thus the right to vote; the standardization of the educational system which implied increasing alphabetization rates; military conscription as a tool to create a union of equal citizens with all the social and political implications of bodily discipline in terms of a reproduction of values and social hierarchies; the nationalization of the economy, i.e. the emergence of national conurbations; the standardization of currency and measurements such as weight and time; the homogenization of inner cultural borders by establishing a standard language taught in school; as well as the ideal and material consolidation of state borders that demarcate the nation state from the outside (Breuilly, 1988; Gellner, 1964a, 1983b; Hobsbawm, 1990).

Throughout Europe, processes of nation-building took pace throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The factors below are of significance not only for past processes of nation-building, but also regarding the maintenance of a national consciousness in the present. The emergence and maintenance of a national consciousness on a mass scale is fostered through mass-communication: imagined invisible co-readers, initiate feelings of belonging to a national community, nations are – quite literally – ‘imagined communities’ (Benedict Anderson). The emergence and maintenance of national consciousness is fostered by common experiences of war: the perception of a threatening external enemy forges the nation from within. Closely related and of significance for the emergence of a national consciousness as well as national self-images are the geographical position and borders of a country. Borders are symbols of possession and power that structure the perception of reality. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the homogenization and levelling of inner cultural borders and the parallel – ideal and material – fortification of state borders that demarcated the ‘nation-state’ from the outside, fostered the development of national consciousness. Nation-building and the maintenance of feelings of togetherness and belonging, rely heavily on the demarcation of external Others – positively and negatively connotated societies of reference: the formation and maintenance of a national consciousness depends on perceptions of being different. Equally important was and is the demarcation of internal Others: social minorities were and are despised as not belonging to the nation by culturally, socially and politically dominant majorities or minorities (Koselleck, 1989a, 2003b; Habermas, 1990; Breuilly, 1988; Gellner, 1964a, 1983b; Hroch, 1985; Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990a; Smith 1983a, 1986b, 1991c; Von der Dunk, 1995; Leggewie, 1996; Brubaker, 1999; Berger & Lorenz, 2008; Kennedy, 2008, Frank & Hadler, 2011; Middell & Roura, 2013).

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the demarcation of internal Others in Europe focused (to different degrees) on socialists, Catholics (in the Protestant North), as well as ‘gypsies’ and Jews (all over Europe). At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and throughout Europe, the role of internal Other has been taken by non-European ethnic minorities, migrants, and especially Muslims (Sunier, 2006, p.186). In this regard an important difference between eastern and western Europe is observable: whilst Sinti and Roma, invariably denounced as ‘gypsies’, as well as Jews are still a focal point of national Othering in central eastern Europe (Tolz, 2001; Gross, 2001; Hodos, 2003; von Klimo, 2006; Tomaszewski, 2009; Borodziej, 2010; Jansen, 2014; Molnár, 2014; Vetter, 2017), they lost significance as internal Other in western Europe after the horrors of the Shoah and the

Second World War. In both, (central) eastern and western Europe, the discourse on Muslims as internal Other is dominated by the 'backlash against multiculturalism' (Vertovec, Wessendorf, 2010). Across Europe, the 'backlash against multiculturalism' involves a number of 'tactics of condemnation': critiques of multiculturalism describe it as a fixed ideology that has been imposed on the country and weakens the 'collective identity' of the nation (Vertovec, Wessendorf, 2010, p.6). Its critiques claim that proponents of multiculturalism are tyrannic disciples of 'political correctness' that act as 'brain police', that aims at controlling thought and speech.

Multiculturalism is presumed to reject social integration and common national values, – instead, it is thought to foster ethnic separatism, i.e. the emergence of ethnic parallel societies at the expense of 'a shared national identity' (Vertovec, Wessendorf, 2010, pp.8–9). At the same time, proponents of multiculturalism allegedly deny societal problems that emerge because of the presence of ethnic minorities. By endorsing cultural relativism, multiculturalism makes concessions to Islam and thus supposedly backs gender inequality, genital mutilations as well as forced marriages and honour killings. Consequently, multiculturalism is depicted as an incubator of terrorism (Vertovec, Wessendorf, 2010, pp.9–11). European debates and discourses on multiculturalism are dominated by its critics and constantly refer to and reiterate themes such as the 'clash between cultures', i.e. of the West and Islam; the threat ethnic diversity poses on national identity and social cohesion; the failure of integration – displayed by high unemployment, high crime rates, and overpopulation caused by migration; as well as the exploitation of the welfare state by migrants and asylum seekers (Vertovec, Wessendorf, 2010, pp.12–13). National European discourses on multiculturalism display how the demarcation of internal Others serves to integrate the nation. Vertovec and Wessendorf claim that this public discourse on multiculturalism should not be confounded with public opinion although the authors admit that it created at least a negative sphere around Muslims in particular, and ethnic minorities in general (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010, pp.13–27). Whereas it indeed seems inappropriate to assume a congruence of public discourse and public opinion, it can be assumed that public opinion is influenced by reporting in the media which are one important arena of public discourse. Opinion leaders adopt information from the media and spread it through interpersonal communication. Public opinions, of course, are contested and marked by plurality: there is not one singular opinion of a population, but journalists and politicians cannot ignore expectations of their public. Albeit there is no generally valid answer to the question whether

media reproduce or form opinions, it seems appropriate to assume a certain degree of compliance between published opinion and public opinions. Media influence and reflect public opinions: by inspiring socio-political action they create reality (Brosius, 1997; Pleitgen, 1997; Kamps, 1998; Noelle-Neumann, 2000; Luhmann, 2000; Weisbrod, 2003).

In contemporary, ethnically diverse European countries, the demarcation of internal Others focuses on ethnic minorities that came to Europe in the course of decolonization, in order to work (labour migration) and as asylum seekers. In eastern Europe (depending on the country to varying degrees), the demarcation of Jews as well as Roma and Sinti who still fulfil the role of internal Others, instils feelings of belonging to the nation among the majority population. The demarcation of internal Others is often accompanied and impacted by racist and ethnic conceptualizations of the nation. Essentializing ideas about common ethnic origins of nations are still prevalent in European socio-political public discourses. The wars on the Balkan recently gave evidence of the high mobilising power that essentialist ideas about ethnicity and race still have (Murji & Solomos, 2015, pp.8-9). Whilst racism was common ground in Europe before, it was generally and officially disavowed after the Second World War. Yet, ethnicity still features regularly as determinant of the contemporary nation. At the same time, the understanding of the concept is often vague and blurred by its ambiguity: ethnicity is partially defined through physical features (phenotype), and partly it is defined as (mostly not explicitly conceptualized) culture. Theoretical and conceptual arguments show that there is no consensus about the meaning of race and ethnicity. Discourses on ethnicity reflect similar divisions as those discussed above regarding nations – i.e., the division between essentialism and anti-essentialism, or primordialist and constructivist approaches. In academic debates, some anthropologists plead for a conceptualization of ‘ethnicity’ that regards it as a qualitative “aspect of a relationship, not as a property of a person or group”. This implies that “the existence of [an] ethnic group...has to be affirmed...through the general recognition [of its cultural distinctiveness by] members and outsiders” (Eriksen, 2010, p.277). Public presumptions about the existence of primordial ethnic communities by contrast, generally base on an essentialising belief in ‘cultural traits’ and ‘national characters’ that allegedly stem from a shared language, tribal roots or race, a shared history, geography, and climate. Regarding the latter, the present study starts from the assumption that existent intragroup similarities of behavioural patterns root in publicly acknowledged customs and conventions about social graces, discipline, parenting and so forth.

Similarities in social behaviour thus result from adherence to dominant yet contested norms of a society rather than from 'national characters' (Poortinga, Girndt, 1996, pp.124-14). *Describing a similar condition*, Pierre Bourdieu referred to 'habitus', "a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.86). Following Johan Galtung, such similarities are understood here as expressions of the socio-cultural code that is shared by individuals that constitute a nation (Galtung, 1997, pp.120-121). The socio-cultural code of a nation is expressed in social practices and perceptions that demarcate the possible range of action of the individual (Imhof, 2002, p.59). The socio-cultural code is imagined as a dynamic concept: it is a product of societal negotiation and bound to change over time. Against this backdrop and considering above conceptualization of culture, it seems inappropriate to claim (as Hofstede does) that culture is the more neutral equivalent of 'national characters': that seems to be the case only if one looks at the concepts from an ontogenetic, essentialising perspective that envisions values as fixed entities.

Public discourses on national identities and the corresponding demarcation of ethnic minorities confirm that across Europe ethnicity is an important element of imaginings of nationhood. This becomes also evident in the contestedness of the nation: different societal groups negotiate group-specific experiences, expectations, and interpretations of the past. Feelings of national belonging are challenged by competing intra- and transnational affiliations. Religious, class, gender and ethnic affiliations represent competing concepts of collective identification, which impact on images of the nation and potentially oppose the self-understanding of the dominant majority (Berger & Lorenz, 2008). At the expense of social exclusion of minorities, the negotiation processes about imaginings of the nation tendentiously create national boundedness and cohesion. The Dutch discourses on the remembrance of slavery as well as on *Zwarte Piet* (Black Pete) exemplify this contestedness of the nation in terms of ethnicity: with regard to the Dutch participation in especially the transatlantic slave trade (Wekker, 2016, pp.168-173), descendants of slaves and people that came to the Netherlands in the course of decolonization demand that this part of the past is remembered and acknowledged publicly. They demand public recognition of this past and thus their place in that past and in the nation. Regarding the debate about Black Pete (Wekker, 2016, pp.139-167), the same ethnic minorities demand that this figure be abandoned because of its racist origin and racist

connotations. Corresponding demands can be interpreted as the claim of being part of the Dutch nation. In any case, such demands and the corresponding political activism compel the dominant white majority to discuss the meaning of being Dutch, to discuss Dutch-ness or rather Dutch 'identity' and self-images publicly – a debate that is controversial and evokes considerable resistance because it touches upon long-standing images of being an 'ethical' nation: it threatens the self-image of being a morally superior nation that has a long tradition (de Roode, 2012, pp.81 ff.) and was maintained and specifically supported after the Second World War by reference to the occupation – despite the 'Dutch paradox' of having enabled the German occupier to deport more Jews to the death camps than any other occupied country in relation to size of the country and its population (Flap & Croes, 2001) and despite the violent attempt to maintain the Indonesian empire after the war (de Roode, 2012, pp.81 ff.). Recently, Gloria Wekker pointed out that the relation between the Dutch self-image of being an ethically guiding nation and the refusal of public acknowledgement of the existence of structural racism in the Netherlands, reflects power relations between ethnic minorities and a dominant white majority (Wekker, 2016, p.171). Regarding the UK, the same point was made by Paul Gilroy already in 1987 (Gilroy, 1992), and again in 2005, in an account written as a reaction to the uproar caused by a report that suggested that the "language and symbols of Englishness and Britishness had a tacit racial connotation which made them exclusionary and synonymous with whiteness" (Gilroy, 2005, p.1). Gilroy states that "[t]he imperial and colonial past continues to shape political life in the overdeveloped-but-no-longer-imperial countries" (Gilroy, 2005, p.2), a point also made by Krishan Kumar (2003). This contest is not a fair game: In contrast to the official universalist pretence of being colour-blind of contemporary western democracies, materialist analyses have shown how ethnicity and class are linked as well as how state power (re-) produces ethnic inequality (Goldberg, 2008).

Nation-building processes as well as the maintenance of feelings of belonging to a nation, rely heavily on the 'invention of tradition'. Invented traditions establish and symbolize social cohesion and membership of a group. They establish and legitimize institutions, status, or relations of authority. They abet socialization with the group, the inculcation of beliefs, of value systems, and of conventions of behaviour. Nation-building and the maintenance of emotional bonding with the nation are fostered by symbolic practices such as non-invented and invented traditions, rituals, and symbols which legitimate power, and provide participants with emotional

experiences. Ambiguous symbols such as flags create a bond between very different people with contradicting interests (Hobsbawm, 2004). Invented traditions are products of processes of social engineering which implies, in turn and corresponding to the above, continuous power-struggles between social groups: socio-political conflicts determine which imaginings of the nation prevail. Periodically repeated, rituals, traditions and symbols imprint values such as patriotism, duty, loyalty to the nation by creating continuity with the past (Hobsbawm, 2004). A nation exists only by voluntary consent of individuals to belonging to a national community. The state has an active interest in creating that voluntary consent of individuals. Its functionality depends on the social solidarity implied by consent that comes forth from a belief in a common past and future of the national community (Renan, 1882; Giessen, 1999, p.117). Feelings of belonging to a national community are fostered by the consciousness of sharing a common history and consequently of partaking in a progressive development towards a future destination (Koselleck, 1989).

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, canonical versions of 'national history', national master narratives were written which gave a simplified account of national history based on a selected choice of events that explained the *raison d'être* of the nation and legitimized its existence in the present and future (Jarausch & Sabrow, 2002; Thijs, 2008). National consciousness and historical remembrance became insolubly intertwined, perceptions and remembrance of a common history still foster the belief in a sense of distinct national Otherness. Images of the nation are represented in, and disseminated by national master narratives, i.e. 'narrative frameworks' which dominate the 'narrative hierarchy' of a nation, and which are legitimized by reproduction of its leading patterns in subordinate narratives (Thijs, 2008) – think for example of the different interpretations of the upheaval against Spain in the Netherlands. Master narratives simplify and omit. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, master narratives were historicist, teleological narrations, which aimed at creating feelings of belonging and togetherness and elevating the nation by telling a tale of glory and honour (Leerssen, 2006, pp.119 ff.). By no means a thing of the past, master narratives are also produced in the new millennium – see, e.g. the coffee table account by Norman Davies' *The Isles* (2000) – admittedly one whose emphasis on distinct nations within the isles and on a European teleology has odd repercussions against the backdrop of Brexit – or Heinrich August Winkler's account with the programmatic title *Der lange Weg nach Westen* (2000) which explains German history as a long, teleological development towards the aim of becoming a western democracy that was finally reached with reunification (Berger, 2010). For



national 'memory communities', remembrance is a social duty: the rekindling of a shared past, fosters the belief in a common destiny. Remembrance is an active and selective process. It is a social act of creating meaning and thus of creating social reality (Assmann, 2005, p.30, p.43, p.48, p.89, p.132f; Assmann, 2006, pp.130-142). Memory is group-bound and contested, yet official national memory cultures and master narratives and corresponding national self-images, are tendentiously dominated by one social group. This condition is reflective of societal power relationships that are dominated by groups who have the socio-political and economic means at their disposal to confirm the prevailing narratives and images. The 'cultural memory' of a nation is administered and heralded by social knowledge attorneys, such as priests, poets, artists, teachers, and scholars, who construct, represent, practise, and stage the cultural memory through mnemotechniques, cultural *lieux de mémoire* such as myths, songs, dance, theatre, proverbs, laws, (holy) texts, pictures, statues, sculptures, monuments, memorials, and museums (Assmann, 2005, pp.52 ff.; Assmann, 2006, pp.38-61, pp.298-339). The spatial staging of memory authenticates the past through places and objects. National history, national territory, and national *lieux de mémoire* merge into a national memory landscape which is actively constructed and reflects discursively determined, political interpretations of history (Assmann, 2005, p.47, p.49, p.55, p.57, p.298ff.). Following Pierre Nora's (1984-1992) seminal study on French *lieux de mémoire*, edited volumes such as the Dutch series *Plaatsen van herinnering* (van den Doel, 2005; Bank & Mathijssen, 2006) or the German *Erinnerungsorte* (François & Schulze, 2005) that present national sites of memory proliferate all over Europe. The erection of a national memory landscape is a process of determined politics of memory and forgetting. This process is reflected also in the establishment of official versions of national histories such as 'the canon of the Netherlands', the German historical museum and the House of History, or the House of Terror in Budapest. The processual nature of cultural memory implies that it is selective: remembering is accompanied by forgetting (Renan, 1882; Hobsbawm, 1990, p.12, Bhabha, 1990, p.311) - which in turn, points once more at the impact of socio-political and economic power relations: memory is contested. Who determines what is remembered and what is forgotten? Who has the prerogative of interpretation?

In the past three decades or so, the European heritage industry became a potent factor in the dissemination of national stereotypes. At the turn of the century, increasing mass tourism resulted in a vast increase of the 'staging of history'. History became business: states, regions and

cities develop marketing strategies to make money with remembrance. The masses of tourists in Barcelona, Paris or Florence and other cities and villages create the impression that the entire continent is turned into a 'heritage theme park' (Macdonald, 2013, pp.109-136). Land- and cityscapes are shaped by heritage which validates some social groups and others not. Selection implies inclusion or exclusion from conversation, – as a consequence the prerogative of preservation and the decision what heritage is worthy of conversation is contested. Disputing heritage is not only about the past, contesting heritage means disputing the projection of the future of the national Self (Macdonald, 2013, pp.79-108).

Museums are part and parcel of the heritage industry. In museums, cultural memory and collective self-imaginings become manifest and tangible (Macdonald, 2013, pp.137-161). Museums are important agencies for the dissemination of images that members of nations have of members of other nations – the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, the Imperial War Museum in London or the monument and museum to Vittorio Emanuele II in Rome exemplify the case. Heritage is entangled with attempts to forge and maintain bounded, homogenous identities of nations. That implies that the display of heritage of dominant societal groups excludes the 'Other'. Ethnological art that is exhibited in European museums, comes from colonial collections which implicitly reaffirms colonial relations of power – see for example the British Museum in London. The intention of such exhibitions often is to emphasize societal inclusion and to create respect and understanding of cultural differences (Macdonald, 2013, pp.162-187) – see for example the great Suriname exhibition in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam of 2019 (which however, largely neglected slavery). Instead of stimulating perceptions of social inclusion however, corresponding exhibitions unavoidably present the culture in question as an exotic Other. On the other hand, museal staging is used by ethnic groups to receive recognition – see e.g. the Sorbisches Museum in Bautzen, Germany. Ethnic groups become imaginable through histories and shared property that are displayed and can be experienced in museums (Macdonald, 2013, pp.162-187). The question is whether hybrid transcultural identities can be displayed.

Often museal displays of multiple cultural heritages merge in the shallow image of the 'happily hybrid citizen' (Macdonald, 2013, pp.162-187) – see, for example, the Museon in The Hague. Forced and voluntary migration, tourism, business travel, international study exchange, all imply the movement of cultural baggage and thus cultural interaction. The existence of the European

Union is an additional factor that impacts crucially on the identity formation of individuals in Europe. At least that is implied by the ever-increasing number of Europeans that indicate in the Eurobarometer polls that the self-perception of being European is an element of their personal identity. The EU fosters actively the emergence of a European identity: since the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), the cultural policy of the EU purports the existence of one European culture whose unity is marked by its diversity. Corresponding to modern European national master narratives it bases on a teleological image of history – with the goal of forging an ‘ever closer union’ which, in this context, may be understood as a European federation with a common culture. The EU’s cultural policy makes use of symbols in the same way they were used in nation-building processes in Europe – a flag, an anthem, a currency, passports, special holidays et cetera. Paradoxically, the EU aims at the establishment of a European cultural unity that, on the other hand, is supposed to exist already, as is reiterated time and again in official communication (Shore, 2000, pp.50–53). Corresponding to the mechanisms of the formation and maintenance of national consciousness, the demarcation of external Others impacts the process of forging a European identity (Shore, 2000, p.52) – the negative Othering of the USA, China or Russia, is an example. The forging of a European identity is potentially accompanied by the demarcation of internal Others – the demarcation of migrants and religious minorities such as Muslims, which is evident on the national level, is likely to impact a European self-image too (Stråth, 2000). The current debate on a European identity is overshadowed by debates about national identities in the member states that are challenged by the presence of migrants and populist opposition against the threat these migrants allegedly pose for the future of the nation and its identity, as well as regional independence movements in multi-national states such as Spain, Belgium or the UK. Whilst being European may form one layer of personal identity for many European individuals – it does not replace the nation and the feelings of belonging instilled by regional and local affiliation as a source of identity formation. Obviously, and in contrast to national identities, a European identity cannot be an ethnic, but only a civic identity that bases on voluntary consent to humanist, democratic values, justice, and freedom. According attempts to the Europeanization of the myth of the victims of National Socialism or the forging of constitutional patriotism on a European level, however, stimulate national (–ist) counterreactions (Østergård, 2005; Kaiser, Krankenhagen & Poehls, 2012, 147–151; Assmann, 2009; Hijink, 2009; Kolen, van Krieken & Wijdeveld, 2009).

To conclude this section, museums are socio-political agencies that have a guiding function for the future which they fulfil by facilitating the interpretation of the present and past: on the nation-state level, museums are arenas of the negotiation of future societal organisation (Kaiser, Krankenhagen & Poehls, 2012, pp.26–45). Museums are part and parcel of the heritage industry and thus play an important role in the discursive negotiation and reinforcement of national self-images and images of internal and external Others. They are institutions that stage the cultural memory of the nation and connect the nation with its past. In ethnically diverse societies, museums are arenas of negotiation of the societal role of ethnic minorities. They are agencies of societal inclusion and exclusion. Museums are impacted too by developments in the humanities and thus confronted with the task of telling non-teleological, de-constructivist narratives of national pasts that necessitate comparative transnational contextualization (Kaiser, Krankenhagen & Poehls, 2012, pp.227). As tourist attractions however, museums nonetheless keep playing an important role in forging images of a nation among members of other nations. Museums proliferate historical and contemporary stereotyped images of the national Self and Other. International businesspeople travel often, and thus are frequently exposed to stereotyped images of nations manifest in the public realm. It seems to me, that an understanding of such mechanisms, of the emergence, the content and effects of national images and stereotypes that goes beyond the superficial knowledge and normative denunciation of stereotypes, (and including the ability to ‘read’ the way cultural memory is staged in the public realm, including museums), is something that can help forging reciprocally beneficial relations that are experienced as rewarding by international managers and students of international business who get in touch with individuals of different cultural backgrounds in their home countries and abroad. Accordingly, museums should be paid attention to in corresponding lessons, and museums should be visited by students during their stays abroad. One or more observations in museums should also be part of the field research round that is going to be implemented following this research.

According to Lutz Niethammer, the concept ‘identity’ is a connotative stereotype which has one hard core only: the demarcation of the non-identical which renders it impossible to communicate about ‘collective identity’ (Niethammer, 2000, pp.333 ff.). Despite this learned refusal of the ubiquitous concept as an analytical tool, reasonable conceptualizations of ‘collective identity’ exist (Assmann, 2005, p.133). In the context of the present study, which aims at

examining patterns of collective perceptions of the Self and the Other, 'stereotypes' – understood as a means to determine identity – are chosen as the analytical concept to approach and determine the object of enquiry. Explicit emphasis has been put above repeatedly on the intention to elucidate the imagined recipient of this survey – (future) managers – which points at the practical relevance of the undertaking. The project is not limited however, to the normative goal of increasing understanding between people by examining stereotypes as deficient modes of perceptions (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, p.25). Whereas it is of limited use to investigate the 'kernel of truth' of stereotypes, on the empirical-analytical level it seems more promising to explore what the stereotype says about the sender and his/her group – i.e., the individual(s) that use(es) the stereotype – and the function it fulfils (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, p.26, Mütter, 2002, p.160). Stereotypes are negative or positive value judgements that are usually accompanied by a strong conviction of the truth of the statement – except for when it is used manipulatively (and the sender uses it without being convinced of its truth) (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, p.20, p.41). Stereotypes describe supposed qualities or characteristics of racial, ethnic, national, social, political, religious, professional or gender groups (albeit there are also stereotypes that refer to relations between groups) (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, p.21). Stereotypes are ubiquitous, subjective, generalising value judgements of other groups and individuals. They are emotionally loaded imaginations about specific characteristics and behavioural patterns of members of groups, organisations or professions. The latter is a distinctive feature: their emotional loadedness distinguishes stereotypes from concepts that can be verified or falsified. Stereotypes do mostly not emerge from experience, they are transmitted emotionally, through social interaction and are therefore resistant to rational critique and change (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, pp.21-22). Emotions are not universal but relative, they are historical and specific to cultures. Knowledge of the specific networks of patterns of perceptions and concepts are a prerequisite to understanding of the emotional connotations of stereotypes (Imhof, 2002, p.63). Because of this predominant emotionality, stereotypes must be distinguished from cognitive concepts. Whilst only individual experience can change them, the own experience is – in case it deviates from the stereotype – mostly incorporated as exception and thus confirms the stereotype (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, pp.21-22). Stereotypes are resistant to change albeit new information, – caesuras, fissures, upheavals, and break-downs – may cause their revision or adjustment. In general, though, individuals avoid the cognitive dissonances caused by new information and adhere to familiar patterns of

perceptions (Festinger, 1987; Niethammer, 1996). Stereotypes reduce complexity and structure the cacophonous mass of information that continuously confronts the individual. Experience, observation, emotion and knowledge fuse into coarse figures, to which new information is attributed. Stereotypes pervade the entire lifeworld of individuals and are marked by longevity and universality. Stereotypes fulfil a function of social integration by demarcating the social self of the Other. Correspondingly, compliance with publicly acknowledged stereotypes protects from internal isolation or rather, an individual that does not comply with the pressure to conformity with the stereotype-consensus of his/her society risks alienation. Regarding concrete interpersonal exchange in international business settings shared stereotypes can correspondingly serve to create a conflict-free, positive setting for a conversation between (potential) business partners. Throughout the post-war period, for example, negative stereotypes about Germans and Germany may have served as a mean to create understanding between individuals from different European countries that had suffered German occupation during the war. National stereotypes explain the socio-historical existence of the Self (auto-stereotype) and its relations to the Other (hetero-stereotype). When a negative hetero-stereotype is articulated, the corresponding positive auto-stereotype is almost certainly thought simultaneously; or rather: when a positive hetero-stereotype is used, it refers to the Other as an example that needs to be emulated. The function of social integration by demarcation of the Other is accompanied by a hierarchical distinction of Us and Them in which the We is usually imagined as better than the Other (Manz, 1968; Krakau, 1985; Breitenstein, 1989; Kleinsteuber, 1991; Flohr, 1995; Benz, 1996; Dichanz, 1997; Hahn & Hahn, 2002, p.28 ff.).

In order to understand and analyse stereotypes and to take into account the changeability of their meaning over time, they need to be contextualized – failing to do that results – implicitly or explicitly – in essentialisations, as in Hofstede's account where a value is a sign within a sign system (of values) which serves as the decisive context within which meaning is bestowed. The stereotype (and the value), however, is not a sign as such, it emerges contextually (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, p.23, Imhof, 2002, p.65). Contextualization in a wider discourse allows for the evaluation of the effects and changes of stereotypes. The genesis of stereotypes is impacted by the socio-political context in a specific period, it is determined by country-specific public remembrance and traditions. Stereotypes that are prevalent about other nations in another nation are embedded in a narrative interpretation of the history of the common relations (Hahn &

Hahn, 2002, p.54). Stereotypes stabilize political and ideological systems and steer public perceptions and interpretations of social reality. Stereotypes are distributed through the socio-political environment and its institutions, – parenting, education, political parties, media, associations, military, food, literature as well as pragmatics of languages that impact thinking and perceptions of individuals et cetera (Krakau, 1985; Hahn & Hahn, 2002, p.26, p.51, Macdonald, 2013, pp.89–90). National stereotypes reflect political cultures and impact inter-state and international (political and economic) relations and communication. They are rooted in history, politics, economy, and cultural traditions as well as in collective ideological orientations (Nicklas & Ostermann, 1989; Dorsch–Jungberger, 1995; Süssmuth, 1997). The stereotype-consensus of a society is not neat and unambiguous, they can contain apparently contradictory stereotypes. Stereotypes that seemed to have been overcome in the course of time, are easily revived when the self-image is in need of corresponding hetero-stereotypes (Hahn & Hahn, 2002, pp.37–38).

To understand the usage of specific stereotypes one needs to examine why a specific stereotype is used in a specific context at a specific point in time, with what (not necessarily intended) motivation and function for the statement in which it is embedded (Imhof, 2002, p.65). To perform such an analysis, stereotypes should be understood as elements and representations of discourses. As representations of a national socio-cultural code, stereotypes are embedded in discourses about the national Self. The discourse determines what can be said and what cannot be said, including stereotypes, specifically in their functions of integration in and exclusion from the nation. National stereotypes are investigated here as representations of the discourse about the national Self. Following Michel Foucault, discourses are understood as the 'room of the sayable' – the condition of the opportunity or impossibility to make specific statements at a specific point in time. The shape of such rooms of communication is determined by the practices and actions of individuals: discourse and practices are insolubly intertwined (Foucault, 1981, pp.183 ff.). Discourses regulate modes of thinking, acting and speaking (Landwehr, 2008, pp.15 ff.). Discourses include institutionalised cultural and societal practices (such as rituals). They are not limited to institutionalised modes of speaking and thus linguistic representations or practices (Schöttler, 1997, pp.134 ff.; Imhof, 2002, p.66 ff.). In his approach of discourse analysis, Jürgen Link describes how knowledge from different specialised discourses is accumulated and integrated into a selective cultural general knowledge that is represented and distributed by popular science, popular philosophy, journalism etc. and which is not expected to meet scientific

standards (Link, 1986, pp.5-6). Discourses shape social reality and (non-) compliance with their rules impacts the social position of participants of the discourse (Telus, 2002, p.102). Discourses can be operationalised as thematically compiled corpuses of (linguistic, cultural, societal) representations that are selected according to chronological, socio-political or geographical criteria (Daniel, 2006, p.355).

## **4. National Auto- and Hetero-Stereotypes in Europe: A Comparison**

Before the methodological approach for the analysis of the source material of this study is discussed, a cursory comparative analysis of elements of European national self-imaginings is



provided in order to give the reader an idea of the explanatory power of historical contextualization. The chapter provides a cursory overview of selected core elements of national self-imaginings of different European nations. To be sure, such an overview must omit the attention to detail that is necessarily to be paid regarding any specific country of interest. The analysis aims at revealing differences, similarities, overlaps, and parallels in European national self-imaginings, that counter the claim to uniqueness usually connected to representations of the national Self. The examples show the significance of historical contextualization for the understanding of national stereotypes and national socio-cultural codes. By decreasing the unholy effect distorted, stereotyped perceptions of Others have on communication, corresponding knowledge increases the understanding between people of different cultural and national backgrounds, including (potential) business partners.

Some elements of national self-imaginings, such as the demarcation of internal and external Others, are common to all national collectives regardless of the civilization they are part of. Other elements of collective national self-imaginings, such as the relation to 'the West' or western civilization, as well as the remembrance of the Second World War are part and parcel of the self-imaginings of all European nations. There are of course, also elements that are specific to individual cases – such as the Dutch pillarization of society and its impact on the political culture of the country. Dominant, publicly acknowledged national self-images are transmitted into society by national master narratives that emphasize the uniqueness and exceptionalism of the prevailing nation, legitimize the nation-state and anchor the nation historically.

The comparison of national cases reveals that constructions of national uniqueness represent country-specific mouldings of European cultural and political phenomena. National self-imaginings are crucially impacted by case-specific constitutional developments. The late establishment of powerful central institutions in Germany, for example, fostered the elevation of the *Kulturnation*. Regarding the constitutional development of the German polity, federalism became a decisive feature and an important element of German self-understanding, strongly connected to and underpinning the importance of *Heimat*. The early institutionalization of the state in England and the Netherlands, by contrast, encouraged the elevation of constitutional freedoms and liberal civic traditions (de Roode, 2012). The uninterrupted history of the French state remains an important element of French national self-images to the present day (Baycroft, 2008). Similarly, the ancientness and continuity of the state in Spain was – and still is – of

significance throughout the past centuries for Spanish self-imaginings (Vincent, 2007; Humblebæk, 2015).

State- and nation-building processes as well as corresponding self-images are irrefutably impacted by the geographical position of a country. English and Dutch self-images of being an Atlanticist nation for example, were evidently shaped by the country's island position or rather, the long coast and dominance of the sea provinces Holland and Zeeland (de Roode, 2012). In case of Denmark, the geographical position and its control over the sound impacted strongly the foreign policy of the country as well as an orientation to the Atlantic powers and corresponding collective self-images. Corresponding to the Dutch position in the river delta, control over the sound became a life-insurance against foreign invasion: no great power would allow a competitor to control the strategically vital position (Østergård, 1996). German self-imaginings were decisively shaped by the country's territorial vagueness and its position at the heart of the continent (de Roode, 2012). The French hexagon with its supposedly natural frontiers – the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees, the Atlantic, the English Channel, the River Rhine – was and is central to French identity (Schmale, 2000, Baycroft, 2008). The geographical shape of the Iberian Peninsula and the fact that the borders of the Spanish state remained largely unaltered since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, impact significantly dominant Spanish self-images (Molinero & Smith, 1996; Vincent, 2007; Humblebæk, 2015). Correspondingly, the Italian peninsula was recognised as a cultural unit since antiquity. It made it easy to demarcate Italy from the Other. Maps of Italy became an important means of imagining Italy (Doumanis, 2001).

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a general obsession with public remembrance of the national past is reflected in the abundance of monuments, statues, sculptures, museums, exhibitions, paintings, plays, songs, poems, novels that broach the nation. The discourse on the nation is thus not only present in coffee table accounts or in school textbooks on national history – it is pervasive and penetrates the public realm on all thinkable levels – also, for example in architecture (Leerssen, 2006). Specific architectural styles were believed to represent special characteristics of the nation. Whereas English cities and the English landscape are littered with neo-Gothic buildings, in the Netherlands, Gothic architecture was – with prominent exceptions such as the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam – generally perceived as 'Catholic' and therefore refused. The neo-Renaissance style by contrast was endorsed as symbolizing the enlightened qualities of the nation (de Roode, 2012). The houses

of Parliament in Budapest, built as an emulation of Westminster, reflect positive hetero-stereotypes of England. Whilst some styles as neo-classicism as representation of ancient Greek and Roman virtues were endorsed all over Europe, other styles such as neo-baroque would only be found in countries with absolutist rule such as France and Germany. Similar to the Dutch Renaissance style (Agricola, 2000), Russians were eager to develop a new, genuinely national architecture, the Russian Revival Style (Tolz, 2001).

All over Europe, and also still after the introduction of the euro, currencies became and are national symbols. Coins and notes disseminate national allegories and symbols through their artwork. Stamps perform a similar heraldic function as currencies. They display a national iconography in an everyday context. The constant edition of new series turns them into a perfect medium to draw attention to diverse anniversaries, as well as to achievements of the nation and its heroes. Stamps are galleries of national history (Leerssen, 2006). Whilst European integration in form of the monetary union added an element to this, the national element is still a distinguishing feature of contemporary designs.

That “[n]ationhood is represented on the model of the family” fosters the essentialization of the national community. The gendering of the nation is mirrored in general denominations: the nation inhabits a fatherland or motherland and shares a mother tongue. Nation-states are usually constituted by ‘Founding Fathers’. Yet, as explained above, many nations established female allegories of the nation. The gendering of the nation is moreover reflected in patterns of self-victimization. After the Second World War, Dutch, Germans, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, Danes, Norwegians alike imagined the occupation and the defeat as the violation of the nation (Malěcková, 2008; Rausch, 2008; Epple & Schaser, 2009).

Whilst many of the northern European countries were dominated by Protestant majorities, in Southern Europe and in large parts of central eastern Europe, Catholicism prevailed. Whereas secularization has pervaded the societies of northern Europe, the church and belief still play an important role in Catholic countries such as Spain, Italy and Poland. Yet, despite pervasive tendencies towards secularization, the religious imprinting of society can have a continuing impact in the north of Europe too as the self-image of being an ethical nation and a tendency to moral as part of the national habitus in the Dutch case shows (de Roode, 2012). Against the backdrop of increasing migration from non-Christian regions, the Christian cultural heritage of European countries is often referred to in the discourse on Islam and Muslims and also, as in the

Hungarian case, in order to refuse migration for the sake of maintaining cultural homogeneity and thus societal cohesion (Vetter, 2017). While religion thus may play a less significant part in the personal life of many individuals, Christianity still impacts the imagining of the collective Self.

Ideas about primordial nations imply the existence of an essentially different outside. The claim of uniqueness depends on the existence and demarcation of national Others who display what the own nation is not (vice) or would like to be (virtue). The demarcation of the Other still fulfils the function of social integration of the nation. Throughout the early modern and modern periods religion was an important indicator of Otherness among the Catholic and Protestant European powers. Whilst religion is less important in that regard now, power relations and neighbourhood are still significant indicators of otherness. Usually, smaller neighbours are of much less significance as Others for the bigger neighbour than the other way round. Denmark and the Netherlands for example, were and are far less important for German self-imaginings than the demarcation of France or Russia. Germany, on the contrary, was and is among the most important Others of its smaller neighbours. In times of great power, Catholic Spain was an important Other in the Netherlands, France and England, but after it lost its powers, its role as Other was only marginal. Throughout its heyday of power and expansionism, France was an important – mostly negative – Other for almost all European nations. Russia and Germany were and are significant Others for the smaller central Eastern European nations, which play no comparable role for neither Germany nor Russia. Once it lost its empire, Austria became less important as national Other to the central European nations. Ideological nearness and perceptions of being religious and/or ethnic kin can play an important role in positive Othering. England was and is a positive Other for the Netherlands. Albeit no direct neighbour the perceived ideological nearness also turns Sweden and Denmark into positive Others of the Netherlands. The perception of the Other can change fundamentally – think for example, of France and Germany who from hereditary enemy became closest allies in the EU (Dann, 1996; Berger, 2004; Dörner, 1995; Tacke, 1996; Frey & Jordan, 2008; Fischer, 2010).

That power plays an important role in determining the significance of other nations for the respective self-image, is displayed by the fact that no matter how far away, the USA served as a positive or negative point of reference for the determination of the national Self in almost all European nations (de Roode, 2012). A similar role, on the other hand, although comparable in culture, regarding distance and size, Canada did never play. For all European countries their

relation to 'the West' and the degree to which dominant self-images depict the nation as a western nation is of significance too. Within the west, – understood as a civilization to which different nations of a similar culture can belong – a differentiation between stereotyped perceptions of eastern, southern, northern or western Europeans can be observed. In the English case, the self-perception of being western, both ideologically and geographically, was reinforced by the island position which, from the English perspective, turned the entire European continent into 'the Other'. Poland perceived and still perceives itself as outpost and glacis of the West whilst nations geographically positioned to the West of Poland would not necessarily agree on this (Janowski, 2008). In case of Russia, where the emulation of the west was replaced with its defamation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, anti-western sentiment continued to serve as glue of the nation after the end of the Cold War (Tolz, 2001, Baberowski, 2007; Wendland, 2010; Aust, 2013; Schlögel, 2016; Koenen, 2017, Lipman, 2019).

Next to external Others, internal Others were and are of significance as an entity of demarcation. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and – depending on the comprehensiveness of industrialization – to different degrees, socialists became internal Others. Anti-socialism was followed suit by anti-Communism in the Cold War in western Europe (de Roode, 2012). Whilst in Eastern Europe, the official image of the west – in this sense understood ideologically as democracy and capitalism – was a concept of the enemy, many individuals had a positive, idealized image of the west that was only reversed after the end of the Cold War when those whose hopes on a better life had been disappointed, turned away (Bingen & Ruchniewicz, 2009, Vetter 2017, Lipman, 2019). Whilst anti-Semitism was discredited after the Second World War and the Shoah, Jews remained an internal Other from which the nation was demarcated in central eastern European countries such as Poland or Ukraine (Vetter, 2012a; 2017b; Jansen, 2014). In contemporary Europe, Muslims and Islam became a focal point of internal Othering throughout Europe.

Throughout Europe, the remembrance of the Second World War is central to the imagination of the national Self. In Russia, the Great Patriotic War became a national myth, as did the myth of 'the Blitz' and the 'finest hour' in Britain according to which the virtuous, defiant British had saved the world from Teutonic tyranny (the role of the USSR and the US was not mentioned in this tale). West-German self-images in the post-war period, were dominated by the anti-memory of Shoah, National Socialism and the Second World War. Like nothing else, did the coming to

terms with the past impact German self-imaginings after the war. Whilst the Germans in the Federal Republic took the full responsibility for the events of the war, they also imagined and imagine themselves as victims – of the expulsions from central eastern Europe, of the mass rapes after the war by Red Army soldiers, of the allied bombings, and as innocent youth that was seduced by the Nazis. Whereas the political centre-right demands an end of penance and a renewed national pride, the liberal left claims that the Nazi past must remain at core of public self-awareness (Jarausch & Geyer, 2003; Frei, 2003a, 2009b; Reichel, 2003; Fullbrook, 2007). The process of coming to terms with the past did play a much smaller role in Italy (Doumanis, 2001). In the Netherlands, the myth of the Golden Age and the Republic was replaced with the myth of the Second World War. The war was a national trauma – the contradiction between a self-image that would have demanded collective resistance and a reality of a passive majority and minorities that collaborated or resisted was compensated through the myth of collective resistance. The war became a moral myth – it was depicted as a mundane purgatory that divided good from bad. The Dutch paradox though, fostered nagging doubts. Most Jews that were in the Netherlands at the time, were deported and murdered. The children of the war generation replaced the myth of collective resistance with the myth of collective failure of the parental generation. The war remained a moral yardstick. Publicly acknowledged images of the war continued to stick to the basic, simplifying distinction between good and bad. Public memorials of the war are still marked by a mixture of martyrdom and heroism and the hefty reactions to war-related incidents show that this is a ‘past that refuses to become history’ (Ultee & Flap, 1996; Flap & Croes, 2001; Keizer & Plomp, 2010; de Roode, 2012). In France, the remembrance of the war was and is coined by the ‘Gaullist consensus’ which implies the denial of the Frenchness of Vichy and the belief that the true France stayed alive in De Gaulle and his followers in London and the French Empire. According to this myth, the French people were a highly unified nation of resisters to Nazi Germany that liberated itself and won the war (Schmale, 2000; Baycroft, 2008). In Hungary, the Second World War and Communism are remembered together which results in a tendentious depiction of Hungary as victim of ‘foreign ideologies’ (von Klimo, 2006; Vetter, 2012). Polish self-images related to the war, depict the Poles as martyrs, victims, and lonely heroes. The myth imagines a Poland under permanent threat. A Poland whose defeat was – with allusions to the Warsaw upheaval and Katyn – re-interpreted as moral victory. Critique regarding Polish anti-Semitism and the treatment of Jews was generally refused as was and is any recognition of Polish

guilt (Borodziej, 2010; Vetter, 2017). All examples show tendencies to self-victimization as well as different degrees of willingness to accept and come to terms with past and thus own guilt. Whilst in Germany and the Netherlands responsibility is accepted, in France and Italy it is partially denied and partially accepted. In Poland and Hungary as well as in the UK and in Russia, responsibility is denied outright from the perspective of the victim, or rather, the victor.

The self-imaginings of those European states that had an empire – sea-borne or landed – were and are impacted by the imperial experience. The colonies were a provider of resources, a selling market as well as a market of investment. Although the dependency theory is not supported by empirical evidence, it is safe to say that European technological, economic, financial, infrastructural superiority was a major factor in the structural underdevelopment of the colonies (Rodney, 2012; Reinhard, 2016). All European imperial states shared the pretence of having a ‘civilizing mission’, based on ideas of racial and cultural superiority that served as a moral legitimation for their jingoism. It was the ‘White Man’s Burden’ to educate the ‘lesser breeds’, the alleged duty to civilize the savages. The need for ‘living space’ and the social Darwinist ‘survival of the fittest’ were a common concern and prevailing view of a world order that stressed struggle, competition, and the use of force. The imperial endeavours were legitimized by alleged divine providence and a consciousness of cultural superiority. Throughout the imperial age, Europeans demarcated themselves of ‘savages’ and ‘imperial Others’ (Wolf, 2010; Reinhard, 2016). The imperial experience colonized the consciousness of most Europeans who were convinced of the cultural and racial superiority and imperial mission of their people. The expansion in exotic worlds inspired the phantasy of the masses whose willing self-colonization was fostered by the (erotic aspects of) oriental colonies, ethnological exhibitions (‘human zoo’), and world exhibitions, by nationalist hero worship through paintings, statues, monuments. Consumers knew where goods came from: crops, meat, tea, coffee, palm oil, gold et cetera. The empire became part and parcel of education – through maps, textbooks, youth books and literature. The empire penetrated the lifeworld of ordinary Europeans. In the academic environment, scientific orientalism prepared the object of study for western requirements, i.e. oriental studies supported the politico-economic subjugation with mental subjugation (Said, 2003). Until 1945, the imperial rule was perceived as a European achievement and a blessing for the colonized. After the war, the empire became a contested memory in France, Spain, Britain, and the Netherlands. Whilst the political decolonization seems to be accomplished, the economic as well as cultural and mental

decolonization is ongoing. Ethno-art exhibitions and colonial collections reaffirm colonial relations of power by presenting the cultures of former colonial people as exotic Others. The remembrance of colonial great power decisively influenced Dutch nation building. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until the Second World War, the myth of the Golden Age remained the dominant national master narrative (Zahn, 1989; Tollebeek, 1996; Blaas, 2000a, 2000b; Beyen & Majerus, 2008). The Empire had a crucial impact on the forging of the British nation and kept impacting on English self-images throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Empire was a decisive feature of national integration of the Celtic fringe into the United Kingdom. Colonialism and imperialism were a force for good, bringing religious truth, moral enlightenment, increased prosperity and education to the supposedly racially inferior colonial peoples. The Empire was perceived as an ontological organism, whose 'coming of age' was to lead to the establishment of an imperial federation. England was to become 'pater familias to most of the civilised world'. The imperial Whig ideology was inseparably intertwined with the idea of distinctive English freedoms (Paul, 1997; Kumar, 2003; Bentley, 2005; Colley, 2005; Webster, 2005; Rashkin, 2009; Thompson, 2012). Corresponding notions were also prevalent in the republican Dutch ideology that depicted the Netherlands as being distinguished by their freedom, tolerance, and civic culture. The messianism of French republicans was marked by the conviction of having the mission to spread the ideas of the enlightenment and the French revolution (Cooper, 2014; Conklin, 2015; Hargreaves, 2015). In the English case (remembrance of) empire continuously impacted on popular culture and publicly acknowledged self-images. Despite its dissolution, the Empire continued to instill feelings of superiority and xenophobia, pride in liberal values, and the spread of freedom, self-government, and civilization. Whereas the memory of imperial conquest and related crimes could also induce feelings of shame, imperial nostalgia increased since the 1970s (Kumar, 2003; Thompson, 2012). Germany's striving to the East, by contrast, culminated in the Second World War and the Shoah, which deprived the Germans of the possibility of endorsing the memory of a past era of great power. German remembrance of overseas' imperialism was superimposed by the memory of the Shoah and (west-) German self-imaginings after the war were determined by the process of coming to terms with the past. The coming to terms with the imperial past in Africa set in at a much later stage, in the 1980s and 1990s (Friedrichsmayer, Lennox & Zantop, 2011). All former imperial powers were inclined to neglect that their empires had been built on violence, war, robbery and enslavement. With immigration from the ex-colonies, former European imperial



powers had to face a non-anticipated long-term effect of imperialism that fundamentally changed the demographic constitution of especially the French, Dutch and English societies which impacts the (discussion about) prevailing national self-images through, for example, the discussion about slavery (Rothermund, 2006; Aldrich & Ward, 2010; Bailkin, 2012; Buettner, 2016; Chin, 2017). Although, after 1898, the Spanish could not rejoice in victories in colonial wars, the empire is still an important and contested site of memory. Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russians depicted Russia as an imperial European power expanding East. This self-image included the idea of having a civilizing mission namely to defend Europe against the Asian barbarians, and to enlighten and Christianize Asia. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the image of Russia as neither European nor Asian was strengthened – the Eurasianists depicted Russia as a part of triade of West, East, and Russia. In this image, Russia is a unique civilization, connecting East and West, distinguished by geography and history. Eurasianists perceive Asia as an integral part of Russia – not as a colony but as part and parcel of Russianness, distinguishing Russia from the West. The Eurasianist self-image perceived the Russian empire as a Russian nation-state – positively distinguished from the West by the vastness and multi-ethnic character of the realm. The refusal of such claims by non-Russians ethnicities was and is ignored – after a brief period of orientation towards the West, post-Cold War Russia saw the re-emergence of anti-western Eurasianists that hope on a recovery of the Russian empire. In Putin's Russia, anti-Western sentiment still serves as glue of the nation (Tolz, 2001; Wendland, 2008; Mycroft & Loskoutova, 2010; Aust, 2013; Lipman, 2019). Whilst remembrance of imperial greatness in Sweden is largely directed towards things Swedish (Björk, 2007), in Denmark, power politics in the Baltic, as well as colonial excursions to India or Africa are largely forgotten and national self-imagination focusses on the small European state (which is not to imply that nationalism would be a thing of the past) (Østergård, 1996; Aronsson, Fulsås, Haapala & Jensen, 2008).

The case of Denmark exemplifies that cultural memory is a selected memory and that the memorization of the past is essentially a process of falling into oblivion. As Eric Hobsbawm put it: "Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation" (1990, p.12). That attempts to collective forgetting or repression can be counterproductive is exemplified by the Spanish case. For almost 40 years, Spain was a dictatorship. The Francoist state institutionalized the repression of opponents through mass executions, enforced exile, imprisonment, penal labour, through the education system, the media, and the military, with the goals to 'cleanse Spain' of Jews,

communists and freemasons. Under the leitmotif *España: Una, Grande y Libre* the admittance of collective guilt became the basic consensus with regard to the civil war which was at the core of the legitimizing discourse of the Francoist regime. This emphasis on the civil war as a myth of origin of the regime made real reconciliation of the people impossible and fundamental divisions among Spaniards persisted. The Francoist nationalizing project was realized through coercion yet control through brutality could not create feelings of belonging and especially the losers of the civil war rejected Francoist Spain, i.e., they refused to identify with official national self-imaginings. After Franco's death, the creation of a 'new Spain' became the common goal: all political action was guided by the overwhelming fear of a repetition of the civil war and the desire to live together in peace. A peaceful transition to democracy necessitated the cooperation of victims and perpetrators and thus the leaving aside of the immediate past of dictatorship and civil war. The fear of conflict and the obsession with consensus resulted in a complete lack of judicial reckoning with the dictatorship: the Franco regime fell into a progressively profound silence supported by the tacit agreement that the past was not to be instrumentalized politically. From 1993 the silence was broken by left-wing parliamentary opposition and the grandchildren of those involved in the civil war, who wanted to know what really happened. The reckoning with the past begun in 2004, with the 'Law on Historical Memory' which aimed at the moral recognition and rehabilitation of the victims of the civil war (Vincent, 2007; Humblebæk, 2015).

The self-imaginings of many European states were and are impacted by economic developments. English and Dutch envisioned themselves as nations of merchants, as Atlanticist free trade nations. Their empires were global conurbations, their imperial power based on trade. Memories of unprecedented economic wealth were central to the remembrance of the Dutch Golden Age. It was trade that made the Republic great. Since the Republic, publicly acknowledged self-images in the Netherlands envision the Dutch as a trading nation: trade was and is part and parcel of Dutch national self-imaginings. The self-image of being a trade nation image was so strong that Germanophobia was overcome pragmatically immediately after the Second World War in favour of economic cooperation with the former foe. The Dutch image of the English as Atlanticist kin was fed by the perception of a common desire for free trade. The self-image of being a trade nation is confirmed daily in the media (van Sas, 1985; Hellema, 2001). English imagined England as the richest and freest of nations, as 'Jerusalem the Golden'. The consciousness of exceptional wealth induced national pride and became a fundamental element

of publicly acknowledged self-images. A cult of trade that crossed social boundaries became central to British self-awareness. Prosperity and wealth became a continuous source of confidence in Britain's greatness, superiority, and freedom, the Pound Sterling the arch-symbol of economic pride. Free trade became an ideology connotated with dissolution of privileges, and thought of having democratizing effects, as well as of contributing to the consolidation of peace through trade dependencies that were thought of as an incentive to avoid conflict (Kumar, 2003; Trentman, 2008). The impact of corresponding self-images becomes apparent in the debate about Brexit. In the German case too, the economy shaped national self-imaginings. 'Made in Germany' was a global seal of quality since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The gradually increasing quality of German produce, turned the term into a synonym for *Deutsche Wertarbeit*. 'Made in Germany' became a symbol of German modernity and was, over time, morally charged as embodiment of alleged German virtues such as reliability, power and lasting innovative capacity. Products such as the VW beetle became the epitome of alleged German virtues such as hardiness, modesty, ingenuity, honesty, reliability, and thriftiness. The *Deutsche Mark* became a symbol of national unity. After the war, the economic miracle was crucial for the political legitimacy of the new state (James, 1990; Head, 1992; Umbach, 2005; Schütz, 2005; James, 2005). The myth of French exceptionalism is central to French national self-imaginings. French history, culture, economy, and society are perceived as exceptional. France is allegedly more proactive and meritorious than other nations, the French nation characterized by unity and greatness. France is imagined as a European and a world leader – a military, economic, and diplomatic model for the rest of the world to follow. Since Louis XIV, Colbertism (mercantilism) the French tradition of a centralized economy, dominates the economic outlook of France. After the war, De Gaulle established a planned economy (*dirigisme*), key sectors of the economy were nationalized – the *Trente Glorieuses* (1945 through 1970s), the French economic miracle, seemed to prove that this policy of centralization was beneficial. France never endorsed free trade. France's economic outlook is an element of demarcation of national Others such as England and the United States – the major proponents of international free trade (Schmale, 2000; Baycroft, 2008).

Powerful and persistent national self-imaginings motivate and legitimate political action. They impact human relations. They create social reality. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, inhabitants of European states perceived each Other and themselves as members of primordial national communities, which are described in stereotypical

patterns of national images. Images are rooted in history, politics, economy, and cultural traditions as well as in collective ideological orientations. Stereotyped images of the nation emerge through the demarcation of internal and external Others. They are impacted by geography, and they are shaped by the perception and remembrance of a common history of the nation which is symbolized by historical periods or specific historical events. Whilst religious, ethnic, class, and gender affiliations represent competing concepts of collective identification which impact on images of the nation throughout Europe, dominant societal groups provide publicly acknowledged self-imaginings of the nation. The constitution of perspectival images of the nation must be investigated individually. In order to create beneficial and productive (long-term) business relations with individuals with cultural backgrounds different from one's own, it is necessary to make the effort and gather some understanding of such patterns of perceptions that goes deeper than a superficial understanding of behavioural codes or presumptions about collective orientations that are derived from a dubious position on a value scale. An understanding of a people (and thus individual representatives of a nation) must be based on an understanding of historically contextualized collective self-imaginings.

## 5. Methodology

Against the backdrop of above theoretical positioning, the following paragraphs explain the methodological approach of the present study. In phase I, a corpus of selected texts that are regarded as representations of the discourse about the nation is examined. These sources are Bachelor theses written at the International Business and Languages study course at the Business School of the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (RUAS). The bachelor study International Business and Languages at the RUAS lasts four years and is finalized with a bachelor thesis. The bachelor thesis consists of a report about a practice-oriented research project that is designed

and implemented by the student. Students must apply for a thesis internship at a company with at least ten employees that is internationally active. In cooperation with the supervisors from school and the company, the student identifies a research problem and determines the scope of the research. Subsequently, the student develops a research design after which the research is implemented, and a report is written that presents the results and gives an advice concerning the solution to the researched problem as well as an implementation plan for the recommendation. The topics vary considerably yet there are several elements that recur consistently, such as consumer or competitor analysis or analysis of entry mode strategies. The students are required to determine a topic that consists of an international element. Often this requirement results in projects that focus on the evaluation of aspects of a market the client company wishes to enter. This in turn, has the effect that students often include a discussion of cultural aspects or cultural differences in their thesis. This is not a requirement though. The material that is used to teach IBL students to understand and evaluate (the impact of) cultural differences has been discussed above. The current content analysis focusses on those theses that include a discussion of cultural aspects.

The corpus of texts examined for phase 1 of this research consists of BA theses written at the IBL study course of RUAS between 2010 and 2018. Since dealing with cultural differences or culture is not a requirement, the theses need to be filtered correspondingly. In a first step, the theses are scanned and the theses that deal explicitly with 'culture' or 'cultural differences' are selected. The respective chapters or passages of those theses are understood as (conscious or unconscious) representations of the discourse about the nation. Subsequently, the respective chapters or paragraphs are searched for national stereotypes. In order to do that, the researcher needs to be able to recognise national stereotypes and distinguish consciously from unconsciously used stereotypes as well as stereotypes that are made explicit from stereotypes that are implicitly apparent. This implies a determination of the degree to which a stereotype is established as factual in the mind of the user or sender of the stereotype. A corresponding distinction necessitates a categorisation of stereotypes. Following Stephan Zoll (2002, p.368-372) five types of stereotypes are distinguished. Type 1 is a statement that represents the basic form of stereotypes as emotionally loaded value judgements: "Germans don't have humour", "French are romantic", "Dutch are sober". Type 2 is a potential stereotype, the statement is confined – "Americans are said to be straightforward", "Danes are said to be tolerant", "Dutch are said to be

sober” – the linguistic confinement of the statement implies that the degree to which the sender endorses the stereotype as factual cannot be established. The sender could report a publicly dominant opinion without making a value judgement – yet the user could also camouflage an established stereotype: the linguistic confinement could be motivated by a desire to vary the used language, or by insecurity. Or the sender could want to avoid evoking the impression that he/she endorses the respective stereotype. To evaluate a corresponding statement the researcher needs to look at the immediate context of the statement (e.g. the (sub-) title of the chapter or passage). If the context allows for an unambiguous classification, the stereotype is categorised as Type 1, if that is not possible, it will be classified as Type 2. Type 3 allows for the identification of a stereotype through syntax: “He was very funny, although he was a German”, or “Despite being a Spaniard, she was not sultry at all”: the case is presented as an exception – by referring to an alleged exception, the statement implies an established stereotype: “Germans don’t have humour”, “Spaniards are sultry”. Type 4 is a relative stereotype – the comparison of allegedly collective characteristics of members of two groups – “Dutch are even more greedy than English” – implies two stereotypes, one of the Type 1 category (“English are greedy”), and one of Type 4, which becomes apparent through the comparison (“Dutch are even greedier”). Type 5 refers to stereotypes that become apparent through the repeated ascription of characteristics or basic attitudes to a group (Zoll, 2002, pp.368–372) – “Italians are extravert”, for example. The found stereotypes will be put in a table that distinguishes auto- and hetero-stereotype as well as meta-stereotype (presumptions of the sender about the stereotypes of the Other about his/her own group) and the categories (1–5). Depending on the accumulative density, concepts that have a similar meaning (synonyms such as reserved, restraint and unemotional) are summarized as a ‘complex of stereotypes’ (Zoll, 2002, p.372). The analysis of the identified stereotypes will focus on the reciprocity of auto- and hetero-stereotypes. In addition to establishing whether Hofstede and/or Solomon and Schell are referred to, it will be established whether other researchers whose culture theories are featured often in global marketing literature such as Edward Hall or Fons Trompenaars are mentioned. Trompenaars and Hall are not actively taught though at RBS and are therefore not discussed in depth here. Oftentimes, culture as a factor impacting attempts to internationalization is discussed in course of a DESTEP analysis (a macro level analysis of countries), as an aspect of the ‘social’ environment. In addition to the categorization of stereotypes, it seems enlightening to distinguish different types of presentation: was the topic

dealt with in a separate chapter or not, how many pages were spent on the topic and how were the respective paragraphs organized. It may be possible to detect patterns of presentations that are or are not fostering stereotyped perceptions.

The examined sources are written by different authors. The students that wrote their theses at the IBL course of RBS, come from various countries – from Europe and beyond – including a huge number of Dutch students with ethnically mixed backgrounds. The analysis aims at establishing whether the examined sources generally reflect stereotypes about individual nations that can be related to the content of courses on culture and cultural differences – namely Hofstede, as well as Solomon and Schell. It is not possible to take into account the individual national backgrounds of students. With an exception or two, of (at RBS very rare) senior students, the authors of the theses do share the quality of belonging to the so called ‘millennial’ generations, Y and Z. Whilst a fully-fledged analysis of ‘millennials’ is neither possible nor necessary in the context of the present study, it seems appropriate to make a few remarks about this fact. Demographically, a generation assigns a cohort of age. A generation can also assign a group of people that share common experiences and thus a common memory. If the generational memory is marked by dramatic experiences, it impacts the collective self-image of this generation – as was the case with for example the generation of ‘1968’ or the German youth that served as flak aids in the Second World War. Specific historical circumstances can result in specific behavioural dispositions of members of a generation as well as in potentially violent socio-political conflicts between generations as in the 1970s especially in Germany and Italy (Koselleck, 1989; Seifert, 1991; Elias, 1992; Kraushaar, 2000; Kraushaar, 2006; della Porta, 2006; Daniel, 2006, pp.330–345; Gilcher-Holtey, 2008; Aly, 2008; Campbell Bartoletti, 2008).

Against this backdrop, the question emerges what distinguishes these generations. Demographically, they are allocated to the cohorts that were born between 1980 and ca. 2005. Gordon Tredgold identified 29 supposed characteristics of American millennials among which ‘making a positive difference in the world is more important than professional recognition’ figured prominently. American millennials seem to be more tolerant of different races than older generations. A vast majority believes that there is more to business success than mere profit (Tredgold, 2016). Danita Bye reports a survey among American businesspeople, of whom a majority were concerned about the ‘character traits’, ‘lack of determination and resiliency’, ‘lack of accountability’ as well as the ‘conflict-resolution skills’ of millennials (Bye, 2017, pp.1 ff.). Laila Frank

establishes that millennials are socially progressive whilst being financially conservative (Frank, 2020). Frank's article refers to American millennials explicitly, a look into European media shows that statements about millennials in western Europe are very similar to those quoted above. According to Dutch journalist Doortje Smithuijsen, a millennial herself, millennials are obsessed with authenticity and the unique – fostered by the abundance of the 'ready-made' (Smithuijsen, 2020, p.50). This urge for authenticity seems to comply with a general trend towards 'individualization'. It is commonly accepted that 'individualization' is one of the distinctive features of modern western societies. Yet, what the concept implies is less clear – in fact, it seems to resemble the connotative stereotypes described above.

According to Paul De Beer (2006, pp.18 ff.) individualization can point at 'de-institutionalization' – an atrophy of the bond with traditional institutions such as church, family, political parties etc., 'de-traditionalization' – decreasing support for traditional values and attitudes, 'privatization' – decreasing importance of collectives for the attitudes and values of individuals, 'fragmentation' – decreasing interconnectedness of values and attitudes on different levels of the lifeworld of individuals, or 'heterogenization' – increasing differences in attitudes of individuals. De Beer concludes that de-collectivization, increasing pluriformity and privatization, the dissolution of the connections between individual and collective is the most plausible interpretation of the concept 'individualization' (De Beer, 2006, p.21). However, in contrast to the much quoted and acclaimed process of individualization, the average (Dutch) citizen would still be a 'herd animal' just as, or even more than previous generations: gender, age, position in the household, as well as educational background still explain to a large degree the behaviour of individuals. Individualization, concludes De Beer, is a myth (De Beer, 2006, pp.30–33). Whilst people would probably have more freedom to make individual choices than previous generations, they would not necessarily make different choices – and: the freedom of choice remains limited considerably by governmental restrictions, through the working environment as well as the impact of the media (De Beer, 2006, pp.35–36). Based on an analysis of swing voters, André Krouwel states that attitudes, opinions and orientations are still strongly connected to collective identities – in the Netherlands, swing voters are a minority (Krouwel, 2006, p.42). The levelling of class differences is less comprehensive than is often presumed and socio-economic and cultural background continue to impact significantly the behaviour of youth (Abma & Selten, 2006, p.110). Among millennial youth, the function of the peer group remains the same as for



previous generations: youth want to belong to a group, impress the other sex, they gather to tackle boredom and to make fun etc. To be really different may be a desire, yet only the brave dare to – the majority chooses the security of the group (Abma & Selten, 2006, pp.114-115). Martianne van den Boomen showed that virtual reality does not lead to an erosion of social connections – the paradigm of individualization through virtual reality or rather, the replacement of real social life by the internet is a myth (Van den Boomen, 2006, pp.139-143). Albeit above statements refer to Dutch millennials, findings of developmental and social psychology confirm the significance of group affiliation for youth and individuals in general (Buunk & Dijkstra, 2007, pp.329-358; Hewstone & Martin, 2007, pp.359-408; Nijstad & Knippenberg, 2007, pp. 409-442; Kessler & Mummendey, 2007, pp.487-532; Stürmer, 2009, pp.131-175; Wicki, 2010). Whereas, in comparison to the German, French and English educational settings, the Dutch system puts strong emphasis on individuality and autonomy (Sunier, 2006, pp.185-202), the generally acclaimed trend towards de-collectivization is not confirmed by evidence (Dekker & De Hart, 2006, pp.167-184) – rather, observes Hans Mommaas (2006, pp.152-166), there emerges a greater diversity of smaller collectives to which members are connected with weak ties, and which remain embedded in a respective national group whose members behave surprisingly similar (Duyvendak & Hurenkamp, 2006, pp.213-222). The wide acceptance of trends towards individualization, is fostered by marketing and mass media that use the positive connotations of individuality and independence to please the consumer and to steer his behaviour – with more success than states ever had (Elchardus, 2006, pp.205-212).

To conclude this section, it is safe to assume that the authors of the sources examined for this research, share a similar generational outlook in certain perspectives, an outlook that seems to be quite similar across western democracies. There is a trend towards greater diversification of smaller collectives, yet the often-presumed trend towards individualization appears to be a myth rather than a reality. Based on above, it can be established that millennials that grew up in the same country, share the same reference frame (Goffman, 1986), the same 'assumptive world', the same socio-historical and cultural background that is taken for granted rather unconsciously than reflected (Schütz, 1993, Simon, Trötschel, 2007). Reference frames are determined by habitual cultural bonds and cultural responsibilities that are usually not questioned (Neitzel, Welzer, 2017, p.23). Whilst it needs to be taken into account that many students of RBS are of mixed ethnic background which impacts their corresponding outlook, millennials are in general and

independent of the groups they may belong to, representatives of the collective of the nation in which they were socialized.

#### 6. Low on Context – High on Stereotypes: National Stereotypes in IBL Theses

This chapter provides a content analysis of BA theses written as a final assignment in the study course International Business and Languages at the Rotterdam Business School of the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. Firstly, all digitally archived theses that were written between 2010 and 2018 are filtered according to the criterion of whether they tackled culture as a factor impacting their management issue or not. Secondly, the theses that tackled culture are analysed with the aim to identify stereotypes according to the categories determined above, and with a focus on the question whether the found stereotypes can be related to the content taught in classes on culture and management. The table below shows the number of the accessible theses<sup>2</sup> per academic year and indicates the number of theses that dealt or dealt not with culture.

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<sup>2</sup> The researcher could not access all theses written in the given period. A representative number of theses that had been archived digitally by back-office staff for the purpose of an accreditation has been examined.

YEAR	TOTAL AMOUNT OF THESES	CULTURE TOPIC	CULTURE NO TOPIC
2010- 2011	47	24	23
2011- 2012	55	36	19
2012- 2013	44	36	8
2013- 2014	37	22	15
2014- 2015	42	24	18
2015 - 2016	54	41	13
2016 - 2017	80	52	28
2017- 2018	25	10	15
Total	384	245	139

Table 1: total amount of analysed theses – culture (no) topic

In total 384 theses were screened 245 of which tackled culture. A little more than 1/3 did not deal with culture. The search terms used to screen the individual theses are 'Hofstede', 'Solomon', 'Schell', 'Trompenaars', 'Hall', 'culture', 'cultural'. If the thesis was written in Dutch, the latter terms were searched for in Dutch. The table below indicates whether Hofstede, Solomon and Schell or other researchers prominent in research on business and culture, yet not taught at RBS, such as Hall or Trompenaars, were used to analyse the impact of culture on the respective problem. If Hofstede was used, the specific Hofstede account is indicated by abbreviation:

Cultures Consequences = CC;

Cultures and Organizations = CO;

Allemaal Andersdenken = AA;

Werken met cultuurverschillen = WMC;

Website = WS;

Summary in another Account = SAC;

Long-term Orientation in Trade = LOT;

Hofstede was explicitly referred to as source and the dimensions were discussed and/or a graph that display the dimensions were shown, yet there was no reference. That case is indicated by question mark = ?.

For the sake of readability, the full table is documented in the appendix. Below table suffices to exemplify the approach.

YEAR	TOPIC	HOFSTED E + Account	SOLOMON and SCHELL	HALL and/or TROMPE- NAARS	OTHER
2010– 2011					
1	Expansion to Germany	–	–	–	x
2	Expansion to the Netherlands	?	–	–	–
3	Expansion to Germany	–	–	–	x
4	Expansion to UK	–	–	–	x
5	Expansion to Belgium	WS	–	–	–
6	Expansion to Belgium	–	–	–	x
7	Expansion to Germany	–	–	–	x
8	Expansion to DR	–	–	–	–
9	Expansion to either US/Capverdy	–	–	–	x
10	Expansion to Germany	WS	–	–	x

Table 2: theses that tackled culture: indication of topic and references used to discuss culture

The table in the appendix shows that in the majority of examined theses (137) Hofstede was referred to as a source to analyse cultural differences. Only eight students referred to Trompenaars or Hall. Solomon and Schell, on the other hand, were referred to only two times. In their theses, a considerable number of students (116) referred to other sources to discuss the impact of cultural differences on doing business in the respective country. The table below lists some of the sources. The list is not exhaustive, yet representative in showing that a specific kind of source was used. On the one hand, the table shows the volumes of Hall and Trompenaars that students referred to. Besides, it lists the accounts of Lewis as well as Claes & Gerritsen that were referred to comparatively often by students (1-6). These accounts discuss theoretical models that allegedly allow for the evaluation of cultural differences. Next to references with a theoretical pretense, the literature mostly used by graduating students is exclusively empirical in its approach and evaluation of a specific culture (7-22). In an approach typical for the discipline of management studies, the accounts give 'hands on' examples of different situations and provide manuals for behaviour in different settings. Supposed collective behavioural patterns of the target people are linked to supposed collective cultural values of the respective people. Corresponding accounts are not scientific. There is no theoretical foundation that would support the respective statements. They consist of an accumulation of implicit and explicit stereotypes that are put forth apodictically.

	LIST OF ADDITIONAL LITERATURE FOUND IN THESES
1	Claes, M.T. & Gerritsen, M. (2002/2007/2011). Culturele waarden en communicatie in internationaal perspectief
2	Lewis, R. (2005). When Cultures Collide
3	Trompenaars, F. (2013). Seven Dimension of Culture. <a href="https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/seven-dimensions.htm">https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/seven-dimensions.htm</a>
4	Trompenaars, F. (1993). Riding the waves of culture: understanding cultural diversity in business
5	Hall, E.T. (1966). The Hidden Dimension
6	Hall, E.T. & Hall, M.R. (1990). Understanding cultural differences
7	Hall, E.T. (1983). The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time
8	Blom, H. (2015). Interculturele samenwerking in organisaties
9	Boekel, D. (2014). Dealing with Japanese-Dutch cultural differences
10	<i>Etiquette in Duitsland / Duitse cultuurverschillen.</i> <a href="http://www.dnhk.org/nl/niederlande/cultuur-en-etiquette/">http://www.dnhk.org/nl/niederlande/cultuur-en-etiquette/</a>
11	Doing business in Germany: <a href="http://export.gov/Germany/MarketResearchonGermany/">export.gov/Germany/MarketResearchonGermany/</a>
12	Knowledge to business (2016)
13	KPMG. (Januari 2014). Onderzoek over zaken doen in Duitsland.
14	Meenink, L. (2013). Business Guide Duitsland
15	Möller (2014). Crisisonderhandelingen: de samenhang tussen onzekerheidsvermijding, legitimeren en waargenomen spanning vanuit een Duits-Nederlands landenniveau en individueel niveau
16	Schmeink, E. H. (2016). Duitse consumenten kiezen voor kwaliteit en gecertificeerd Emerce: <a href="https://www.emerce.nl/achtergrond/duitse-consumenten-kiezen-kwaliteit-en-gecertificeerd">https://www.emerce.nl/achtergrond/duitse-consumenten-kiezen-kwaliteit-en-gecertificeerd</a>
17	<a href="https://smcmarketingcommunications.wordpress.com/2011/04/26/solomon-and-schells-seven-elements-of-culture-provide-a-basis-for-understanding-colleagues-from-a-different-culture/">https://smcmarketingcommunications.wordpress.com/2011/04/26/solomon-and-schells-seven-elements-of-culture-provide-a-basis-for-understanding-colleagues-from-a-different-culture/</a>
18	<a href="https://culturematters.com/wat-zijn-de-belangrijkste-cultuurverschillen-nederland-belgie/">https://culturematters.com/wat-zijn-de-belangrijkste-cultuurverschillen-nederland-belgie/</a>
19	Soest, A. van (2012) The house of Technology
20	Stewart-Allen (2003). Doing business the American Way
21	Stewart-Allen (2002). Working With Americans

Table 3: additional references

In the table below, three different types of presentation that were mostly used are distinguished: Type 1 presentations refer to culture in course of a DESTEP or PESTLE analysis as an aspect of the 'social' dimension, or independent of a DESTEP/PESTLE. At least one cultural theory or account on the culture of the country or countries in question is mentioned, yet not explained in detail. The discussion is limited to 1-2 pages. Type 2 presentations spent an exclusive chapter on cultural difference and discuss a cultural theory on 3 pages or more. Type 3 representations emphasize the role of culture in a separate paragraph with often a separate headline and a graph (often a Hofstede chart about the respective country), yet do not discuss it in any way.

TYPE of PRESENTATION	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
	212	18	15

Table 3: types of presentation of topic

In case of a Type 2 presentation of a cultural theory, it was evaluated whether the student gave an adequate account of the theory in question nor not. None of the 18 cases that chose to tackle cultural differences in a separate chapter explained the chosen cultural theory to a satisfactory degree. The table below provides some quotes that demonstrate how theories were presented. The full table can be found in the appendix.

Adequate Explanation	Inadequate Explanation - Quotes
0	18
	cultures differ from each other in how much they value or think in the future, present and past and the number of things they do at a time. In monochronic [!] cultures attention is being paid to one thing at a time, where people from a polychronic culture do many things at the same time
	for effective communication between Belgium and the Netherlands, the differences between the two countries should be identified and in as much as possible translated to how text are constructed
	monochronic [!] cultures are much faster than polychronic [!] cultures when it comes to a simple thing like buying stamps. Hence, punctuality and accuracy is higher in monochronic [!] cultures than in polychronic cultures

Table 4: quotes inadequate explanations of theory

It is not possible to determine the exact ethnic and national background of each individual author. Therefore, it is not possible to distinguish auto- from hetero-stereotypes. Since however, students often write their theses for Dutch companies that plan to expand internationally, the Netherlands and the Dutch are often the point of reference in theses. Correspondingly, the table below includes a column 'stereotypes about the Dutch' instead of 'auto-stereotypes'. The table does not list all stereotypes that were found in the theses. The table is exhaustive though in its display of quotes that represent the way students utter stereotypes in BA theses. For the sake of readability, below table only includes stereotypes about several selected countries that were often referred to in the examined theses. The stereotypes in the table are representative of the general style. A table with more examples can be found in the appendix.



## STEREOTYPES

Type	Stereotypes about the Dutch	Stereotypes about other Nations	Meta-Stereotype
Type 1 BELGIUM	<p>student explains that Belgium and NL are low context cultures – therefore Dutch and Belgians are/prefer ...</p> <p>...simple and clear messages</p> <p>...are inclined to blame others for failure</p> <p>...communicate more verbally than with body language</p> <p>...reactions are visible and have an external and outward character</p> <p>...are flexible and open to changes if needed</p> <p>...mix up easily with other groups</p> <p>...relationships with the family and community and/or people that show little loyalty are relatively weak</p> <p>...are less flexible in time, because</p>	<p>...it is very important to have a relationship with the business contact before talking about actual business</p> <p>... Within Belgium, the upper part, Flanders, is more monochronic than the lower part, Wallonia</p> <p>...have a more formal business cultural (!) and value the differences between employer and employee.</p> <p>...One can say that there is more inequality in the Belgium society [higher power distance than NL]</p> <p>... are competition driven in their culture.</p> <p>Performances and showing your strengths are cultural values in Belgium [higher masculinity than NL]</p> <p>... Belgians are very keen on avoiding uncertainty and have a very bureaucratic culture with rules and regulations on many levels. This means that doing business in Belgium is sometimes a difficult and bureaucratic activity with a lot of obstacles.</p> <p>... inequality within the society is accepted ... there is a hierarchical relationship between employees and employers.</p>	

	<p>their time is well-organized</p> <p>...the end product counts more than the process towards the final product</p>	<p>... Belgium has a masculine culture. This means that Belgians like to be judged by their performances, assertiveness and success. This also means that the female gender are often not accepted while conducting male professions.</p> <p>... Belgium scores very high on uncertainty avoidance, which means that uncertainty is avoided. This means that the Belgian business culture is not risk taking and not very innovative. Belgians like to have certainty in their private life and their work.</p> <p>...regarding business it is very important for Belgians to look at a problem from all aspects</p> <p>...it is very important for Belgians to come to clear agreements and to maintain structure</p> <p>...it is very important for Belgians to plan and to be prepared</p> <p>...Belgians are factual, cool and detailed planners</p> <p>...Belgians score high on power distance, Belgians are formal and everything is communicated along hierarchical structures</p> <p>...Belgians score high on individualism, they cherish their privacy, they focus on direct family - their individualism contradicts their</p>	
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		<p>hierarchical orientation in professional settings</p> <p>...Belgians score relatively high on masculinity they can be feminine as well as masculine – they negotiate to achieve compromise</p> <p>...Belgians do not take decisions immediately, because they need to have time to think about it</p> <p>...Belgians score high on uncertainty avoidance, they need rules and planning and refuse change because it causes stress and discussions</p> <p>...Belgians adjust easily to traditions and are keen to save money and to invest</p> <p>...there are cultural differences within Belgium between Walloons and Flanders – Walloons have a more French mentality and are less direct than Flemish, and they take decisions faster, whereas Flemish are more open-minded and flexible</p> <p>... Belgium scored 94 points for uncertainty avoidance. This dimension shows to which degree members of a certain culture feel threatened by unknown or ambiguous situations. Furthermore, to which extent the members of that particular culture have created institutions and believes to avoid the previously mentioned situations.</p> <p>... With a score of 75, Belgium is scoring high regarding Individualism.</p>	
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		<p>This means that Belgians appreciate individual opinions and take care of themselves and their close family rather than wanting to belong to a larger group.</p> <p>...Belgium scores relatively high, 65 points, regarding PowerDistance. This indicates that inequalities are accepted within the societies and that hierarchy is essential. Power centralized and superiors are often privileged and inaccessible.</p> <p>...masculinity, the country scores 54 points on average. The fundamental difference between a Masculine and Feminine culture is what motivate s the people within a culture. A Masculine society has the want to be the best and a Feminine society has the want to like what they do. There is also a separation between the north and south part of Belgium.</p> <p>Indulgence. This shows to which extent the people with in the culture try to control their desires and impulses. Belgium got a score of 57, an intermediate score</p> <p>... Gastronomy, building trust and relationships are important for Belgians</p> <p>... Uit de analyse van Hofstede is naar voren gekomen dat België een mensgerichte cultuur is waarbij vertrouwen een belangrijke rol speelt. Belgen zijn rationeel ingesteld en hechten daarom veel waarde aan een goede klantendienst, een vast contactpersoon en een</p>	
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		professionele helpdesk	
Type 3 BELGIUM	<p>... The Dutch culture is a lot more feminine because of the way Dutch people think and deal with absence through illness, homo sexuality and drugs. 'Moet kunnen' (it should be allowed, it's alright) is what they often tend to say</p>		
Type 4 BELGIUM	<p>...the NL is more monochromic (!) than Belgium =&gt; <i>people from monochronic cultures do one thing at a time: Belgians are more inclined than Dutch to do more things at a time</i> (throughout this paper the student uses chromic instead of chronic)</p> <p>... the NL are average, Belgium is high uncertainty avoidance – therefore:</p> <p>...no more rules than necessary</p>	<p>...Belgians are more formal than Dutch</p> <p>..... Belgians being more warm, impulsive and emotional than the Dutch</p> <p>... The Netherlands is a talk culture, Belgium is a listen culture</p> <p>...Belgians are more sensitive to grammatical mistakes-</p> <p>...Dressing less 'outgoing' compared to the Netherlands</p>	

	<p>(NL) vs Rules are very valued emotional (B)</p> <p>...time is an orientation frame (NL) vs time is money (B)</p> <p>....work hard only when you need to (NL) vs working hard is their mentality, emotional cravings for an activity (B)</p> <p>...precision and punctuality should be learned (NL) vs precision and punctuality are always present (B)</p> <p>...innovative and deviate ideas are tolerated and the same goes for the attitude (NL) vs innovative and deviate ideas, attitude are not naturally tolerated, but suppressed (B)</p> <p>...the <i>NL</i> and <i>Germany</i> have lower power distance than <i>Poland</i> and <i>Belgium</i> therefore</p>	
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	<p>it is likely that in Poland and Belgium management decides****</p> <p><i>...Belgium and Poland</i> score much higher on uncertainty avoidance than the <i>NL</i>, therefore they are likely to prefer a safe choice if available</p> <p>.... like the Dutch ... Belgians do not want to belong to a group but are rather be seen as individuals</p> <p>NL, B, DK =&gt;  ...though the three countries are always seen as same sort of countries there are definitely international differences. These differences cannot be ignored. The Netherlands do better business with Germany than with France and Belgium does more business with France than with Germany. It is not strange that</p>	
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	Denmark first wants to implement a new service in these two countries. It would be a lot harder if they would start with the service in Spain and Turkey. But it has to be said that Denmark, The Netherlands and Belgium are not the same and have to be treated in different ways.		
Type 1 GERMANY		<p>... are formal</p> <p>... is hierarchical</p> <p>... are punctual</p> <p>... oriented towards expertise</p> <p>... keep work and private life strictly separated</p> <p>... are robust</p> <p>... seek reliability, politeness</p> <p>... are very perfectionist</p> <p>... oriented towards results, products, status</p> <p>... low power distance but strongly hierarchical, focused on punctuality and good working ethos</p> <p>... not very individualistic</p> <p>... average masculinity</p> <p>... average uncertainty avoidance</p> <p>... Germans have a better (! - relational object is not specified)</p> <p>long term vision</p> <p>...are difficult to approach</p>	0



		<p>...do not trust foreign businesses</p> <p>...Germans long for security – this is symbolized by the legal system and there is an intensive procedure for governmental projects (!)</p> <p>...Germans are renown for the lack of human touch in business</p> <p>...in Germany defaulters are requested to pay immediately, a reminder Dutch style would not be taken seriously by Germans</p> <p>...German employees are not inclined to take decisions which the manager is supposed to take</p> <p>...Germans are very professional and talk only about business</p> <p>... make a clear division between work and leisure time, and also highly values this leisure time.</p> <p>... Germans are very long term oriented which makes decision---making processes more complicated</p> <p>...Germans like it if you speak their language</p> <p>...Germans are strict and formal</p> <p>...Germans like to be well-prepared</p> <p>...Germans do not speak about their private life during business negotiations</p>	
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		<p>...Germans are punctual, polite and hierarchical</p> <p>...Germans score low on power-distance, they don't like if somebody feels better than another person</p> <p>...Germans are very individualistic; they are focused on themselves and therefore they prefer persons to whom they are loyal</p> <p>... Germans score high on uncertainty avoidance, they like to control what happens in the future</p> <p>...Germans score high on long term orientation, that means they are pragmatic and adjust to situation, context and time</p> <p>...Germans are hardworking, prudent and punctual. They are very much focussed on their tasks and communication is often very formal and direct.</p> <p>...in Germany, everything is planned on longterm with the future in mind. This is why Germans prefer biological, green products and high quality products which are sustainable. The products of bobble perfectly fit into this lifestyle</p> <p>... Germany scores quite low when it comes to power distance. This means that the German culture is highly decentralized. A direct and participative communication approach/ meeting style is common. Control is disliked and the leader is seen as an equal.</p>	
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		<p>...German families are very individualistic. They tend to have small families, and the focus lies more on themselves or immediate family. When a country scores low on individualism, that means that those people tend to live in groups and look after each other, but in Germany's case the opposite applies. People from collectivistic countries may find this behavior very cold and distanced.</p> <p>...Germany scores high on masculinity, which means that the society is driven by competition, achievement and success. You can really see the masculine behavior from early on. The school systems separates children into different types of school. The better your performance in school, the better the school level is that you get into. Other characteristics of a masculine society is showing off, especially by cars, houses, watches etc.</p> <p>...Furthermore, Germany also scores high on uncertainty avoidance, which means that they do not like to take risks. Germans like to plan every step they take and make sure that they have a plan B in case something goes wrong.</p> <p>...are also very long term oriented and have a pragmatic approach. Every society has to maintain a link with their past while also adjusting to the present and future. Since Germany scores high, they do not really mind modernization of their</p>	
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		<p>tradition if it contributes to a better future.</p> <p>...Germany scores low on indulgence, which means that they are a restrained group of people. This means that they not put much emphasis on leisure time and they tend to control their desires. Restrained cultures tend to be very pessimistic too</p> <p>...Germany has a strong culture</p> <p>...competitiveness is in the German nature – that is because they score high on masculinity and they avoid uncertainty</p> <p>...the nature of a relation depends on the status of the other person</p> <p>...Germans are reserved by nature</p> <p>... culture is a vital part of societal life and therefore the impact of the government can be great</p>	
Type 4 GERMANY	<p>... Dutch are easier and more nonchalant than Germans</p> <p>.... Dutch are more optimistic than Germans and believe that everything will work out fine</p> <p>...whilst in Germany, managers are</p>	<p>... cherish privacy more than Dutch</p> <p>... are more conservative than Dutch</p> <p>... read more than inhabitants of Benelux</p> <p>... are generally more critical than inhabitants of Benelux</p> <p>... in contrast to NL variety of mentalities/norms/values – due to past: Cold War partition</p> <p>... Germany has a lower power distance than Malta. This means that Germans are less likely to accept a hierarchical order in society</p>	

	<p>expected to lead, Dutch managers expect expertise from their employees and there is informal contact between managers and team members =&gt; <i>the Dutch are more egalitarian than the more hierarchical Germans</i></p> <p>... Dutch score higher on individualism than Germans, Dutch think in I-form (=1<sup>st</sup> person singular) - it is expected that you take care only of yourself and your nearest kin, - in Germany, by contrast, individualism is emphasized by a strong feeling of responsibility as well as self-deployment</p> <p><i>...same author half a page below:</i> Dutch focus on self-deployment whilst Germans have a strong sense of responsibility</p>	<p>... Malta and Germany are both individualistic countries so there is no big difference here.</p> <p>..."Masculinity" in Germany is higher than in Malta, this means that achievements and success are important in the society.</p> <p>... Malta has a very high uncertainty avoidance index, Germany is also on the higher side. This means that (potential) German customers should always be provided with all information they need about the school and its products</p> <p>...Germans are much more long term orientated than the Maltese. This means that they like to plan ahead for a long time and are very aware of their future.</p> <p>... Indulgence is much lower in Germany than it is in Malta. This means that Germans do not put much emphasis on leisure time and indulging themselves. Instead Germany has a restrained society where people control their desires and impulses</p> <p>...Germans score high on individuality which means that expressing one's opinion is appreciated even if it leads to conflicts</p> <p>... Germans like to have certainty when it comes to work and their social life. There are strict rules,</p>	
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	<p>...Germans are self-confident because of what career they achieve – status and performance are proved and shown by cars, watches and tech devices – this creates strong competition – the NL are a feminine society with a clear balance between career and private life – equality and solidarity are appreciated – the Dutch are more oriented towards negotiation</p> <p>...whilst Germans and Dutch score average on uncertainty avoidance, Dutch seek uncertainty while Germans try to avoid it - this implies that Dutch can use effectively the knowledge about wants of Germans and influence them to reach their goals</p> <p>...Germans and Dutch easily</p>	<p>which is also shown by the government.</p> <p>...Germans are very individualistic therefore they take care of themselves</p> <p>... Germany makes a clear division between work and leisure time, and also highly values this leisure time.</p> <p>...whereas <i>Iranians</i> are emotional and express feelings easily, are oriented towards the individual, want to do a lot of things simultaneously, emotions are more important than facts – <i>Germans</i> do everything one-by-one, are polite but direct, can suppress emotions and are oriented towards work and control facts first before they let emotions play</p> <p>...in <i>Germany</i>, long term orientation, masculinity and individualism are much higher than in <i>Iran</i></p> <p>...the communication style in Germany is direct and participative.</p> <p>...German people dislike control, and the leadership of managers is challenged</p> <p>...individualists are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. Collectivists belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty. There is strong image among Germans that self-actualization is key.</p>	
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	<p>accept new components in traditions, and both are inclined to save and invest with an eye on long-term developments</p> <p>...Germans and Dutch score high on individualism, which means they are expected to be able to take care of themselves</p> <p>...Germans score much higher on masculinity than the Netherlands, thus status and performance are more important in Germany than in the NL</p> <p>...Germans and Dutch are very individualistic and therefore direct in communication in order to avoid misunderstandings</p> <p>...Germany is very masculine and very competitive, this is completely different in the NL which is very feminine – this</p>	<p>...Germany has a masculine culture which means that performance for example is extremely important</p> <p>...German managers are expected to be decisive and assertive. In Germany, it is common to show your status and money.</p>	
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	needs to be taken into account when doing business		
Typ1 POLAND		<p>...difference in long-term orientation means that Poland is more normative than pragmatic.</p> <p>... they value traditions and have a clear view of the truth and what is right or wrong</p> <p>... Poland has a low indulgence score. This means that their view to life is more pessimistic.</p> <p>...do not value leisure time and self-indulgence</p> <p>...like to establish a long-term relationship which is based on slowly getting to know each other</p> <p>... high power distance which is normal for eastern European countries</p> <p>... individualism scores lower than western European countries</p> <p>... masculinity is average to low</p> <p>...uncertainty avoidance is high which is also detectable in the long-term orientation</p> <p>... the high amount of paperwork and bureaucracy is annoying =&gt; <i>Poles are bureaucratic</i></p>	



		<p>... higher power distance score indicates that Polish look up to employees with a higher function which will make cooperation with Dutch colleagues difficult initially =&gt; also Type 3: <i>Dutch are egalitarian</i></p> <p>...Polish are warm and emotional</p> <p>... Polen is hiërarchisch opgesteld en is vrij individualistisch. Fouten zullen dus persoonlijk opgevat worden en zorgen voor gezichtsverlies. Waar Nederland vrij feministisch is, is Polen nog klassiek masculien. Dit houdt in dat de cultuur competitief is, en men leeft om te werken. Problemen worden uitgevochten in plaats van verzwegen. Onzekerheidsvermijding is extreem hoog en dus erg belangrijk voor Polen. Regels moeten er zijn, evenals hard werken. Het pragmatische onderdeel vertaalt zich in een korte-termijn blik in Polen. Snelle resultaten en affiniteit met tradities zijn belangrijke factoren in Polen. Overgave is de laatste eigenschap. Polen hebben graag de touwtjes in handen en men heeft dus moeite zichzelf over te geven</p>	
TYPE 3 POLAND	<p>...when a western European company wants to do business in Poland, they have to take into account that they do not come off too direct =&gt; <i>western Europeans are</i></p>		

	<i>more direct than Polish</i>		
Type 4 POLAND	<p>... Poles and Dutch score high on individualism – they think predominantly of themselves and not in terms of ‘we’: self- interest prevails</p> <p>... in contrast to the NL, masculinity is very present in Poland: competition, performance and success are very important for Poles – Poles live to work and Dutch work to live</p> <p>... Poles score higher on uncertainty avoidance than Dutch – that means they avoid uncertainty, they like to be busy and work hard and value accuracy and punctuality, – in contrast to the Dutch which also work hard yet value accuracy and punctuality less and have</p>	<p>... power distance in Poland is higher than in the Netherlands: Polish people are used to and appreciate hierarchy within organizations. The Dutch are less used to that.</p> <p>... Poland is a little less individualistic than the Netherlands, but they are still qualified as individualistic.</p> <p>... Netherlands is a very feminine country, where Poland is more masculine. This means that in Poland it is more likely that people are driven by performance and are more competitive.</p> <p>... Poland is also more drawn to certainty in their lives. This means that they do not like big changes and they are more conservative than the Netherlands.</p>	

	<p>more a 9 to 5 mentality which is unthinkable in Poland</p> <p>... Poles are oriented towards the long term, they respect and value traditions a lot and do not think much about the future – Dutch in contrast score high on long term orientation so they think a lot about the future which is reflected e.g. in the encouragement of modern education</p> <p>...<i>Poles</i> are oriented much more towards the short term than <i>Germans, Belgians, Dutch</i> – therefore Germans and Belgians are more likely to plan in advance</p>		
Type 1 SPAIN		<p>...Spanish people do not like to party during the afternoon hours</p> <p>...Spanish people love to party</p> <p>...it is well known that Spanish people like sport games.</p> <p>... average power distance</p>	

		<p>...is rather feminine</p> <p>...scores high on uncertainty avoidance (2)</p> <p>...Spanish prefer face-to-face communication (over email/telephone)</p> <p>...it is necessary to invest a lot of time to build personal relations</p> <p>...Spanish are not punctual themselves but want foreigners to be punctual</p> <p>...it is important to shake hands and make eye-contact</p> <p>...Spaniards do not like to lose face, so they will not necessarily say that they do not understand something, particularly if you are not speaking Spanish. You must be adept at discerning body language. Spaniards are very thorough. They will review every detail to make certain it is understood. First you must reach an oral understanding. A formal contract will be drawn up at a later date. Spaniards expect both sides to strictly adhere to the terms of a contract. Appointments are mandatory and should be made in advance, preferably by telephone or fax.</p> <p>...there is inequality in the Spanish society</p> <p>...Spanish 'live' and appreciate hierarchy</p>	
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		<p>...Spanish like centralisation as an organisational principle</p> <p>...Spanish bosses are often benevolent authoritarian</p> <p>...Spaniards are friendly and hospitable but proud. Spaniards often hide their deficiencies behind certain arrogance</p> <p>...Spanish bosses ask their subordinates for their opinions and consider these in their decision making</p> <p>...Spain can build relations well with especially non-European cultures</p> <p>...Spanish perceive cooperation as natural</p> <p>... Spanish employees do not have to be motivated by managers</p> <p>...Spanish find consensus important</p> <p>...Spanish do not appreciate polarization and competition</p> <p>...children learn to refuse in harmony, choose a side, or to distinguish themselves</p> <p>...Spanish are concerned about the weak</p> <p>...except for one Spain is the most noisy country in the world</p> <p>...Spanish make rules for everything but they prefer to avoid rules that make life more complex</p>	
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		<p>...Spanish are stressed by and want to avoid changes and uncertain situations</p> <p>...Spanish don't want to worry about the future and live for the moment – that's how the term fiesta emerged</p> <p>...Spain is a normative country</p> <p>...Spanish appreciate fast results and don't like delay</p> <p>...Spanish prefer clear structures and clearly defined rules that allow for a peaceful life without being pragmatic</p> <p>... Spain is not an indulgent society which means that Spanish are inclined to be cynical and pessimistic</p> <p>...Spanish are reserved</p> <p>...Spanish do not have strong empathy for leisure time and control of desires</p> <p>...action is controlled by social norms which imply that being indulgent is wrong</p> <p>...Spanish appreciate individuals being well dressed</p> <p>...Spanish businesspeople like expensive brands</p> <p>...Spanish don't like people to behave like a big know-it-all</p>	
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		<p>...Spanish speak bad English</p> <p>... neatness, seriosity and formal behaviour are expected</p> <p>...Spanish are warm and emotional</p>	
Type 4 SPAIN	<p>...Spanish do not appreciate taking decisions immediately – that is seen as an insult =&gt; <i>Dutch like to take decisions swiftly</i></p> <p>... in comparison to Europe except Portugal, Spain is collectivistic – Dutch are strongly individualistic</p> <p>...in comparison to Spain, the Dutch society is feminine which means that Dutch find it important that people only do what they like</p> <p>...Dutch are more long term oriented and oriented towards the future than Spanish</p> <p>...in contrast to Spanish, Dutch are indulgent</p>	<p>...lower individuality in comparison to western European countries</p> <p>...lower long term orientation than e.g. Germany</p> <p>... in comparison to Europe except Portugal, Spain is collectivistic</p> <p>...in comparison to other continents, Spain is perceived as individualistic</p> <p>...Spain is hierarchical, decisions are difficult to make</p> <p>... high uncertainty avoidance, they don't like changes and unplanned events</p> <p>... Spaniaarden houden van snelle resultaten in plaats van toekomstgerichte resultaten. Anders gezegd, ze leven per moment zonder te veel in termen van toekomst te denken</p> <p>..... Compared to the Netherlands, Spain is a more collectivistic country. However, compared with other continents it is seen as individualist due to its score of 51. Despite this it is very easy for Spaniards to relate with non-European. Teamwork is considered as something natural and there is no need for strong management motivation.</p>	

	<p>... bedrijfsleven in Spanje hiërarchischer is dan in Nederland en communicatie hoofdzakelijk top-down verloopt.</p> <p>...bij vorming team rekening houden met het feit dat zij daar meer leiding verwachten dan in Nederland gewenst is</p> <p>...Nederland is ontzettend individualistisch in tegenstelling tot Spanje</p> <p>...in Spanje lopen prive en zakelijk soms een beetje door elkaar heen</p> <p>.... Power in the Netherlands is decentralized and managers count on their team members for success. Control is very much disliked and attitudes towards managers are informal as well as communication is direct and participative. On the other hand,</p>	<p>... The Netherlands scored as a feminine society while Spain scores shows that polarization is not well considered or excessive competitiveness appreciated. Managers tend to consult their employees to know their opinions before they make their decisions. To the Spanish community, "The winner takes it all" is not the correct attitude.</p> <p>.... in Spain compared to the Netherlands...the people like to have rules for everything but at the same time are obliged in avoiding rules that will make life in fact more complex. Confrontation is avoided as it causes great stress and Spanish people avoids stress at all costs possible. Changes are also causes of stress seeing that the Spanish community does not like changes. On the other hand, the Netherlands perceives a slight preference for avoiding uncertainty, for example, punctuality is important, urge of always being busy and working hard</p>	
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	Spain has a hierarchical society. Here centralization is popular and employees are expected to do what they have been told to do		
Type 1 UK		<p>... there is low power distance which implies that there is no conflict (?) in office =&gt; conflict is what is probably meant – the Dutch sentence makes simply no sense: “in het Verenigd Koninkrijk is er een lage machtsafstand, wat inhoudt geen sprake is van ongelijk op de werkvloer”</p> <p>... the country is predominantly individualistic</p> <p>... as well as rather masculine which implies that British value competition, success and performance</p> <p>... the uncertainty avoidance score implies that British are not afraid of uncertainty</p> <p>...long term orientation is average</p> <p>...British are polite and indirect</p> <p>...UK is not hierarchical – decisions are easily made</p> <p>....low uncertainty avoidance, they don't mind changes and uncertain events</p>	

		<p>... UK does not emphasize the difference in people's status, power or wealth and equality is seen as the collective aim of society</p> <p>... in UK individuality and individual rights are very important</p> <p>... UK society is less concerned than the Dutch about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance towards variety and experimentation. The country is less rule-orientated, readily accepts change and is willing to take risks.</p> <p>...English youth is sensitive to trends and always looking for something new and exciting</p> <p>... hat UK prefers to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion (<i>same author as previous remark: the exact opposite!</i>)</p> <p>... Brits believes that inequalities amongst people should be minimized. However,the power distance among high class is lower than the working class. This does not square with the well-established and historical British class system</p> <p>... British are very individualistic and private people. They are also known as a Me Culture. At an early age the children were taught to think and look for themselves. This is to find out the purpose of life and how to contribute uniquely to the society</p>	
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		<p>... it is a masculine society which is driven and oriented by highly success</p> <p>... modesty and understatement of the British culture are at odds with the underlying success of driven value system in the culture</p> <p>... they are able to read between the lines and do not always mean what they say</p> <p>... Brits live in order to work and to have a clear performance ambition</p> <p>... are relatively open in taking risk and dealing with changes. This can be seen as well on macro as micro level. They consider conflict or disagreement as something healthy</p> <p>.... UK society is indulgent because they have the willingness to realize their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun</p> <p>...British are penchant for understatement. Sometimes they challenge the understanding of people, things and situations that lead them to perceive things differently. Also is known that the Brits use humour during conversation as a defence mechanism in form of self-depreciation or irony</p> <p>... British people like to keep the professionalism</p> <p>....Brits also communicate with gestures</p>	
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		<p>... Brits are known for Stiff upper lip which means that they have a reserved and restrained attitude when facing certain situations. They rarely open to show emotions neither positive nor negative</p> <p>... appreciates the Britain an atmosphere of trust, reliability and fairness however it likes to keep the business and social matters strictly separate</p> <p>... Brits do not talk loud and don't show disruptive behaviour</p> <p>... universalistic, individualistic countries that are neutral in controlling their emotions, are more business driven, taken the United Kingdom and the Netherlands as an example</p>	
Type 3 UK	<p>... British are polite and indirect which can confuse Dutch =&gt; <i>Dutch are direct and rude</i></p>		
Type 4 UK	<p>... UK experiences a higher degree of gender differentiation. It shows that men dominate a significant portion of society and the power structure =&gt; <i>Dutch society is more egalitarian than the British and</i></p>		

	<p><i>correspondingly, more women are in higher positions in the NL than in the UK</i></p> <p>...the UK and the NL more or less have a tendency towards optimism</p> <p>... The Dutch and the United Kingdom could be described as cool, factual, decisive and planners</p>		
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Table 5: stereotypes found in theses (selection)

## Discussion

The analysis of BA theses written between 2010 and 2018 at the IBL study course of the Rotterdam Business School of the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences verifies the working hypothesis of this research: the lessons about and reception of Hofstede and other work on culture or cultural differences and management results in the work of students in stereotyped presumptions about other nations. The topic of most theses was the expansion to a foreign market. Most theses included a discussion of cultural differences as an aspect to be reckoned with in that undertaking.

The author most often referred to evaluate the impact of cultural differences was Hofstede. Whilst Solomon and Schell were only mentioned twice, Trompenaars and Hall were referred to eight times. Students discussed relatively often the work of R. Lewis. Since it only became apparent after a larger amount of theses already had been analysed, the factual number of theses referring to Lewis was not counted, but he was referred to more often than the other authors, except for Hofstede. Apart from the authors mentioned, students referred to a variety of other sources – often from the internet – that tackled the (business) culture in the respective target country. The work of Hofstede was mostly consulted on the internet. Culture's Consequences and Cultures and Organizations were mentioned far less often. Most of the examined theses explored possibilities of expansion to European markets, yet a considerable amount of the investigated sources tackled countries in the Americas, in Asia or the Middle East. A vast majority of the examined theses discussed cultural differences as an aspect of a DESTEP or PESTLE analysis (the 'S' in both acronyms stands for 'social-cultural'). In course of such an evaluation, the respective country is analysed under legal, political, economic and socio-cultural aspects on a macro-level. In the analysed BA theses this almost necessarily results in a cursory overview that spends a paragraph or two on each of the analytical levels. That this results mostly in shallow, superficial findings is obvious.

In case Hofstede was used as a reference, the reader was often referred to the appendix where one or more bar charts were displayed that showed the relation between the investigated country/countries and the Netherlands (as the country of residence of the client that wished to expand) according to the dimensions of Hofstede. An example of such a graph displaying the relation between USA and France is provided below:



Graph 1: retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Hofstede-dimensions-comparing-the-USA-grey-and-France-green-blue\\_fig2\\_320863629](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Hofstede-dimensions-comparing-the-USA-grey-and-France-green-blue_fig2_320863629) (accessed 21-01-2021)

The reductionist potential of Hofstede's approach becomes immanently clear: depending on one's perspective, one nation scores higher or lower than the other on the respective dimension which allegedly allows for drawing conclusions about the 'character' (personal traits) and behavioural patterns of individuals representing the nation in question. The dimensions are typically presented without any further explanation and the position of the target country/nation is presented in comparison to the respective nation/country of the client. The explications are confined to a statement about the comparative position on the respective dimension and corresponding implications are presented apodictically. One student, for example, explained that "[b]oth of the countries have a noticeable low index of individualism which means that the citizens have the collectivism mentality. This means that the people in Chile have a 'we' culture, actually acting in groups. This means also that relations are very important". Another student explains that "Poles score higher on uncertainty avoidance than Dutch – that means they avoid uncertainty, they like to be busy and work hard and value accuracy and punctuality, – in contrast to the Dutch which also work hard yet value accuracy and punctuality less and have more a 9 to 5 mentality which is unthinkable in Poland". Another student emphasizes that "Germany is very masculine and very competitive, this is completely different in the NL which is very feminine – this needs to be taken into account when doing business". Further examples of this relative stereotypes (Type 4) are given in table 5 above. Next to Type 1 stereotypes that were used the

most, Type 4 stereotypes occurred relatively often. Whilst some students also included Type 3 stereotypes (apparent through syntax), none of the theses made Type 2 statements (potential stereotypes). That the students often stated relative stereotypes corresponds of course, to the approach of Hofstede. Most students simply verbalize the charts that display the comparative position of nations on the dimensions: nation x scores higher/lower than nation y. Therefore, company A (representative of nation x) must consider that members of nation y are F / will often behave like E. Mostly, the students do not seem to understand that these statements are outright stereotypes. Corresponding statements are presented as facts. The analysis of cultures and cultural differences based on Hofstede comes down to the proliferation of stereotypes that do not help to increase understanding. What is staggering is that in none of the examined theses a student seems to have questioned the added value of such statements. Even one presumed hypothetically, that the corresponding statements are true, the type of presentation is lacking any explanatory power whatsoever. It remains opaque of what use corresponding information could possibly be for a company. Next to Type 4 stereotypes, students most often made Type 1 statements, that is direct stereotypes that in case Hofstede was used, were mostly connected to one of the dimensions. This results in statements such as the following: "British are very individualistic and private people. They are also known as a Me Culture. At an early age the children were taught to think and look for themselves. This is to find out the purpose of life and how to contribute uniquely to the society" [sic!]. The reader of this report should not think that the absurdity of such statements is due to the fact that they are quoted out of context: corresponding statements – sheer nonsense – occur in the examined theses in exact this random fashion. Another example that proves the point: "Spanish prefer clear structures and clearly defined rules that allow for a peaceful life without being pragmatic". Whilst one student establishes that "Spain is not an indulgent society which means that Spanish are inclined to be cynical and pessimistic", another student explains that "Polish they value traditions and have a clear view of the truth and what is right or wrong". "Portuguese" on the other hand "are not that good when it comes to teamwork (in general), because they do not like challenging authority" and "Germany scores low on indulgence, which means that they are a restrained group of people. This means that they not put much emphasis on leisure time and they tend to control their desires. Restrained cultures tend to be very pessimistic too". The examples are representative. The statements show the



limitedness of the approach. Establishing such stereotypes as supposed facts is nonsensical and utterly useless. The frequent language mistakes make the statements even less intelligible.

A limited amount of theses tackled the topic of cultural differences in doing business by referring to Trompenaars and Hall, or a combination of approaches including especially Lewis and Hofstede. Such attempts to discuss in more detail the pitfalls of neglecting, or the advantage of awareness of, cultural differences result in meaningless apodictic statements as the following: “[M]onochronic [!] cultures are much faster than polychronic [!] cultures when it comes to a simple thing like buying stamps. Hence, punctuality and accuracy is higher in monochronic [!] cultures than in polychronic [!] cultures”; or “Another essential problem in cultures around the world is what drives human encroachment? The answer to this phenomena lies according to cultural specialists in two questions: 1. What motivates us humans? 2. How do we humans deal with unknown and uncertain situations?”. One can hardly believe that it should have evaded the author’s attention that the statement does not make sense. In that case, one must presume that the authority of the written word is so big that it was stated nonetheless.

A greater number of students tackled culture as a factor with references to sources as listed in table 3, entry 8 to 21. Respective sources do not provide any theoretical background. This type of source is limited to statements about supposed behavioural patterns of the target population and corresponding recommendations about suitable behaviour without contextualization of any sort. Often such sources are described by the authors of the theses as tackling business culture, yet they merely present implicit or explicit stereotypes about the respective nations. The following examples display the point: “Germans are formal, hierarchical, punctual, more conservative than Dutch and they read more than inhabitants of Benelux”; “Lithuanians speak very softly when they say something important” and “Romanians are warm and emotional”. It appears that corresponding statements are not only of no added value but do have the potential to cause frictions and serious misunderstandings.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the analysis of the sources one is compelled to conclude that the way cross cultural management has been taught in the IBL study course at RBS in the past 10 years at least, results in not much more than an accumulation of nonsensical statements and stereotypes that do not increase understanding but often seem a gateway to less understanding of the culture in question. The evaluation of sources showed that the PLO in intercultural proficiency of the IBL study course at RBS are not or only partly met. Out of four PLO in intercultural proficiency, the IBL study course is successful regarding only one. Whilst it is safe to say that most students happily “[d]isplay willingness to work with people from other cultures and to work in countries with different cultural backgrounds”, the analysis of source material shows that the students are not able to “[m]itigate the pitfalls of cultural differences in business and social contexts”; are unlikely to “[u]se appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication in an intercultural setting” and certainly not able to “[a]ssess the effect of cultural differences upon organisational behaviour and strategic choices”. Whilst it seems beneficial to sensitize students for cultural differences and the way they impact on human relations, it does not seem recommendable, against this backdrop, to continue giving lessons on cross cultural management that are based on Hofstede or comparable approaches to cultural differences.

From a scholarly perspective, it seems dubious, to say the least, to presume that a model or quantitative approach could replace the substantial and essential input of reading. It is safe to presume, that students that would deal for a longer period and more intensely with ‘culture’ from a cultural studies perspective would not be inclined to make nonsensical statements such as the utterances found in this content analysis. The analysis has shown that the reception of Hofstede results in tendency in primordialist and essentializing understandings of national cultures. The same is true apparently for the reception of the work of Lewis, Hall and Trompenaars and the many practical guides that base on one or more of those accounts.

The many misconceptions and misunderstandings that result apparently from the reception of corresponding accounts have implications for the practice of international management relations. It is easy to see that a manager who is guided by corresponding presumptions about the culture of prospects or potential business partners, is likely to finding his/her attempts of doing business abroad thwarted or undermined by it. Approaching a potential business partner with a huge mental baggage of supposedly factual stereotypes

cannot bear positive effects. It is easy to imagine countless examples of situations in which action based on essentialized stereotypes derived from the perception of Hofstede, would lead to disgruntled individuals or hurt feelings: the opposite of which a manager that wants to internationalise their business and establish good relations is interested in. The reception of Hofstede is likely to lead to an undesirable bias of perceptions on side of the recipient. A manager seriously interested in establishing long-term relations with business partners in another culture would benefit instead from acquainting him-/herself with the respective culture of interest in an unprejudiced way. That would begin with a non-judgemental approach to culture that is open for the reception of the many ambiguities inherent to cultures – this openness would be a fundamental prerequisite for understanding, which is the prerequisite in turn, for building good relations. The average manager that seeks to gather some knowledge about another culture is likely to search for unambiguous certainties – knowledge that is easily receptible and that does not cause cognitive dissonance. In a European context it is likely that the individual already has some more or less vague ideas about the culture in question. Literally every European has some stereotypical imaginations about Italians, French, Germans, Dutch. Instead of breaking up stereotyped patterns of perception, accounts such as the work of Hofstede and Lewis are likely to confirm existing stereotypes or create new ones.

It is safe to say, that an attempt to establish international business relations that bases on corresponding accounts is likely to be less successful than an attempt that bases on more thorough efforts to gather deeper background knowledge. In order to gather some understanding of a culture an investment of time needs to be made that allows for the reception of some introductory works that go beyond the shallow realms of practice oriented (behavioural) guides and corresponding stereotypes. It is of the essence to make a careful choice and select some volumes that discuss the country, nation and culture, as well as the collective habitus and social graces in question, from a post-modern, constructivist perspective informed by insights from disciplines such as cultural history and anthropology. Such an approach cannot result in a universal instant-manual for correct behaviour. By opening the door to deeper understanding, it offers something more valuable. Obviously, such a demanding approach is only practical in case the plan to expand business abroad aims at a long-term business relationship.

The paper showed that whilst the homogeneity of nations as implicated by Hofstede does not exist, it would be premature to abandon the nation as an analytical concept in attempts to

understand the populations of other countries. In order to understand a national 'culture', it is necessary to get acquainted with the predominant historical narrative(s) about the common national past, the elements of which are essential to national self-imaginings. Without such a historical contextualization the determination and analysis of social practices, habitus, commonly shared beliefs and values is meaningless. The contextualization through historical analysis is a prerequisite of understanding national 'cultures' and differences between them. Shedding the light of historical contextualization can explain much more than essentialist assertions based on survey material gathered from employees of one international company. Whilst the attractiveness to managers of Hofstede's approach that allegedly allows to formulate statistically based insights into 'culture' is understandable, the interactive and contested nature of culture cannot be captured by higher or lower scores on an uncertainty avoidance scale. The differences and similarities between cultures cannot be reduced and oversimplified into the establishment of different (value-based) ways to deal with the universal. In order to provide meaningful insights about similarities, differences, parallels, and overlaps of and between cultures, cultures need to be studied in detail with due attention to the specifics of different cases. The equation of values and cultures and the supposed stability of allegedly "organically grown" nations, neglects their constructedness and contestedness. Nations are products of continuous negotiation between societal sub-groups and as such they are products of dynamic interaction that can only be understood by taking a closer look at the individual case.

Instead of proliferating them, education that aims at facilitating the internationalization of business should be dealing thoroughly with national stereotypes. Imaginations about specific characteristics and behavioural patterns of members of nations that are transmitted emotionally, through social interaction, are historical and specific to cultures. National stereotypes explain the socio-historical existence of the Self and its relations to the Other. In order to understand and analyse stereotypes they need to be contextualized. The genesis of stereotypes is impacted by the socio-political context in a specific period, it is determined by country-specific public remembrance and traditions. Stereotypes that are prevalent about other nations in another nation are embedded in a narrative interpretation of the history of the common relations. As representations of a national socio-cultural code, stereotypes are embedded in discourses about the national Self. The discourse determines what can be said and what cannot be said, including stereotypes, specifically in their functions of integration in and exclusion from the nation. National

stereotypes are representations of the discourse about the national Self. Developing an understanding of patterns of collective self-imaginings of a nation can be a meaningful starting point for the emergence of fruitful business relations. It occurs to me that the logic of this is self-evident. One can easily comprehend it by imagining the individual Self in relations to Others: meaningful relations emerge when they are driven by interest in the Other and efforts to learn about the Other. Relations that remain confined to the immanent and unavoidable impressions suggested by unconscious stereotypical categorization will not develop beyond shallow acquaintance. An attempt to establish fruitful long-term business relations should therefore start with making the effort to get acquainted with the respective culture.

An alternative, correspondingly, to abandoning lessons about cultural differences that are based on Hofstede or comparable approaches, is to spend more resources on teaching cultural differences and international business. In order to increase the understanding of different cultures an approach that considers the impact of historically founded national self-imaginings is necessary. Such a course should run over a longer period. It should be a voluntary course for interested students that runs for four semesters. For two years students would spend two hours of classes and read 4 to 6 volumes or approximately 1 to 1 ½ books per semester or an equivalent of around 12 to 16 articles or chapters of books in two years, thus 3-4 articles or chapters per semester. That implies ca. 2 hours of self-study per week, per semester. The progress can be measured by writing mini essays of 10-12 pages at the end of the first three semesters and one longer essay at the end of the fourth semester (20-30 pages). The first year would be spend on developing some theoretical foundation based on which the students could develop a deeper understanding of a specific culture of their interest.

## 7. Experiences on the Front – How Cultural Knowledge Impacts Doing Business Abroad in the Perception of Managers

Independent of the probably utopian vision of some substantial revision of the set-up of lessons in cultural differences and international business, it seems rewarding to design and implement a round of field research to examine the dealing with and the role of cultural differences in international business. It makes sense to investigate how companies for whom a thesis research was conducted by an IBL student of RBS who considered the role of cultural differences in the way described above, made use of the insights provided by the student or not, and if and how culture impacted the effort to internationalization. Next to this sample, a sample of companies that expanded internationally in the past yet were not advised by an IBL student of RBS should be examined in order to establish similarities and differences. A third sample should examine if and how companies that are currently planning to expand internationally, reckon with cultural differences impacting the undertaking. The field research can be conducted by graduating students of the IBL study course at RBS. Students that conduct research on that topic, should also include an analysis of exhibitions on the nation as well as an analysis of parts of the public realm (sculptures, monuments, buildings) in order to deepen their understanding of the topic. They could also interview respondents from a control panel outside the business context. Per semester 5 students can graduate on the topic. If that is done during a period of 4 years, a corpus of 40 theses is build. That seems enough data to serve as a basis of a meta-analysis into the perception of the role and the dealing with culture and cultural differences as a factor in doing international business. Based on the results of the analysis the researcher will be able to draw conclusions that allow for giving further recommendations regarding the set-up and content of education about the impact of culture and cultural differences international business.

## Afterword

This research project was inspired by personal discomfort with the complete negligence of history in classes on cultural differences in international business study courses at the Business School (RBS) of the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (RUAS). The paper made clear why these ahistorical approaches to culture and the omission of historical contextualization are inadmissible. In addition to the academic discussion above, this afterword provides a contextualization from a subjective point of view that makes clear how culture and history impact the life of individuals. It provides insight in some aspects of my individual experiences as a citizen and academic as well as my professional occupation at RBS that led me to conducting this research. This research is an explicit plea for an approach to cultures in business studies that considers the crucial significance of the historical contextualization of cultures: Historical contextualization is a prerequisite for the understanding of cultures.

As a Dutch-German, I grew up in two different 'cultures' which are very similar in some respects and very different in others. With regard to my ontological development and the quest to determine my personal identity, my mixed background was of crucial importance. My grandparents lived through the war in Amsterdam. My grandfather's brother was in the resistance and shot by the Germans. The two brothers of my grandmother collaborated economically. They profited from the occupation by doing business with the Germans. My grandparents on the contrary, helped people in need. They hid people and gave food to others, of which they had more than average since at the time my grandfather ran a grocery store. After my grandfather's death, I found a letter from the government in his papers stating that they wanted to honour him. So many people had mentioned him and their gratefulness for the help he had provided in the war that at least the government wanted to thank him and signal that his deeds were not forgotten in spite of his decision to stay on the background. He had chosen to keep his experiences for himself and never spoke of the war.

Against this backdrop, my grandparents were devastated when my father left Amsterdam to live in Germany in the early 1960s, at a time thus when Germanophobia instilled by the occupation in the Second World War was still *bon ton* in the Netherlands. When later I asked my father about his motives to leave, he alluded to the suffocating societal atmosphere of the contemporary Netherlands (which can be re-experienced vividly by reading Gerard Reve's classic

*De avonden*) as well as the fact that the parents of his Catholic girlfriend would not allow her to marry a Protestant. Besides, in the early post-war period the Dutch government stuck to a conservative economic policy aiming at restoration of the pre-war status quo. Germany, at the same time, experienced the 'economic miracle' and soon after the war, Germans were back again in the Netherlands – in cars instead of tanks, as tourists and shoppers not as soldiers. That the former foe, utterly vanquished only a couple of years before, could come to buy coffee and tea and have a holiday on the beach so soon after his defeat, deeply impressed the young man.

For years my grandparents tried to convince my father to return to the Netherlands with incentives and threats – yet in vain. He stayed and eventually he married my German – and Catholic – mother. I was born in 1972 in Dusseldorf, in the lower Rhine region, close to the Dutch border. Whilst I grew up in Dusseldorf, we had a cottage on one of the islands in the south of Holland, and I went to see my grandparents often for longer periods, so that in total, I spent a couple of years of my childhood in the Netherlands. Throughout the years, my grandfather subtly instilled me with resentments against Germany. The pages of my first scrap book were full of pictures of the Second World War, provided and commented by my grandfather in writing, disparaging the Germans and Germany and glorifying the Dutch. I read the diary of Anne Frank when I was 6 or so, when I could not really understand all the implications of it. After I read a patriotic, bibliographical account of Dutch Shoah survivor Mirjam Bits at the age of 13, I refused to even speak German for weeks on my return to Germany. Categorically, I refused to spend time at my German grandmother's house. My German grandfather, who was a chapel master and violinist and not interested in politics, had neither supported nor opposed the Nazis. Because of his limp, he could keep to himself and his music during the Third Reich, performing occasional auxiliary services such as leading villagers to the bunker in the hills. I did not know him, he died when I was two years old. Yet, despite the resentment I developed against Germany and the Germans whom I imagined as violent thugs, perpetrators and murderers, my friends were Germans, my mother was German, and I went to school in Germany. Whilst my primary school was Protestant, my grammar school was oriented to the left politically. Most of my teachers were socialized politically in the 1960s and had been hippies or socialist students, and many endorsed the subsequently emerging environmental movement and the new Green Party in the 1970s and 1980s. Consequently, the Third Reich and the Second World War were dealt with so thoroughly and extensively that hardly a day went by without any mentioning of it.



Thus, and that is the point here, throughout my childhood and adolescence the war and the Shoah were everywhere and against this backdrop of the Dutch and German versions of the European 'public religion' around Auschwitz (Oegema, 2003), I was constantly confronted with my bi-cultural background and compelled to deliberate my national identity as part of my individual identity more than an average child and adolescent with a homogeneous cultural and national background would. This impacted fundamentally the development of my personal identity. During early adolescence, when I started thinking about 'who I am', I initially simply refused any Germanness as a feature of myself. In hindsight, this was a futile way of coping with what being German in the presence meant against the backdrop of the horrors of the war and the Shoah. Retreating to my Dutchness helped me to distance myself from any connection to the crimes committed by Germans. I would simply not have anything to do with the slaughter of millions of innocent people and the utter destruction of an entire world. Simultaneously, I idealized the Netherlands as a beacon of liberalism and democracy, a shining light of tolerance and freedom – of all the good things, I seemed to miss in Germany (which was a delusion, of course).

It was delusive, of course, to believe that I could simply neglect my German background and pretend it never existed. I was not and would never be Dutch like somebody who grew up exclusively in the Netherlands, like a child to two Dutch parents. Just as I would never be a German in the way a child to two German parents is. Over time, the attempt to maintain the self-image of being Dutch only caused so much cognitive dissonance that it could no longer be maintained. Subsequently, I retreated to 'Europeanness' as a refuge, another place where I could evade my Germanness, so it seemed. Defining myself as European in the first instance freed me from accepting my German inheritance. In the meantime, my personal struggle for a consonant identity, also influenced my choice of study: history. I had to know, I had to study the war and the Shoah initially to find out what exactly had happened how and why and how this impacted the relations and reciprocal perceptions of the two peoples I am connected to by birth.

After accomplishing a M.A. in history, political science and media studies, I followed a postgraduate programme in European studies. At the end of that period, I received a grant from the European Commission to write my master thesis about US discourses about the future of the EU and NATO after the end of the Cold War in California. That was a dream come true. In my imagination, California symbolized freedom and living there, so I envisioned, would liberate me from the war infested European quagmire and my struggle for identity. Above all though, the time

in California reinforced my sense of being European. On the one hand this was a relief. It was wholesome to be recognized as a European by Americans: it did not matter anymore if I were Dutch or German or both. I was a European and most intriguingly, I could become an American if I wanted. This experience of feeling uprooted yet being welcomed and invited to join the American people was overwhelming. It was not necessary anymore to demarcate my Dutchness from my Germanness or to define my identity by recurrence to either nation. Whereas I felt relieved initially, after a while living in America estranged me. It made me feel very European, including some occasional and rather misplaced haughty disdain for the seemingly banal and philistine elements of the American way of life.

Since I was a boy, my personal background sensitized me to being perceptive of 'culture' and cultural differences. Being confronted with stereotypical remarks about the Netherlands and Germany countless times throughout the years, stimulated my academic interest in national images and 'cultures' and their impact on human relations. Once I returned from the US, I was invited to the UK to write a PhD. Not coincidentally, I set out to examine the impact of national self-imaginings on the perception of European integration in Germany, the Netherlands and England. Writing this book helped me to finally reconcile my Dutchness with my Germanness and to accept my own identity as culturally mixed, as Dutch-German. It made me understand the constructedness of social reality. Whereas I did not turn into a fundamental constructivist, declining the existence of anything outside human perception, I did come to realize that and how everything we perceive is automatically impacting our construction of reality which in turn is impacted by the 'cultures' we are socialized in. Our multi-level identities and the different realities we perceive in different contexts and settings are two sides of one medal. In the national context, constructions of national pasts are a factor of utmost significance for the emergence and persistence of the idea of belonging to a nation. In order to understand a 'culture' or cultural background of an individual or national collective it is necessary to understand these constructs and how they impact on life in all its facets.

In 2015, I started working at RBS as a teacher of German as a foreign language. In that position, I gave a course that included the assignment to give a presentation about an imagined Dutch product that was to be exported to Germany. In their presentations, students frequently referred to the dimensions of Hofstede, of which I had never heard before (which in itself is telling: no mentioning of Hofstede whatsoever in any of the volumes I read in 20 odd years at the

academy, dealing with different aspects of 'culture'). According to the students these ominous 'dimensions', indicated cultural differences between people from different countries. What struck me especially, was that students repeatedly claimed that Germans 'scored higher than Dutch on masculinity', which seemed to imply that on average Germans (because they were Germans) would be more masculine than Dutch. In the given context, students concluded that therefore Germans would be more likely to consume product X, thus implying that 'culture' determined behaviour in a way that could be calculated, making it possible to manipulate people by predicting their behaviour. In the beginning, I would ask for elaborations on these highly dubious claims and causalities. I would ask for explanations of the 'dimension-model', or I would ask for an elaboration on the concept 'masculinity' (sometimes making fun of it, as all the not-so masculine Germans I had encountered throughout the years came to mind). Alas, the responses I got were never satisfactory. The only thing that was quite apparent was that students did not really understand Hofstede's model. I had to get used to the idea that my students simply were of the opinion (because they were taught that, or that was what they understood and remembered from what they were taught) that Hofstede was a researcher with considerable authority, who had established a model to understand 'culture', and that the model consisted of several dimensions one of which was 'masculinity and femininity'. People with different national background would score differently on these dimensions, which implied that an individual's nationality would determine the score on those dimensions. In general, Dutch would thus score lower on 'masculinity' than Germans which seemed to confirm the image of a German as a beer drinking, sausage eating, brawling, muscle flexing, angry looking man with a Bavarian hat on. Was it the silliness of the insinuation or the naïveté with which students faithfully presented this as a given which was more absurd? In short, it seemed that students were taught stereotypes about nations (and individuals representing these nations) in form of a model that apparently essentialized the nation and quantified supposed national 'cultures' based on seemingly arbitrary dimensions. At the same time however, I knew that students were taught to think beyond the immanent stereotypical pictures in their heads when getting in touch with peoples from other 'cultures'. There even were seminars that included activities dealing with the recognition of cultural micro-aggressions, i.e., they were taught to avoid hurting somebody's feelings because of a lack of perceptiveness of cultural differences.

This contradiction stimulated my curiosity and I read the book that was used to teach cross cultural management (that was the course students referred to when asked where they learned about Hofstede's dimensions), a volume entitled *Managing Across Cultures* of Charlene Solomon and Michael Schell, which I discussed in the theoretical conceptualization. I then also read Hofstede's *Allemaal Andersdenkenden* (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). As a humanist and social scientist, I found the approach of Solomon and Schell dubious to say the least and disagreed with Hofstede for the reasons discussed above. Having read these volumes and being repulsed fundamentally by the abundance of essentializing oversimplifications aiming at the provision of pragmatic behavioural guidelines, I wanted to stimulate students to dig deeper and examine 'cultures' from a different angle, starting from a constructivist historical and anthropological perspective in order to develop a better understanding of the 'culture' of the country of their interest. I did that in several courses and for various countries, including the Netherlands, Germany, England, France, Spain, Italy, Japan, Russia, Hungary, and Poland. Alas, the number of students who understood the point (the constructivist approach to 'culture', based on an analysis of dominant self-imaginings of a country of their choice) was very limited. Most participants could not overcome the perception of history (constructions of which are at the core of national 'cultures' and *habitus*) as a row of events (the more advanced students would make connections between events and deliberate their consequences) and of 'culture' as a combination of behaviour and (material) things. To give an example of the absurd statements I was regularly confronted with, a typical presentation of Italian 'culture' (at the end of the course) would sound like this: 'highly emotional, wildly gesticulating, spaghetti eating Ferrari admirers, who in some distant past went through this period of Fascism'. As a teacher, of course, one always does it for those few who do understand, those who experienced the course as an 'eye-opener' as one such student put it. Or the duo that approached me after the subsequent vacation and told me that the course on central eastern Europe inspired them to change plans and travel around the region for a month. Yet, overall, it was frustrating to see that the didactical intention was not realized, and the learning goal was not achieved for most. One obstacle for understanding was the apparently widespread feeling among students that somebody who does not origin from a country he discusses, cannot possibly teach someone who comes from there about that country. I was confronted with arrogant benevolence from 20-year-old students who would admit that 'even they as Hungarians' had learned something. Several angry looking

Russian students, arms crossed over chest, would refuse outright the possibility that they could learn something about Russia from a non-Russian. Ethnically white Dutch students would get upset when confronted with slavery and Black Pete – the figure was of course an innocent tradition and not at all connotated with racism (and how dared I, a Dutch-German, doubt that). To be sure, Dutch students with ethnically mixed backgrounds were more enthusiastic about the topic. Spanish and Polish students, confronted with aspects of their past, and their effects on contemporary culture, such as the lack of coming to terms with the Franco era and the imperial past or anti-Semitism, repeatedly confronted me with reproaches of having insulted the individual student and their people, and sometimes even threatened me – in their country, I would be send to jail for such statements: judging from the empirical evidence, gathered as a teacher, the essentialising view on culture and nations among students of IB apparently is pervasive.

I deliberated and discussed with colleagues and students and tried to find different ways and techniques to reach the target group, but results remained meagre. Given my high emotional and intellectual involvement in the matter, I decided to quit the course. I had the impression that the lack of engagement on side of the majority of students had also something to do with the fact that these courses were so called 'electives' – a type of course of which students are obliged to take two in the first years of their study. Electives are rewarded with only very few credit points and speaking to students and colleagues fostered the impression that from a student's perspective electives are supposed to be fun in the first instance, the willingness to put some effort in gathering the points is limited in general – it appears to be a side show, for students as well as for most colleagues. There had to be other ways to approach the topic. Subsequently, I conducted a small (and not representative) research project, examining the role 'culture' played for the identity formation of students of mixed cultural backgrounds in contrast to students with culturally homogeneous backgrounds. Not surprisingly, I found that 'culture' played a much bigger role for students with mixed backgrounds than for those with ethnically homogeneous (Dutch only) backgrounds. That matched my personal experience of course. Internal HR statistics show that students with mixed ethnic background – especially those from the Middle East and Northern Africa as well as Indonesia and South America – quit their study without a diploma more often than average. A mixed ethnic background, or an ethnic background different from the majority, implies often that these children grow up in households

with a low socioeconomic status, i.e. with parents that did not follow higher education and that have a low income. There often is no privacy of a study at home and often the tuition fees need to be earned by the students. Generally, male students are more likely to quit without a diploma than female students. The majority of students who leave the RBS with a diploma are females with an ethnically homogenous Dutch (Caucasian) background that started with a havo diploma (see Edward van Os, unpublished research paper, Rotterdam 2019). That implies that a lot of talent is lost and it is specifically those male students with ethnically mixed background who are more likely to quit their study without a diploma that could benefit from a better understanding of 'culture'. In contrast to a primordialist, essentializing understanding of 'culture' that keeps those born into a 'culture' captive to their cultural inheritance, the constructivist approach to 'culture' implies freedom of individual choice, also regarding to 'culture'. In that regard, gathering corresponding knowledge has the potential to liberate students from an emotional bondage that might impacts their study success.

In the meantime, I had started to supervise IB theses which often deal with the attempts of SME to expand internationally. Generally, these theses rarely alluded thoroughly to 'culture' as a factor for the success or failure of an internationalization. If it was mentioned, the supporting statements were confined to superficial elaborations along the dimensions of Hofstede. The lack of thorough attention to cultural factors in theses dealing with internationalization of SME, prompted the idea for this present research. I claim, that having historically informed knowledge about the cultural reference frames of businesspeople from a country a company wants to do business in is helpful in making that endeavour successful.

Whereas it may certainly be helpful to know different usances concerning concrete behaviour, some more profound knowledge can prove to be essential for success and will facilitate communication anyway. It is beneficial to know usances, but one only really comprehends if there is some understanding of the background of certain collective social codes and graces – that background is not explicated sufficiently by references to positions on scales of antipodes. A prerequisite to understanding different 'cultures' is to read. If living in a country of interest is not an option, reading is a must. And if living there is an option it should be accompanied by reading. There is no way around this truism. And there is no model or quantitative approach that can replace the substantial and essential input of reading. Books for managers that provide guidelines about how to deal with cultural differences often include some

apologising remarks in the introductory pages that, whilst confirming the complexity of 'culture', serve to justify the reduction of that complexity. Most often, the main reason given is the lack of time: managers do not have the time to read and yet they are faced with the necessity to adequately deal with individuals of various cultural backgrounds. The impossibility to spend considerable resources on reading though, must not necessarily result in the restriction to the exclusive reception of oversimplified, superficial pseudo-knowledge as presented in behavioural guidelines for managers or accounts that pretend to provide an overview of a 'culture' whilst in reality they consist of a blend of stereotypes (such as that of the tolerant and liberal Dutch for example).

The reader of such accounts gets the impression that post-modernism and constructivism passed by management studies in favour of an – in tendency – primordialist and essentializing understanding of 'culture' – the kind of thinking that stands at the cradle of nationalism, of segregation and racism. Diving into the topic, I learned about attempts by several researchers of marketing and business to pick up different perspectives from other disciplines such as anthropology, in their research dealing with 'culture' and cultural differences – all published not long ago. After having gotten a first impression of the state of the art in management studies concerning the impact of 'culture' and cultural differences on doing business, the attempt to find a way to enable managers to look at a 'culture' of their interest from a different angle appeared as a timely undertaking. This afterword's purpose was to show on a personal level, how an individual life, the ontology, identity formation, academic and professional development of a person, are impacted by the cultural environment. In this case, this includes the idea to conduct this present study. I sincerely hope that this paper will contribute to sensitizing (future) managers to being perceptive of aspects of cultural differences less obvious and mostly unknown in the current landscape of management studies.

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# Appendices

Appendix 1

YEAR	TOPIC	HOFSTED E + Account	SOLOMON and SCHELL	HALL and/or TROMPE- NAARS	OTHER
2010- 2011					
1	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
2	Expansion to the Netherlands	?	-	-	-
3	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
4	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	x
5	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
6	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
7	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
8	Expansion to DR	-	-	-	-
9	Expansion to either US/Capverdy	-	-	-	x
10	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	x
11	Expansion to Russia	-	-	-	x
12	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
13	Expansion to France	-	-	-	x
14	Expansion to Spain	-	-	-	x

15	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
16	Expansion to Spain	WS	-	-	-
17	Expansion to UK	WS	-	-	-
18	Expansion to Chili	-	-	-	x
19	Expansion to West-Africa (Nigeria & Senegal )	WS	-	-	-
20	Expansion to UK	WS	-	-	-
21	Expansion to UK	WS	-	-	-
22	Expansion to Spain	WS	-	-	-
23	Expansion to US	WS	-	-	-
24	Exppansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
2011-2012					
25	Expansion to several European countries	-	-	-	x
26	Expaansion to Russia	-	-	-	x
27	Expansion to the Netherlands	-	-	-	x
28	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
29	Expansion to France	WS	-	-	-
30	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x

31	Expansion to India	-	-	-	x
32	Expansion to Germany	AA, CO	-	-	x
33	Expansion to Belgium	CO, WS	-	-	-
34	Expansion to Canada	-	-	-	x
35	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
36	Expansion to Belgium	?	-	-	-
37	Expansion to Poland	?	-	-	-
38	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
39	Expansion to Sweden	WS	-	-	-
40	Expansion to Kosovo	-	-	-	x
41	Expansion to the Netherlands	WS	-	-	-
42	Expansion to the Netherlands	-	-	-	x
43	Expansion to Germany/France	-	-	-	x
44	Expansion to Kenya/Brazil	-	-	-	x
45	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
46	Expansion international recruitment	-	-	-	x
47	Expansion to Luxembourg	?	-	-	-
48	Expansion to Singapore	-	-	-	x

49	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
50	Expansion to UK	WS	-	-	-
51	Expansion to UK	WS	-	-	x
52	Expansion to Nigeria/Suriname	-	-	-	x
53	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
54	Expansion to South America	WMC	-	-	-
55	Expansion to Denmark	WS	-	-	-
56	Expansion to Romania, Greece, Japan	SAC	-	-	-
57	Expansion to US	-	-	-	x
58	Expansion to Mexico	WS	-	-	-
59	Expansion to USA	-	-	-	x
60	Expansion to the Netherlands	-	-	-	x
2012-2013					
61	Expansion to UAE	WS	-	-	-
62	Expansion to India	WS	-	-	x
63	Expansion to Belgium and the Netherlands	-	-	-	x
64	Expansion to Germany or Turkey	WS, SAC	-	-	-

65	Expansion to the Netherlands	?	-	-	-
66	Expansion to France	WS	-	-	-
67	Expansion to Slovenia	WS	-	-	-
68	Expansion to Central Eastern Europe	WS	-	-	-
69	Expansion to Germany, Norway, UK	WS	-	-	-
70	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
71	Expansion to Turkey	WS	-	-	-
72	Expansion to UK and Germany	SAC	-	-	-
73	Expansion to South Africa	SAC	-	-	-
74	Expansion to the US	-	-	x	x
75	Expansion to Central Eastern Europe	-	-	-	x
76	Expansion to Germany	AA	-	-	-
77	Expansion to the Netherlands	-	-	-	x
78	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
79	Expansion to Africa	-	-	-	x
80	Expansion to UK, Belgium, the Netherlands	WS	-	-	-

81	Expansion to the Netherlands or Belgium	-	-	-	x
82	Expansion to France, Germany or the UK	SAC, WS	-	-	x
83	Expansion to Africa	-	-	-	x
84	Expansion to Turkey or Russia	-	-	-	x
85	Expansion to Germany	SAC	-	-	-
86	Expansion to Germany	?	-	-	x
87	Expansion to Germany and Norway	-	-	-	x
88	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	x	-
89	Expansion to Indonesia	-	-	-	x
90	Expansion to India	?	-	-	-
91	Expansion to India	WS	-	-	x
92	Expansion to Spain	-	-	-	x
93	Expansion to Belgium	?	-	-	x
94	Expansion to the Netherlands	WS	-	-	-
95	Expansion to Slovenia	-	-	-	x
96	Expansion to West Africa	-	-	-	x

2013-2014					
97	Expansion to France	WS	-	-	-
98	Expansion to US or NW Europe	WS	-	-	-
99	Expansion to Turkey	-	-	-	x
100	Expansion to Bangladesh	-	-	-	x
101	Expansion to Belgium	?	-	-	-
102	Expansion to Turkey	SAC	-	-	-
103	Expansion to Chili	WS	-	-	x
104	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
105	Expansion to Turkey	-	-	-	x
106	Expansion to Spain	-	-	-	x
107	Expansion to Denmark	?	-	-	-
108	Expansion to Poland	WS	-	-	-
109	Expansion to Switzerland	WS	-	-	-
110	Expansion to Saudi Arabia	WS	-	-	-
111	Expansion to Saudi Arabia	-	-	-	x
112	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
113	Expansion to Spain	WS	-	-	-
114	Expansion to Canada	WS	-	-	-



115	Expansion to Spain or UK	WS	-	-	-
116	Expansion to Greece	WS	-	-	-
117	Expansion to Mexico or Brazil	WS	-	-	-
118	Expansion to Italy	WS	-	-	-
119	Expansion to Iraq	WS	-	-	-
2014-2015					
120	Expansion to Norway	CO	-	-	-
121	Expansion to Germany or Belgium	?	-	-	-
122	Expansion to Germany, the Netherlands or the UK	WS	-	-	-
123	Expansion to Spain	-	-	-	x
124	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
125	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
126	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
127	Expansion to the Middle East	WS	-	-	-
128	Expansion to France	WS	-	-	-
129	Expansion to UK	WS	-	-	-
130	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	x

131	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
132	Expansion to Australia	WS	-	-	-
133	Expansion to China	-	-	-	x
134	Expansion to Germany	WS, LOT			
135	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
136	Expansion to Taiwan	WS	-	-	x
137	Expansion to Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, France, Austria or Sweden	WS	-	-	-
138	Expansion to Greece	WS	-	-	x
139	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
140	Expansion to Scandinavia	-	-	-	x
141	Expansion to South America	WS	-	-	-
142	Expansion to Romania and Bulgaria	WS	-	-	-
143	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
2015–2016					
141	Expansion to South America	CC, WS	-	-	
142	Expansion to the UK	-	-	x	

143	Expansion to the US	-	-	-	x
144	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
145	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
146	Expansion to Spain	CO, WS	-	-	-
147	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
148	Expansion to Poland	WS	-	-	-
149	Expansion to Europe (!): considers UK, Poland, Germany, France, Italy, Spain	WS	-	-	-
150	Expansion to Spain	WS	-	-	-
151	Expansion to Nordic countries	-	-	-	x
152	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	x
153	Comparison Awareness of website in UK & Spain as opposed to NL	WS	-	-	-
154	Expansion to UK	CC, WS	-	-	-
156	Internal communication	X (not specified /from other secondary source)		x	

157	Expansion to Suriname	-	-	-	x
158	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
159	Attract German customers	WS	-	-	-
160	Expansion to Portugal	WS	-	x	-
161	Expansion to Spain	WS	-	-	-
162	Expansion to Taiwan	AA, WS	-	-	-
163	Expansion to Iran	WS	-	-	-
164	Expansion to South America	-	-	-	x
165	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
166	Expansion to China	AA. CC, WS			
167	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	-
168	company culture (!)	AA			x
169	Expansion to UK & US	-	-	x	-
170					
171					
172	Recruitment Polish candidates	WS	-	-	-
173	Expansion to France	WS	-	-	-
174	Attracting German, Polish, Belgium customers for	CC			

	truck parking lots in NL				
175	Expansion to Brazil	CO, WS	-	-	-
176	Expansion to Belgium and Germany	WS	-	-	x
178	Expansion to Benelux, UK-I, Scandinavia	-	-	-	x
179	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
180	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	-
181	Expansion to Slovenia	WS	-	-	-
182	Expansion to Spain	WS	-	-	-
183	Coordination between entities in different countries	-	-	x	x
2016 - 2017					
184	Marktpositie AFR in NL	SAC	-	-	x
185	Communicatio n Plan bolivia	-	-	-	x
186	Potential for expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	-
187	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
188	Expansion to Italy	WS	-	-	-
189	Expansion to China and Norway	-	x	-	x

190	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
191	Expansion to Germany	CO, WS	-	-	x
192	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
193	Expansion to Mexico	CO, WS	-	-	-
194	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	x
195	Expansion to Scandinavia & Germany	WS	-	-	-
196	Expansion to Spain	-	-	-	-
197	Expansion to Belgium	CC	-	-	x
198	Expansion to Latvia or Ecuador	-	-	-	-
199	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
200	Expansion to France	-	-	-	-
201	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
202	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
203	Expansion to Germany, France, Sweden, UK, Spain	-	-	-	-
204	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
205	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	x
206	Expansion to Germany or Belgium	-	-	-	x

207	Cooperation with Amazon	-	-	-	-
208	Expansion to Germany	CO	-	-	-
209	Expansion to Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania	-	-	-	x
210	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
211	Expansion to Belgium	CC, WS	-	-	-
212	Expansion to Denmark	WS	-	-	-
213	Expansion to Denmark	-	-	-	x
214	Expansion to US	-	-	-	x
215	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	x
216	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
217	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	x
218	Expansion to India	-	-	-	x
219	Expansion to Poland	-	-	-	x
220	Expansion to Belgium	-	-	-	x
221	Expansion to Thailand	WS	-	-	-
222	Expansion to SE Asia	WS	-	-	x
223	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	x
224	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
225	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-

226	Expansion to Germany	WS	-	-	-
227	Expansion to Aruba	WS	-	x	-
228	Expansion to United Arab Emirates	WS	-	-	-
229	Expansion to USA, Japan, Taiwan	-	-	-	x
230	Expansion to Brazil	WS, CC	-	-	-
231	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	-
232	Expansion to Japan or Chili	WS	-	-	x
233	Expansion to Egypt	-	-	-	x
234	Expansion to Belgium	WS	-	-	x
235	Expansion to Belgium and Germany	WS	-	-	-
2017-2018					
236	Expansion to UK	CC	-	-	-
237	Expansion to Germany	-	-	-	x
238	Expansion to Sweden	-	-	-	x
239	International branding	-	-	-	x
240	Expansion to Japan	WS	-	-	-
241	Expansion to Brazil	CO, WS	x	x	x
242	Expansion to UK	-	-	-	x



243	Export to Scandinavia	-	-	-	x
244	Export to France	-	-	-	x
245	Branding	-	-	-	x

Table 2: theses that tackled culture: indication of topic and references used to discuss culture

## Appendix 2

Adequate Explanation	Inadequate Explanation - Quotes
0	18
	The five cultural dimensions bridge cultural aspects between different countries.
	According to Hofstede (Itim International, 2010) is the long term orientation about how every society maintains some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future. Here the societal goals differently.
	Context is defined by Hall as the information that surrounds an event; it is completely bound up with the meaning of that event
	cultures differ from each other in how much they value or think in the future, present and past and the number of things they do at a time. In monochronic cultures attention

	is being paid to one thing at a time, where people from a polychronic culture do many things at the same time
	for effective communication between Belgium and the Netherlands, the differences between the two countries should be identified and in as much as possible translated to how text are constructed
	Hofstede, who states that intercultural misinterpretations and conflicting interpretations are mostly caused by the differences in collectivistic and individualistic cultures
	Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, preserve their space by creating physical space. They are most likely to work behind thick and soundproof walls, with their doors closed, and preferably in their own office, where people from collectivistic cultures are preserving their personal space by staying either physically or emotionally distant
	respecting the other person's personal space, can significantly increase your chances to unlock the other person's mentality and avoid unfavorable and conflicting situations when communicating
	When communicating in high context cultures most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. The opposite is low context communication. Herein most of the information is located in the explicit code
	compared to high context cultures, low context cultures show low commitment to building relationships and prior tasks over relationships
	monochronic cultures are much faster than polychronic cultures when it comes to a simple thing like buying stamps. Hence, punctuality and accuracy is higher in monochronic cultures than in polychronic cultures

	<i>HALL explained in a paper that compares NL to B along the monochronic/polychronic level: the strong focus on the job or task at hand vs being easily distracted; think in terms of when jobs or task are to be achieved vs think in terms of what will be achieved; their job has priority vs relationships have priority over the job or task; do not often borrow, lend things and property vs Are very easy in lending and borrowing things from others (2015)</i>
	Another essential problem in cultures around the world is 'what drives human encroachment ? The answer to this phenomena lies according to cultural specialists in two questions: 1.What motivates us humans? 2.How do we humans deal with unknown and uncertain situations? The first question looks at the masculinity and femininity of cultures by Hofstede (Claes & Gerritsen, 2007). For the second question, Hofstede has categorized cultures to their degree of uncertainty avoidance
	The Power Distance dimension shows whether the population accepts individuals in their society
	When different cultures meet in person, high context persons speak more, but they say less. In other words, they need more words to deliver a message. On the other hand, low context cultures need fewer words to deliver a message. Confusion could arise when these different cultures communicate within a virtual team, because body language, tone of voice, and subtle timing cannot be taken into account when it comes to online communicating. According to Lewis, these communication confusions lead to a loss of trust. Low context-persons within a virtual team will assume that high-context persons will hide information from them, and that high-context persons are intentional being vague. The other way around, low-context individuals will pragmatically emphasize instructions, explanations and clarifications, which lead to an embitterment of the high-context individuals

Table 4: quotes inadequate explanations of theory

### Appendix 3

	<b>STEREOTYPES</b>	
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Type	Stereotypes about the Dutch	Stereotypes about other Nations	Meta-Stereotype
Type 1 BOLIVIA		<p>... it a fact that Bolivia knows a very hierarchical culture</p> <p>... people need to get told exactly what to do because if not they are not able to perform a task</p> <p>... in Evangelical sub culture in Bolivia it is considered normal to donate 10% of your income to the church</p> <p>... Bolivia really has a relation-based culture meaning that having the right relations can make a world of difference even if the law says different</p>	

		<p>... the culture is not very straight: rules can be bended and exceptions can be made when necessary</p> <p>...information is very findable and organized, something quite rare in Latin culture</p> <p>...conclusion (!): Bolivia knows many subcultures and those have sometimes problems adapting to the dominant culture which itself is also subject to change as cultures and people get more and more mixed up with each other</p>	
Type 1 BRAZIL	<p>...a more masculine society focusses on competition and success and a more feminine society people need to like what they do – the Dutch society is more feminine than the Brazilian</p> <p>...Dutch are more oriented towards the long term than Brazilians</p>	<p>...power distance is high, society believes that hierarchy needs to be respected and inequality is acceptable – status symbols are an important way to claim respect</p> <p>...Brazilian society is collectivistic and thinks in terms of 'we' – people belong to a group by birth and are loyal to that group – therefore it is necessary to build long term relations and therefore people in Brazil use a lot of words to express what they want to say (!)</p> <p>... Brazilians score high on uncertainty avoidance – they need rules and systems and exchange with colleagues – they are passionate and show their emotions</p>	

		... Brazilians will tell you yes when they actually mean no, specifically if you ask them for a straight answer.	
Type 1 CHILE		<p>...have a collectivism mentality</p> <p>...have a 'we' culture</p> <p>...find relations very important</p> <p>...high uncertainty avoidance</p> <p>...appreciate quality in life and quality in</p> <p>...living together</p> <p>...have the mentality live by the day</p>	
Type 1 MEXICO			
Type 1 SURINAME		<p>...Suriname culture is very unique with its multicultural population. The original inhabitants of Suriname are the Amerindians (In Dutch we call them Indianen). They were brought from Africa to work as slaves. (!!!) Apart from the Amerindians, Suriname has also the following ethnicities; Creoles, East Indians, Javanese, Chinese, Dutch people and some small groups from the rest of the world. One of the eldest Jewish communities of America can also be found in Suriname.</p> <p>The mixture of the cultures is clearly expressed in different ways. The Suriname cuisine for example is a combination of all the above cultures. There are churches,</p>	

		temples and mosques in Suriname and there is no disagreement between the cultures.	
Type 1 USA		<p>...are addicted to planning</p> <p>...love competition</p> <p>...primary focus in business is making money</p> <p>...have an 'anything is possible' attitude</p> <p>...are right to the point and mean what they say ...are very direct</p> <p>...have a cut-to-the-chase business approach</p> <p>.... the American culture can be compared with that of Western-Europe yet not always, because Americans all have a different lifestyle. All of them believe in 'the American Dream' which is why they are seen as a dominant culture because they do everything to achieve the American Dream</p> <p>... The Protestant background of the US may explain the US score on universalism: the culture is characterized by obeying God's rules and laws, without any room for exception</p> <p>... look forward, with future being the most important in the trio of past, present and future.</p> <p>...generally do not believe in coincidence</p>	
Type 4 USA	Europeans: ...[in contrast to US Americans] primary		

	<p>focus in business is “social rewards the value of the business relationship, information gained from the collaboration</p> <p>...the Dutch are far more concerned about the long-term and they will not consider lots of investments for a short-term contract</p> <p>...a regular employee communicates quite informal with his superior and he will give his opinion and share his thoughts if he does not agree on the way things go in the company. This is a huge difference because the Americans will obey what their superiors ask</p>		
Type 1 MUSLIMS		<p>...each Muslim follows a Muslim law school</p> <p>...Muslims do not disagree about the main features of the religion</p> <p>... Muslims spend more money on charities than usual during Ramadan</p>	
Type 1 EGYPT		<p>...Egypt is a high-context, polychronic culture. In other words,</p>	



		<p>the spoken message itself does not contain all the information, but instead facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures support the meaning of the message. Communication is rather implicit than explicit. The most common ground for this behaviour implies saving face and guaranteeing harmony.</p> <p>...Regarding time, Egyptians, as mentioned above, are rather flexible and are likely to do several things at once.</p> <p>...the Egyptian culture is very collectivistic and besides</p> <p>...Egypt is a fatalistic culture which believes that the hands of God will define their destiny</p> <p>...the individual is always subordinate to the family, the tribe, or the collective. It is a male dominated society</p>	
Type 1 IRAN		<p>... high power distance. This means that they follow a hierarchical society where centralization is popular</p> <p>... collectivistic country which means that they focus on their society as a group. Family and loyalty are important aspects in a collectivistic culture and the main focus in the Iranian culture</p>	

		<p>... is a relatively feminine society . The focus is on working in order to live. People value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. The core business is on well-being not status</p> <p>... high uncertainty avoidance which means they value and follow strict rules and do not approve of unorthodox behaviour and ideas</p> <p>... low long term orientation. It is a tradition oriented country which focuses on achieving quick results in the present</p> <p>... country does not focus on the future but they live in the present</p> <p>...Iranians are short term oriented and stick to traditions and habits</p>	
Type 1 TURKEY		<p>...find performance, achievement, success important</p> <p>... Turkije loopt het regeeringsstelsel nog steeds niet helemaal goed, maar het is beter dan een aantal jaren eerder. Een artikel (De Verdieping Trouw, 2013) meldde dat er laatst 52 mensen gearresteerd zijn nadat er een onderzoek naar corruptie is geweest. Dit onderzoek is gedaan naar zakenlieden, regionale bestuurders, maar ook naar politiechefs</p>	
Type 4 TURKEY		<p>...Turkey scores much higher on the</p>	

		uncertainty avoidance than Germany. That is because the society is more reliant on laws and rules. People want to be sure about what might happen and try to control the future. People refer to 'Allah' on a daily basis that is mostly because of ritual matters to ease tension	
Type 4 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	...comparative discussion of all the dimensions with no added information: the UAE score lower/higher on x than the NL	... cultuur. De groep gaat boven het individu en dus zal de distributeur erg loyaal zijn tegenover Pelican. Die loyaliteit wordt ook van Pelican verwacht. Doordat de Nederlandse cultuur individualistisch ingesteld is, zal Pelican dit moeilijk kunnen beantwoorden. Hierdoor kan een contract, wat voor Nederlanders erg normaal is, bij de Emirati overkomen als een vorm van wantrouwen. Hier moet van te voren goed over worden gesproken zodat er misstanden uit de weggegaan worden. Discussies worden door de Emirati op een andere manier gevoerd dan door de Nederlanders. Nederlanders willen graag een consensus bereiken daar waar de Emirati graag hun gelijk willen behalen. Dit kan nare gevolgen hebben voor de relatie tussen de distributeur en Pelican.	
Type 1 CHINA		... Chinese population accepts that fact that there are inequalities in the Chinese population	

		<p>... that the society performs with their group in mind rather than their own interests</p> <p>.... Chinese live to work</p> <p>... a lot of Chinese are very business driven</p> <p>... Chinese culture traditions can be changed without a lot of difficulties</p>	
Type 1 INDIA		<p>...het systeem in India verwacht dat de individuen het belang van gemeenschap boven dat van het individu zetten</p> <p>... Traditioneel gezien heeft India een geduldige bevolking waarin tolerantie voor het onverwachte hoog is</p>	
Type 1 JAPAN		<p>...a long process of trust building is common before doing business and patience is key for long-term benefit</p> <p>... relationship building by visiting clients regularly is highly important. As a result, oral communication between Dutch and Japanese employees can lead to</p>	

		<p>misconceptions and obstructed workflows</p> <p>... The high number of uncertainty avoidance makes it difficult to realize differences in Japan. An example of that are unnecessary meetings to get to know people first instead of talking business right away and mandatory drinking sessions with all your coworkers</p> <p>... Japan a restraint society. These societies are not open to leisure time and control their desires. According to Hofstede these countries have the feeling that they are restrained by social norms. Restraint societies feel uncomfortable with indulging themselves and are trying to avoid this situation</p> <p>... With the high number of masculinity it is hard for women to climb in the carrier ladders</p> <p>...“Losing face” is one of the strongest senses of shame in the country. Not showing respect to older people can have large impact on “the face”. Japanese are indirect and conservative, decisions will be made by several people and it is all about building relationships. Relationships come in the first place before doing business</p>	
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Type 1 SINGAPORE		...If the Singaporeans say yes it do not necessary means yes. The yes of the Singaporeans can mean maybe and sometimes it means no. You do not make eye contact with a senior person; the Singaporeans can consider this as a sign of disrespect	
Type 1 THAILAND		...Thailand, the business and culture are really driven by being successful and all about being the best. The Thai business people really focus on competing the competitors and become the best in the field.	
Type 1 TAIWAN		...Taiwan has a long-term orientation culture meaning it shows an ability to adapt traditions to a modern context  ...Taiwanese culture values respect, hard work, friendliness and patience. They dislike loud and showy behaviour and family is their most important economic resource	
Type 4 West-Africa	...De machtsafstand is in West-Afrikaanse landen veel groter als in de Nederlandse cultuur men hecht veel waarde aan het hiërarchische systeem in bedrijven en superieuren zijn vaak minder makkelijk toegankelijk. Individualisme scoort laag omdat men meer	... Door de historie (kolonisatie) kent West-Afrika Europese religies. De meeste landen bestaan uit het christendom, Islam en traditionele Afrikaanse godsdiensten. De normen en waarden verschillen heel erg van onze westerse normen en waarden, bijvoorbeeld afspraak maken. In Nederland kan men de telefoon pakken of een e-mail sturen om een afspraak te maken al kent men elkaar niet. In West-	

	<p>gericht is op collectivisme de gezamenlijke belangen wegen zwaarder dan die van het individu. De West-Afrikaanse cultuur neigt meer naar een Feminine cultuur waarbij de kwaliteit van het leven en elkaar helpen belangrijker worden gevonden dan de ambitie hebben op hard te werken en geld te verdienen. Op de dimensie onzekerheidsvermijding scoren Nederland en West-Afrika ongeveer gelijk, men is bereid risico's te nemen maar niet overdreven. In beide culturen kent men regels en protocollen om risico's te vermijden, maar er is wel ruimte voor afwijkende ideeën. Nederlanders staan bekend om hun spaarzaamheid en zuinigheid dit is omdat zij toekomstgeoriënteerd zijn men maakt zich zorgen over hoe men over een paar jaar erbij zit. In West-Afrikaanse cultuur leeft men meer met de dag en wordt er meer waarde gehecht aan (culturele) tradities</p>	<p>Afrika is dat niet mogelijk omdat men pas een afspraak maakt wanneer er een vertrouwelijke relatie is. [THIS IS THE ENTIRE CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THIS SPECIFIC THESIS]</p>	
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	men is ook gevoeliger voor gezichtsverlies		
Type 1 KENYA		...Do not try to plan the end of a meeting. Don't be too emotional, this is perceived as weakness.	
Type 1 BELGIUM	<p><b>auto- &amp; hetero:</b> student explains that Belgium and NL are low context cultures – therefore Dutch and Belgians are/prefer ...</p> <p>...simple and clear messages</p> <p>...are inclined to blame others for failure</p> <p>...communicate more verbally than with body language</p> <p>...reactions are visible and have an external and outward character</p> <p>...are flexible and open to changes if needed</p> <p>...mix up easily with other groups</p> <p>...relationships with the family and community and/or people that show little loyalty are relatively weak</p>	<p>...it is very important to have a relationship with the business contact before talking about actual business</p> <p>... Within Belgium, the upper part, Flanders, is more monochronic than the lower part, Wallonia</p> <p>...have a more formal business cultural (!) and value the differences between employer and employee.</p> <p>...One can say that there is more inequality in the Belgium society [higher power distance than NL]</p> <p>... are competition driven in their culture.</p> <p>Performances and showing your strengths are cultural values in Belgium. [higher masculinity than NL]</p> <p>... Belgians are very keen on avoiding uncertainty and have a very bureaucratic culture with rules and regulations on many levels.</p>	



	<p>...are less flexible in time, because their time is well-organized</p> <p>...the end product counts more than the process towards the final product</p>	<p>This means that doing business in Belgium is sometimes a difficult and bureaucratic activity with a lot of obstacles.</p> <p>... inequality within the society is accepted ... there is a hierarchical relationship between employees and employers.</p> <p>... Belgium has a masculine culture. This means that Belgians like to be judged by their performances, assertiveness and success. This also means that the female gender are often not accepted while conducting male professions.</p> <p>... Belgium scores very high on uncertainty avoidance, which means that uncertainty is avoided. This means that the Belgian business culture is not risk taking and not very innovative. Belgians like to have certainty in their private life and their work.</p> <p>...regarding business it is very important for Belgians to look at a problem from all aspects</p> <p>...it is very important for Belgians to come to clear agreements and to maintain structure</p> <p>...it is very important for Belgians to plan and to be prepared</p>	
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		<p>...Belgians are factual, cool and detailed planners</p> <p>...Belgians score high on power distance, Belgians are formal and everything is communicated along hierarchical structures</p> <p>...Belgians score high on individualism, they cherish their privacy, they focus on direct family - their individualism contradicts their hierarchical orientation in professional settings</p> <p>...Belgians score relatively high on masculinity they can be feminine as well as masculine – they negotiate to achieve compromise</p> <p>...Belgians do not take decisions immediately, because they need to have time to think about it</p> <p>...Belgians score high on uncertainty avoidance, they need rules and planning and refuse change because it causes stress and discussions</p> <p>...Belgians adjust easily to traditions and are keen to save money and to invest</p> <p>...there are cultural differences within Belgium between Walloons and Flanders – Walloons have a more French mentality and are less direct than Flemish, and they take</p>	
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		<p>decisions faster, whereas Flemish are more open-minded and flexible</p> <p>... Belgium scored 94 points for uncertainty avoidance. This dimension shows to which degree members of a certain culture feel threatened by unknown or ambiguous situations. Furthermore, to which extend the members of that particular culture have created institutions and believes to avoid the previously mentioned situations.</p> <p>... With a score of 75, Belgium is scoring high regarding Individualism. This means that Belgians appreciate individual opinions and take care of themselves and their close family rather than wanting to belong to a larger group.</p> <p>...Belgium scores relatively high, 65 points, regarding PowerDistance. This indicates that inequalities are accepted within the societies and that hierarchy is essential. Power centralized and superiors are often privileged and inaccessible.</p> <p>...masculinity, the country scores 54 points on average. The fundamental difference between a Masculine and Feminine culture is what motivate s the people within a culture. A Masculine society has the want to be the best and a Feminine society has the want to like what</p>	
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		<p>they do. There is also a separation between the north and south part of Belgium.</p> <p>Indulgence. This shows to which extent the people within the culture try to control their desires and impulses. Belgium got a score of 57, an intermediate score</p> <p>... Gastronomy, building trust and relationships are important for Belgians</p> <p>... Uit de analyse van Hofstede is naar voren gekomen dat België een mensgerichte cultuur is waarbij vertrouwen een belangrijke rol speelt. Belgen zijn rationeel ingesteld en hechten daarom veel waarde aan een goede klantendienst, een vast contactpersoon en een professionele helpdesk</p>	
Type 3 BELGIUM	<p>... The Dutch culture is a lot more feminine because of the way Dutch people think and deal with absence through illness, homosexuality and drugs.</p> <p>‘Moet kunnen’ (it should be allowed, it’s alright) is what they often tend to say</p>		

<p>Type 4 BELGIUM</p>	<p>...the NL is more monochronic (!) than Belgium =&gt; <i>people from monochronic cultures do one thing at a time: Belgians are more inclined than Dutch to do more things at a time</i> (throughout this paper the student uses chronic instead of chronic)</p> <p>... the NL are average, Belgium is high uncertainty avoidance – therefore:</p> <p>...no more rules than necessary (NL) vs Rules are very valued emotional (B)</p> <p>...time is an orientation frame (NL) vs time is money (B)</p> <p>....work hard only when you need to (NL) vs working hard is their mentality, emotional cravings for an activity (B)</p> <p>...precision and punctuality should be learned (NL) vs precision and punctuality are always present (B)</p>	<p>...Belgians are more formal than Dutch</p> <p>..... Belgians being more warm, impulsive and emotional than the Dutch</p> <p>... The Netherlands is a talk culture, Belgium is a listen culture</p> <p>...Belgians are more sensitive to grammatical mistakes-</p> <p>...Dressing less 'outgoing' compared to the Netherlands</p>	
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	<p>...innovative and deviate ideas are tolerated and the same goes for the attitude (NL) vs innovative and deviate ideas, attitude are not naturally tolerated, but suppressed (B)</p> <p>...the <i>NL</i> and <i>Germany</i> have lower power distance than <i>Poland</i> and <i>Belgium</i> therefore it is likely that in Poland and Belgium management decides****</p> <p>...<i>Belgium</i> and <i>Poland</i> score much higher on uncertainty avoidance than the <i>NL</i>, therefore they are likely to prefer a safe choice if available</p> <p>.... like the Dutch ... Belgians do not want to belong to a group but are rather be seen as individuals</p> <p>NL, B, DK =&gt; ...though the three countries are always seen as same sort of countries there are definitely international differences. These differences cannot be ignored. The Netherlands</p>		
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	<p>do better business with Germany than with France and Belgium does more business with France than with Germany. It is not strange that Denmark first wants to implement a new service in these two countries. It would be a lot harder if they would start with the service in Spain and Turkey. But it has to be said that Denmark, The Netherlands and Belgium are not the same and have to be treated in different ways.</p>		
Type 1 Bulgaria		...family is very important for Bulgarians	
Type 1 Denmark		<p>...Danes are brought up to only take care of themselves, which makes Danes very individualism.</p> <p>...Denmark is considered a feminine country because Danes prefer having someone in their circle who feels involved or is modest over someone with achievements or heroism</p>	

		<p>...the uncertainty avoidance is quite low in Denmark because of the fact that the Danes are all right with unexpected changes.</p> <p>....Danes find unexpected changes very attractive</p> <p>...Danes are quite short-term orientated. Danes make a decision based on the moment.</p> <p>...Past and present are far more important for Danes than the future</p> <p>... Denmark is an individualistic society, which says that people in this country are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only</p>	
Type 1 FRANCE		<p>... is individualistic</p> <p>... is feminine</p> <p>...has a high uncertainty avoidance</p> <p>... scores higher than average on long term orientation</p> <p>...the country is known for being chauvinistic</p> <p>...French value highly if there language is spoken or this is attempted at least</p> <p>...France scores high on power distance meaning that there are indeed different levels to which people and companies are subjected to. The overall attitude towards power distance is socially</p>	<p>...in the eyes of the French, Dutch are reliable, punctual, expert and straight and targeted.</p>



		<p>accepted. In companies, there is a hierarchy of mostly one or two more levels than companies in other countries resulting in a centralized power. For example CEO's of large companies are very prestigious and have other, less accessible privileges</p> <p>...France scores high on individualism. This means that peoples' self-image is related to the "I" rather than the "We". Kids grow up with the knowledge to be independent in order to take care of oneself and one's family.</p> <p>...France is mostly driven by the thought of being the winner or the best in field. On the other hand, with a score of 43, France is rather feminine because of the quality of life standing for success. The government takes care of its citizens for example by the welfare system that seems to work pretty well.</p> <p>...high score uncertainty avoidance: the French do not like surprises. Before meetings they like to receive all information that will be discussed. They have a strong desire for laws and regulations so they can have structure in life.</p> <p>...longterm orientation: dimension describes how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the</p>	
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		<p>challenges of the present and future, and societies prioritise these two existential goals differently. The French culture is more pragmatic. People believe that the truth depends on situation, context and time. The French have the ability to adapt traditions easily.</p> <p>... Indulgence - This is the degree to which small children are socialised. Without socialisation we do not become "human". Scoring 48 points, it means that the French are not as relaxed as they appear to be. Their desire to control urges and desires are average but still France scores relatively low on the happiness indices.</p> <p>...France scores very high on uncertainty avoidance. When something changes, it will cause stress.</p>	
Type 4 FRANCE		<p>...power distance is higher in France than in the rest of western Europe (2)</p> <p>...the Netherlands and France are both individualistic and feminine societies (<b>auto &amp; hetero</b>)</p> <p>...more bureaucracy</p>	<p>...in the eyes of the French, Dutch are reliable, punctual, expert and straight and targeted</p>

Type 3 FRANCE	<p>...NL is een calvinistisch land. Soberheid is een van de grootste peilers van het Calvinisme; pronken met rijkdom is uit den boze</p> <p>=&gt; France is Catholic, likes pomp, French are less sober/rational than Dutch</p>		
Type 1 GERMANY		<p>... are formal</p> <p>... is hierarchical</p> <p>... are punctual</p> <p>... oriented towards expertise</p> <p>... keep work and private life strictly separated</p> <p>... are robust (?!)</p> <p>... seek (!) reliability, politeness</p> <p>... are very perfectionist</p> <p>... oriented towards results, products, status</p> <p>... low power distance but strongly hierarchical, focused on punctuality and good (!) working ethos</p> <p>... not very individualistic</p> <p>... average masculinity</p> <p>... average uncertainty avoidance</p> <p>... Germans have a better (! - relational object is not specified)</p> <p>long term vision (= orientation)</p> <p>...are difficult to approach</p> <p>...do not trust foreign businesses</p> <p>...Germans long for security – this is symbolized by the legal system and there is an intensive procedure for governmental projects (!)</p>	

		<p>...Germans are renown for the lack of human touch in business</p> <p>...in Germany defaulters are requested to pay immediately, a reminder Dutch style would not be taken seriously by Germans (!)</p> <p>...German employees are not inclined to take decisions which the manager is supposed to take</p> <p>...Germans are very professional and talk only about business</p> <p>... make a clear division between work and leisure time, and also highly values this leisure time.</p> <p>... Germans are very long term oriented which makes decision---making processes more complicated</p> <p>...Germans like it if you speak their language</p> <p>...Germans are strict and formal</p> <p>...Germans like to be well-prepared</p> <p>...Germans do not speak about their private life during business negotiations</p> <p>...Germans are punctual, polite and hierarchical</p> <p>...Germans score low on power-distance, they don't like if</p>	
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		<p>somebody feels better than another person</p> <p>...Germans are very individualistic; they are focused on themselves and therefore they prefer persons to whom they are loyal</p> <p>... Germans score high on uncertainty avoidance, they like to control what happens in the future</p> <p>...Germans score high on long term orientation, that means they are pragmatic and adjust to situation, context and time</p> <p>...Germans are hardworking, prudent and punctual. They are very much focussed on their tasks and communication is often very formal and direct.</p> <p>...in Germany, everything is planned on longterm with the future in mind. This is why Germans prefer biological, green products and high quality products which are sustainable. The products of bobble perfectly fit into this lifestyle</p> <p>... Germany scores quite low when it comes to power distance. This means that the German culture is highly decentralized. A direct and participative communication approach/ meeting style is common. Control is disliked and the leader is seen as an equal.</p>	
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		<p>...German families are very individualistic. They tend to have small families, and the focus lies more on themselves or immediate family. When a country scores low on individualism, that means that those people tend to live in groups and look after each other, but in Germany's case the opposite applies. People from collectivistic countries may find this behavior very cold and distanced.</p> <p>...Germany scores high on masculinity, which means that the society is driven by competition, achievement and success. You can really see the masculine behavior from early on. The school systems separates children into different types of school. The better your performance in school, the better the school level is that you get into. Other characteristics of a masculine society is showing off, especially by cars, houses, watches etc.</p> <p>...Furthermore, Germany also scores high on uncertainty avoidance, which means that they do not like to take risks. Germans like to plan every step they take and make sure that they have a plan B in case something goes wrong.</p> <p>...are also very long term oriented and have a pragmatic approach. Every society has to maintain a link with their past while also adjusting</p>	
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		<p>to the present and future. Since Germany scores high, they do not really mind modernization of their tradition if it contributes to a better future.</p> <p>...Germany scores low on indulgence, which means that they are a restrained group of people. This means that they not put much emphasis on leisure time and they tend to control their desires. Restrained cultures tend to be very pessimistic too</p> <p>...Germany has a strong culture (!)</p> <p>...competitiveness is in the German nature - that is because they score high on masculinity and they avoid uncertainty</p> <p>...the nature of a relation depends on the status of the other person</p> <p>...Germans are reserved by nature</p> <p>... culture is a vital part of societal life and therefore the impact of the government can be great</p>	
Type 4 GERMANY	<p>... Dutch are easier and more nonchalant than Germans</p> <p>.... Dutch are more optimistic than Germans and believe that everything will work out fine</p>	<p>... cherish privacy more than Dutch</p> <p>... are more conservative than Dutch</p> <p>... read more than inhabitants of Benelux</p> <p>... are generally more critical than inhabitants of Benelux</p>	

	<p>...whilst in Germany, managers are expected to lead, Dutch managers expect expertise from their employees and there is informal contact between managers and team members =&gt; <i>the Dutch are more egalitarian than the more hierarchical Germans</i></p> <p>... Dutch score higher on individualism than Germans, Dutch think in I-form (=1<sup>st</sup> person singular) – it is expected that you take care only of yourself and your nearest kin, – in Germany, by contrast, individualism is emphasized by a strong feeling of responsibility as well as self-deployment (<b>auto- &amp; hetero</b>)</p> <p><i>...same author half a page below:</i> Dutch focus on self-deployment whilst Germans have a strong sense of responsibility</p> <p>...Germans are self-confident because of what career they</p>	<p>... in contrast to NL variety of mentalities/norms/values – due to past: Cold War partition</p> <p>... Germany has a lower power distance than Malta. This means that Germans are less likely to accept a hierarchical order in society</p> <p>... Malta and Germany are both individualistic countries so there is no big difference here.</p> <p>...“Masculinity” in Germany is higher than in Malta, this means that achievements and success are important in the society.</p> <p>... Malta has a very high uncertainty avoidance index, Germany is also on the higher side. This means that (potential) German customers should always be provided with all information they need about the school and its products</p> <p>...Germans are much more long term orientated than the Maltese. This means that they like to plan ahead for a long time and are very aware of their future.</p> <p>... Indulgence is much lower in Germany than it is in Malta. This means that Germans do not put much emphasis on leisure time and indulging themselves. Instead Germany has a restrained society where people control their desires and impulses</p>	
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	<p>achieve – status and performance are proved and shown by cars, watches and tech devices – this creates strong competition – the NL are a feminine society with a clear balance between career and private life – equality and solidarity are appreciated – the Dutch are more oriented towards negotiation (<b>auto- &amp; hetero</b>)</p> <p>...whilst Germans and Dutch score average on uncertainty avoidance, Dutch seek uncertainty while Germans try to avoid it (<b>auto- &amp; hetero</b>) – this implies that Dutch can use effectively the knowledge about wants of Germans and influence them to reach their goals (!)</p> <p>...Germans and Dutch easily accept new components in traditions, and both are inclined to save and invest with an eye on long-term developments (<b>auto- &amp; hetero</b>) (!)</p>	<p>...Germans score high on individuality which means that expressing one's opinion is appreciated even if it leads to conflicts</p> <p>... Germans like to have certainty when it comes to work and their social life. There are strict rules, which is also shown by the government.</p> <p>...Germans are very individualistic therefore they take care of themselves</p> <p>... Germany makes a clear division between work and leisure time, and also highly values this leisure time.</p> <p>...whereas <i>Iranians</i> are emotional and express feelings easily, are oriented towards the individual, want to do a lot of things simultaneously, emotions are more important than facts – <i>Germans</i> do everything one-by-one, are polite but direct, can suppress emotions and are oriented towards work and control facts first before they let emotions play</p> <p>...in <i>Germany</i>, long term orientation, masculinity and individualism are much higher than in <i>Iran</i></p>	
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	<p>...Germans and Dutch score high on individualism, which means they are expected to be able to take care of themselves (<b>auto- &amp; hetero</b>)</p> <p>...Germans score much higher on masculinity than the Netherlands, thus status and performance are more important in Germany than in the NL</p> <p>...Germans and Dutch are very individualistic and therefore direct in communication in order to avoid misunderstandings</p> <p>...Germany is very masculine and very competitive, this is completely different in the NL which is very feminine – this needs to be taken into account when doing business</p>	<p>...the communication style in Germany is direct and participative.</p> <p>...German people dislike control, and the leadership of managers is challenged.</p> <p>...individualists are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. Collectivists belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty. There is strong image among Germans that self-actualization is key.</p> <p>...Germany has a masculine culture which means that performance for example is extremely important</p> <p>...German managers are expected to be decisive and assertive. In Germany, it is common to show your status and money.</p>	
Type 1 HUNGARY		<p>...Hungarians are warm and emotional</p> <p>.... emotional chattering and impulsive people who attach great importance to family, feelings, relationships and people in general. They like to do many things at the</p>	

		same time and are poor followers of agendas.	
Type 1 ITALY	...in the NL, the quality of life is seen as being successful and that the communities in the country care for each other	<p>... power distance is average</p> <p>... the country is somewhat individualistic</p> <p>...it is rather masculine</p> <p>... it scores high on uncertainty avoidance</p> <p>... the score on long term orientation is ...</p> <p>...Italians are warm and emotional</p> <p>... emotional chattering and impulsive people who attach great importance to family, feelings, relationships and people in general. They like to do many things at the same time and are poor followers of agendas.</p> <p>... Italy has a culture where being the best, winning and being successful are very important</p> <p>...Italy is a chauvinistic country</p>	
Type 1 Lithuania		<p>...Lithuanians are always strictly punctual</p> <p>...Lithuanians speak very softly when they say something important</p>	
Type 1 LUXEMBOURG		... In Luxemburg is de mate van individualisatie hoger dan het collectivisme. Binnen het land leven verschillende bevolkingsgroepen, alleen betekent dit niet dat de mensen zich binnen deze groepen blijven. Hooguit de taal zal een verschil zijn. Er is daarom ruimte	

		<p>voor personele ontwikkeling. Mensen leven op zichzelf en laten zich niet meeslepen door een bepaalde groep. Dit kenmerk is goed terug te zien in het bedrijfsleven.</p>	
<p>TYPE 4 NORWAY</p>	<p>...in contrast to the egalitarian <i>NL</i> and <i>Norway</i> where everybody is treated in the same way, in hierarchic <i>China</i> not everybody is the same (<b>auto- &amp; hetero-</b>stereotype)</p> <p>...the <i>NL</i> and <i>Norway</i> have an individualistic culture. Children learn that they need to identify as an individual. Decisions are made if a majority agrees. The only group that is important is the immediate core family – in contrast to collectivistic <i>China</i> where the wider family is the focal point of identification and where it takes much longer to make decisions (<b>auto- &amp; hetero-</b>stereotype)</p> <p>...in contrast to Norway and the <i>NL</i> relations are very important in China</p>		

	<p>(<b>auto- &amp; hetero-</b>stereotype)</p> <p>...<i>Norwegians</i> and <i>Dutch</i> are direct, <i>Chinese</i> not, they do not say what they think in order to not lose face – it is therefore important to ask what was meant after the meeting (!)</p> <p>(<b>auto- &amp; hetero-</b>stereotype)</p> <p>...in contrast to <i>Chinese</i>, <i>Dutch</i> and <i>Norwegians</i> are very focussed on time</p> <p>(<b>auto- &amp; hetero-</b>stereotype)</p> <p>...in contrast to the <i>Norwegians</i> and the <i>Dutch</i> who are very tolerant for change, <i>Chinese</i> think traditions are very important and cannot be changed, – but <i>Chinese</i> are very open for innovation</p> <p>(<b>auto- &amp; hetero-</b>stereotype)</p> <p>...<i>Norwegians</i> work to live, <i>Chinese</i> live to work, in the <i>NL</i> work and private life overlap</p>		
TYPE 1 PORTUGAL		...the Portuguese culture in general is very particularistic: Personal	

		<p>obligations and special circumstances are important. Personal relationships (obligation) play a bigger role with moral choices than abstract norms.</p> <p>...Portuguese do not like verbal directness and confrontations</p> <p>...Portuguese are not that good when it comes to teamwork (in general), because they do not like challenging authority</p>	
Type 4 PORTUGAL		<p>...Portugal scores 'higher' on Power Distance', than the Netherlands. This means that hierarchy is accepted in this country. Privileges are normal in higher positions</p> <p>...on the scale 'Individualism/Collectivism can be seen that Portugal strongly inclines towards 'Collectivism'. 'Group feeling' is very important. Except for Spain and Portugal, all other European countries are more individualistic. Family, relationships and loyalty are important.</p> <p>...in terms of Masculine/Feminine, Portugal is less feminine than the Netherlands. The key is consensus (agreement). Conflicts are being solved by negotiation and compromises.</p> <p>...in comparison to the Netherlands, Portugal is strongly 'Uncertainty Avoiding'. Lots of rules, certainty and religion is important (although, 'religion' is more important to the elderly than to the youth</p>	

		... is 'Short-term Oriented'. They are focused on quick results.	
Typ1 POLAND		<p>...difference in long-term orientation means that Poland is more normative than pragmatic.</p> <p>... they value traditions and have a clear view of the truth and what is right or wrong</p> <p>... Poland has a low indulgence score. This means that their view to life is more pessimistic.</p> <p>...do not value leisure time and self-indulgence</p> <p>...like to establish a long-term relationship which is based on slowly getting to know each other</p> <p>... high power distance which is normal for eastern European countries</p> <p>... individualism scores lower than western European countries</p> <p>... masculinity is average to low</p> <p>...uncertainty avoidance is high which is also detectable in the long-term orientation</p> <p>... the high amount of paperwork and bureaucracy is annoying =&gt; <i>Poles are bureaucratic</i></p>	

		<p>... higher power distance score indicates that Polish look up to employees with a higher function which will make cooperation with Dutch colleagues difficult initially =&gt; also Type 3: <i>Dutch are egalitarian</i></p> <p>...Polish are warm and emotional</p> <p>... Polen is hiërarchisch opgesteld en is vrij individualistisch. Fouten zullen dus persoonlijk opgevat worden en zorgen voor gezichtsverlies. Waar Nederland vrij feministisch is, is Polen nog klassiek masculien. Dit houdt in dat de cultuur competitief is, en men leeft om te werken. Problemen worden uitgevochten in plaats van verzwegen. Onzekerheidsvermijding is extreem hoog en dus erg belangrijk voor Polen. Regels moeten er zijn, evenals hard werken. Het pragmatische onderdeel vertaalt zich in een korte-termijn blik in Polen. Snelle resultaten en affiniteit met tradities zijn belangrijke factoren in Polen. Overgave is de laatste eigenschap. Polen hebben graag de touwtjes in handen en men heeft dus moeite zichzelf over te geven</p>	
TYPE 3 POLAND	<p>...when a western European company wants to do business in Poland, they have to take into account that they do not come off too</p>		



	direct => <i>western Europeans are more direct than Polish</i>		
Type 4 POLAND	<p>... Poles and Dutch score high on individualism – they think predominantly of themselves and not in terms of ‘we’: self-interest prevails</p> <p>... in contrast to the NL, masculinity is very present in Poland: competition, performance and success are very important for Poles – Poles live to work and Dutch work to live (<b>auto &amp; hetero</b>)</p> <p>... Poles score higher on uncertainty avoidance than Dutch – that means they avoid uncertainty, they like to be busy and work hard and value accuracy and punctuality, – in contrast to the Dutch which also work hard yet value accuracy and punctuality less and have more a 9 to 5 mentality which is unthinkable in Poland (<b>auto &amp; hetero</b>)</p>	<p>... power distance in Poland is higher than in the Netherlands: Polish people are used to and appreciate hierarchy within organizations. The Dutch are less used to that.</p> <p>... Poland is a little less individualistic than the Netherlands, but they are still qualified as individualistic.</p> <p>... Netherlands is a very feminine country, where Poland is more masculine. This means that in Poland it is more likely that people are driven by performance and are more competitive.</p> <p>... Poland is also more drawn to certainty in their lives. This means that they do not like big changes and they are more conservative than the Netherlands.</p>	

	<p>... Poles are oriented towards the long term, they respect and value traditions a lot and do not think much about the future – Dutch in contrast score high on long term orientation so they think a lot about the future which is reflected e.g. in the encouragement of modern education (<b>auto &amp; hetero</b>)</p> <p>...Poles are oriented much more towards the short term than <i>Germans, Belgians, Dutch</i> – therefore Germans and Belgians are more likely to plan in advance [<b>NOTE</b> the contradiction to the previous statement: the other student claims the exact opposite with regard to that dimension]</p>		
Type 1 ROMANIA		<p>...Romanians are warm and emotional</p> <p>... emotional, chattering and impulsive people who attach great importance to family, feelings, relationships and people in general. They like to do many things at the</p>	

		<p>same time and are poor followers of agendas.</p> <p>.....Romanians are always strictly punctual</p>	
Type 1 RUSSIA		<p>...de gemiddelde Rus leest vaak, gaat vaak naar musea en theater. Wereldberoemd zijn het Russische ballet en opera. Sport is heel belangrijk in het leven van de Rus. Vooral nu het Russische voetbal elftal goed presteert is deze sport een rage geworden in Rusland. Rusland kent een sociaal leven. Hoewel de Russen overkomen als een gesloten volk, zijn zij heel openhartig naar de mens toe. Vertrouwen en vriendschap staan hoog in het vaandel. Een manier om vriendschap te sluiten is drinken</p>	
Type 1 SCANDINAVIA		<p>...de gemiddelde Rus leest vaak, gaat vaak naar musea en theater. Wereldberoemd zijn het Russische ballet en opera. Sport is heel belangrijk in het leven van de Rus. Vooral nu het Russische voetbal elftal goed presteert is deze sport een rage geworden in Rusland. Rusland kent een sociaal leven. Hoewel de Russen overkomen als een gesloten volk, zijn zij heel openhartig naar de mens toe. Vertrouwen en vriendschap staan hoog in het vaandel. Een manier om vriendschap te sluiten is drinken</p> <p>..Scandinavians set their importance on equals rights</p>	

		<p>...managers rely on the experience of employees</p> <p>...employees expect to be consulted</p> <p>...communication is direct and involving</p> <p>...flexible working hours and free time is important</p> <p>...Scandinavian people are very social they care for other and believe quality of live is an important indicator of success</p> <p>...SWEDEN SPECIFIC:</p> <p>....People value quality and solidarity. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. The Swedish culture is based around 'lagom' which means everything has to be done in moderation. It is a fictional law which helps people not to lift themselves above others.</p>	
Type 1 SLOVENIA		<p>....high power distance, strong hierarchies</p> <p>...Slovenia is a collectivistic country</p> <p>... The Slovenian culture is influenced by its German and Austrian ancestry, which is understandable due to their long presence in the country. Thanks to its geographical location Slovenia offers a rich culture that mixes</p>	

		Eastern European, Mediterranean and Alpine aspects	
Type 4 SLOVENIA	...onzekerheidsvermijding in Slovenië danig hoger ligt dan in Nederland. Zo worden in Slovenië vaak alleen die beslissingen genomen, waarvan de uitkomst zeker is		
Type 1 SPAIN		<p>...Spanish people do not like to party during the afternoon hours</p> <p>...Spanish people love to party</p> <p>...it is well known that Spanish people like sport games.</p> <p>... average power distance</p> <p>...is rather feminine</p> <p>...scores high on uncertainty avoidance (2)</p> <p>...Spanish prefer face-to-face communication (over email/telephone)</p> <p>...it is necessary to invest a lot of time to build personal relations</p> <p>...Spanish are not punctual themselves but want foreigners to be punctual</p> <p>...it is important to shake hands and make eye-contact</p>	

		<p>...Spaniards do not like to lose face, so they will not necessarily say that they do not understand something, particularly if you are not speaking Spanish. You must be adept at discerning body language.</p> <p>Spaniards are very thorough. They will review every detail to make certain it is understood. First you must reach an oral understanding. A formal contract will be drawn up at a later date. Spaniards expect both sides to strictly adhere to the terms of a contract. Appointments are mandatory and should be made in advance, preferably by telephone or fax.</p> <p>...there is inequality in the Spanish society</p> <p>...Spanish 'live' and appreciate hierarchy</p> <p>...Spanish like centralisation as an organisational principle</p> <p>...Spanish bosses are often benevolent authoritarian</p> <p>...Spaniards are friendly and hospitable but proud. Spaniards often hide their deficiencies behind certain arrogance</p> <p>...Spanish bosses ask their subordinates for their opinions and consider these in their decision making</p>	
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		<p>...Spain can build relations well with especially non-European cultures</p> <p>...Spanish perceive cooperation as natural</p> <p>... Spanish employees do not have to be motivated by managers</p> <p>...Spanish find consensus important</p> <p>...Spanish do not appreciate polarization and competition</p> <p>...children learn to refuse in harmony, choose a side, or to distinguish themselves (!)</p> <p>...Spanish are concerned about the weak (!)</p> <p>...except for one Spain is the most noisy (! = luidruchtig) country in the world</p> <p>...Spanish make rules for everything but they prefer to avoid rules that make life more complex</p> <p>...Spanish are stressed by and want to avoid changes and uncertain situations</p> <p>...Spanish don't want to worry about the future and live for the moment – that's how the term fiesta emerged</p> <p>...Spain is a normative country</p>	
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		<p>...Spanish appreciate fast results and don't like delay [same author as stereotype, Type 4, A1]</p> <p>...Spanish prefer clear structures and clearly defined rules that allow for a peaceful life without being pragmatic (!)</p> <p>... Spain is not an indulgent society which means that Spanish are inclined to be cynical and pessimistic</p> <p>...Spanish are reserved</p> <p>...Spanish do not have strong empathy for leisure time (!) and control of desires (!)</p> <p>...action is controlled by social norms which imply that being indulgent is wrong (!)</p> <p>...Spanish appreciate individuals being well dressed</p> <p>...Spanish businesspeople like expensive brands</p> <p>...Spanish don't like people to behave like a big know-it-all</p> <p>...Spanish speak bad English</p> <p>... neatness, seriosity and formal behaviour are expected</p> <p>...Spanish are warm and emotional</p>	
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Type 4 SPAIN	<p>...Spanish do not appreciate taking decisions immediately - that is seen as an insult (A1) =&gt; <i>Dutch like to take decisions swiftly</i></p> <p>... in comparison to Europe (!) except Portugal, Spain is collectivistic – Dutch are strongly individualistic</p> <p>...in comparison to Spain, the Dutch society is feminine which means that Dutch find it important that people only do what they like</p> <p>...Dutch are more long term oriented and oriented towards the future than Spanish</p> <p>...in contrast to Spanish, Dutch are indulgent</p> <p>... bedrijfsleven in Spanje hiërarchischer is dan in Nederland en communicatie hoofdzakelijk top-down verloopt.</p>	<p>...lower individuality in comparison to western European countries</p> <p>...lower long term orientation than e.g. Germany</p> <p>... in comparison to Europe (!) except Portugal, Spain is collectivistic</p> <p>...in comparison to other continents (!), Spain is perceived as individualistic</p> <p>...Spain is hierarchical, decisions are difficult to make</p> <p>... high uncertainty avoidance, they don't like changes and unplanned events</p> <p>... Spaniaarden houden van snelle resultaten in plaats van toekomstgerichte resultaten. Anders gezegd, ze leven per moment zonder te veel in termen van toekomst te denken</p> <p>..... Compared to the Netherlands, Spain is a more collectivistic country. However, compared with other continents it is seen as individualist due to its score of 51. Despite this it is very easy for</p>	

	<p>...bij vorming team rekening houden met het feit dat zij daar meer leiding verwachten dan in Nederland gewenst is</p> <p>...Nederland is ontzettend individualistisch in tegenstelling tot Spanje</p> <p>...in Spanje lopen prive en zakelijk soms een beetje door elkaar heen</p> <p>.... Power in the Netherlands is decentralized and managers count on their team members for success. Control is very much disliked and attitudes towards managers are informal as well as communication is direct and participative. On the other hand, Spain has a hierarchical society. Here centralization is popular and employees are expected to do what they have been told to do. (<b>auto &amp; hetero</b>)</p>	<p>Spaniards to relate with non-European. Teamwork is considered as something natural and there is no need for strong management motivation.</p> <p>... The Netherlands scored as a feminine society while Spain scores shows that polarization is not well considered or excessive competitiveness appreciated. Managers tend to consult their employees to know their opinions before they make their decisions. To the Spanish community, "The winner takes it all" is not the correct attitude.</p> <p>.... in Spain compared to the Netherlands...the people like to have rules for everything but at the same time are obliged in avoiding rules that will make life in fact more complex. Confrontation is avoided as it causes great stress and Spanish people avoids stress at all costs possible. Changes are also causes of stress seeing that the Spanish community does not like changes. On the other hand, the Netherlands perceives a slight preference for avoiding uncertainty, for example, punctuality is important, urge of always being busy and working hard (auto- &amp; stereotypes)</p>	
Type 1 UK		<p>... there is low power distance which implies that there is no conflict (?) in office =&gt; conflict is what is</p>	

		<p>probably meant – the Dutch sentence makes simply no sense: “in het Verenigd Koninkrijk is er een lage machtsafstand, wat inhoudt geen sprake is van ongelijk op de werkvloer”</p> <p>... the country is predominantly individualistic</p> <p>... as well as rather masculine which implies that British value competition, success and performance</p> <p>... the uncertainty avoidance score implies that British are not afraid of uncertainty</p> <p>...long term orientation is average</p> <p>...British are polite and indirect</p> <p>...UK is not hierarchical – decisions are easily made</p> <p>....low uncertainty avoidance, they don't mind changes and uncertain events</p> <p>... UK does not emphasize the difference in people's status, power or wealth and equality is seen as the collective aim of society</p> <p>... in UK individuality and individual rights are very important</p> <p>... UK society is less concerned than the Dutch about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more</p>	
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		<p>tolerance towards variety and experimentation. The country is less rule-orientated, readily accepts change and is willing to take risks.</p> <p>...English youth is sensitive to trends and always looking for something new and exciting</p> <p>... hat UK prefers to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion (<i>same author as previous remark: the exact opposite!</i>)</p> <p>... Brits believes that inequalities amongst people should be minimized. However,the power distance among high class is lower than the working class. This does not square with the well-established and historical British class system (!)</p> <p>... British are very individualistic and private people. They are also known as a Me Culture. At an early age the children were taught to think and look for themselves. This is to find out the purpose of life and how to contribute uniquely to the society</p> <p>... it is a masculine society which is driven and oriented by highly success (!)</p> <p>... modesty and understatement of the British culture are at odds with</p>	
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		<p>the underlying success of driven value system in the culture (!)</p> <p>... they are able to read between the lines and do not always mean what they say</p> <p>... Brits live in order to work and to have a clear performance ambition</p> <p>... are relatively open in taking risk and dealing with changes. This can be seen as well on macro as micro level. They consider conflict or disagreement as something healthy</p> <p>.... UK society is indulgent because they have the willingness to realize their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun</p> <p>...British are penchant for understatement. Sometimes they challenge the understanding of people, things and situations that lead them to perceive things differently. Also is known that the Brits use humour during conversation as a defence mechanism in form of self-depreciation or irony</p> <p>... British people like to keep the professionalism (!)</p> <p>....Brits also communicate with gestures (!)</p>	
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		<p>... Brits are known for Stiff upper lip which means that they have a reserved and restrained attitude when facing certain situations. They rarely open to show emotions neither positive nor negative (!)</p> <p>... appreciates the Britain (!) an atmosphere of trust, reliability and fairness however it likes to keep the business and social matters strictly separate</p> <p>... Brits do not talk loud and don't show disruptive behaviour (!)</p> <p>... universalistic, individualistic countries that are neutral in controlling their emotions, are more business driven, taken the United Kingdom and the Netherlands as an example (<b>auto &amp; hetero</b>)</p>	
Type 3 UK	... British are polite and indirect which can confuse Dutch => <i>Dutch are direct and rude</i>		
Type 4 UK	... UK experiences a higher degree of gender differentiation. It shows that men dominate a significant portion of society and the power structure ( <b>auto- &amp; hetero</b> ) => <i>Dutch society is more egalitarian than the British and correspondingly, more women are in higher</i>		

	<p><i>positions in the NL than in the UK</i></p> <p>...the UK and the NL more or less have a tendency towards optimism</p> <p>... The Dutch and the United Kingdom could be described as cool, factual, decisive and planners.</p>		

Table 5: stereotypes found in theses (quotes)