What has brought you to this training? What is your purpose for being here? What would you like to get out of it?

Three purposes per person on a sticky note each

Phalkun
1. Understanding AU/local business interaction habits
2. Seperation between work and life / work-life-balance
3. How AU deals with multiculture / ethics

Matthias
1. How not to offend AU
2. Saying politely "No"
3. Understand the client's culture & mentality

Lifeswap Episode 2 - The Tea Towel Stinks
In episode two, Jörg learns how to beat around the bush Kiwi style, while Duncan is starting to appreciate the time saved by monosyllabic, German directness. If you haven't already follow our YouTube channel: youtube.com/lifeswap Like our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com...
Youtube

Kevin
1. How to lead AU people the best? Directive or collaborative?
2. How important is small talk and socialising with AU colleagues?
3. Are there any cultural taboos or humour styles that might be misunderstood by Europeans?

Patrick
1. When there is more time pressure to finish the work. How can I approach correctly?
2. What motivates AU people
3. When you are as a foreign person in charge, but the AU people don't like it. What would be the best way to loosen things up or make it also comfortable for them?

Jerome
1. To know the limitations of humor/jokes.
2. Usual terminologies when dealing with the local conversations
3.

Oliver
1. Understand AU business communication
2. Get to know culture
3. how to act with AU clients with no's or ciritcial topics

Philipp
1. Understanding how to work with diffrent cultures
2. Whats diffrent between working environment between Austria and Australia
3. Get to know about the Australian culture

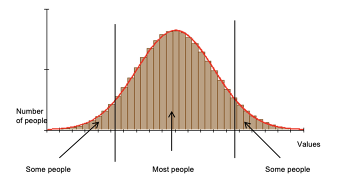
How to say no without saying no
- "I'm not sure that's the best way to go."
- "That might be a bit tricky."
- "I'll have to think about that."
- "Maybe not this time."
- "It could be difficult right now."

- "I really like your idea, but I don't think we can do it right now."
- "Good point — maybe we could try something else instead?"
- "Yeah, nah..." (a very Australian way of saying no, often with a smile)
- "Might give that one a miss."
- "Not sure that'll fly."
- "maybe," "a bit," "I'm not sure"
- "I see where you're coming from — maybe we can revisit that next week?" "That's an interesting suggestion. I wonder if we could approach it differently?"
- Use questions instead of statements

Purpose for this class

Stereotypical AUS

Stereotypes: Cultural profiles yes – blanked judgments no!!



From Nancy Adler: Communicating across Cultural Barriers:
Stereotyping involves a form of categorization that organizes our experience and guides our behavior toward ethnic and national groups. Stereotypes never describe individual behavior; rather, they describe the behavioral Communicating across Cultural Barriers for members of a particular group.
Stereotypes, like other forms of categories, can be helpful or harmful depending on how we use them. Effective stereotyping allows people to understand and act appropriately in new situations.
A stereotype can be helpful when it is
• Consciously held. The person should be aware that he or she is describing a group norm rather than the characteristics of a specific individual.
• Descriptive rather than evaluative. The stereotype should describe what people from this group will probably be like and not evaluate those people as good or bad.
• Accurate. The stereotype should accurately describe the norm for the group to which the person belongs.
• The first best guess about a group prior to having direct information about the specific person or persons involved.
• Modified, based on further observation and experience with the actual people and situations.

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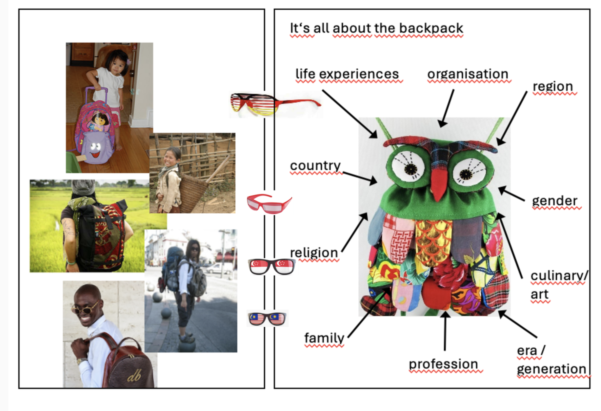

What is culture: Some definitions

Cyriac Roeding: Culture is a reference / framework for decisions.

Alexander Thomas: Culture is an orientation system that is passed on from generation to generation and helps us to master the challenges of our surroundings.

Fons Trompenaars: A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water to a fish. We live and breathe through it.

Geert Hofstede: Culture is the programming of the human mind by which one group of people distinguishes itself from another group. "Software of the mind".

Bary Tomalin: Culture is the way we do things here.

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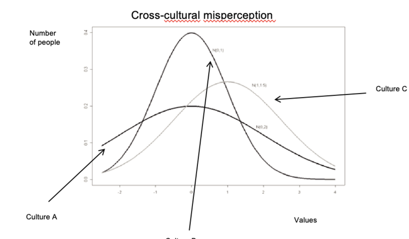
Cross-cultural misperception



From Nancy Adler: Communicating across Cultural Barriers:
Do the French and the Chinese see the world in the same way? No. Do Venezuelans and Ghanaians see the world in the same way? Again, no. No two national groups see the world in exactly the same way.
Perception is the process by which each individual selects, organizes, and evaluates stimuli from the external environment to provide meaningful experiences for himself or herself. For example, when Mexican children simultaneously viewed tachistoscopic pictures of a bullfight and a baseball game, they only remembered seeing the bullfight. Looking through the same tachistoscope, American children only remembered seeing the baseball game. Why didn't the children see both pictures? The answer lies in the nature of perception.
Perceptual patterns are neither innate nor absolute. They are selective, learned, culturally determined, consistent, and inaccurate.
• Perception is selective. At any one time there are too many stimuli in the environment for us to observe. Therefore, we screen out most of what we see, hear, taste, and feel. We screen out the overload and allow only selected information through our perceptual screen to our conscious mind.
• Perceptual patterns are learned. We are not born seeing the world in one particular way. Our experience teaches us to perceive the world in certain ways.
• Perception is culturally determined. We learn to see the world in a certain way based on our cultural background.
• Perception tends to remain constant. Once we see something in a particular way, we continue to see it that way.
• We therefore see things that do not exist, and do not see things that do exist. Our interests, values, and culture act as filters and lead us to distort, block, and even create what we choose to see and hear. We perceive what we expect to perceive. We perceive things according to what we have been trained to see, according to our cultural map.

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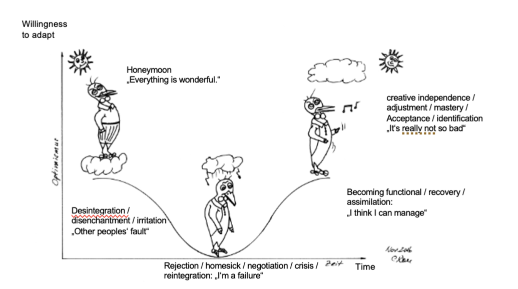
Culture Shock Curve



Honeymoon:
New experiences are exciting, you feel fortunate for having the opportunity of moving overseas. People are friendly and you smile a lot, you are in control, your own sense of culture is not threatened.
-> Be a tourist! Send postcards home while You're feeling so positive. Book a holiday six Months ahead for you to look forward to. Make contacts through clubs and associations Sign up for activities, join a language course

Creative independence:
You are generally successful in communications with locals, enjoying bein where you are, adapt at finding things, no longer stereotyping, understanding local customs.
-> Review your lifestyle for areas that need improving, if leaving, tie up any loose ends and farewell people properly, maintain key relationships.

Desintegration:
Daily frustrations can build into disillusionment, the big things of home loom large. Discussions with other expats reinforce the difficulties of the new culture. Self-doubt and depression may set in.
-> Look after yourself, treat yourself to a massage, exercise, avoid alcohol and over-eating, keep a journal, get out and be with people, continue language practice, keep busy, set daily goals, and make the effort to achieve them. List the goals you had for your Time overseas and get started.

Becoming functional:
Feeling in control and positive again about being where you are. Self-understanding and more tolerance of others, a sense of comfort operating in the host culture. You're helping others get through their adjustments.
-> Try new things and explore the culture, practice the language, buy some local home furnishings, do the things you intend to do while in this country before it's time to leave.

Reintegration:
A sense of standing up to the things and people that are frustrating you, racial generalisations and rejection of host culture, determination to work things out and get things done.
-> Build your network of friends, take that you booked before, continue language study, spend time with people to enjoy being there.

Source: Marx, E., Breaking through Culture Shock

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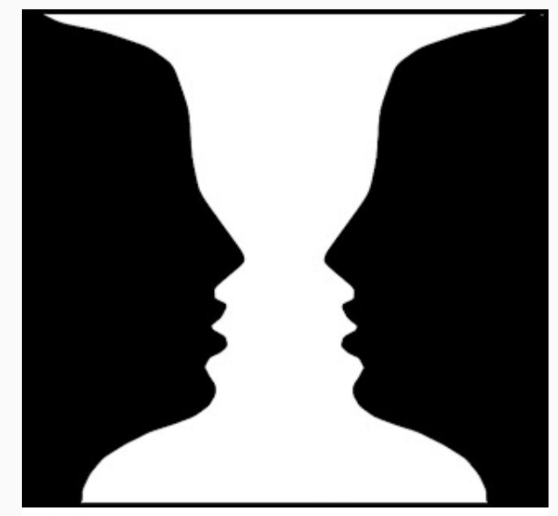
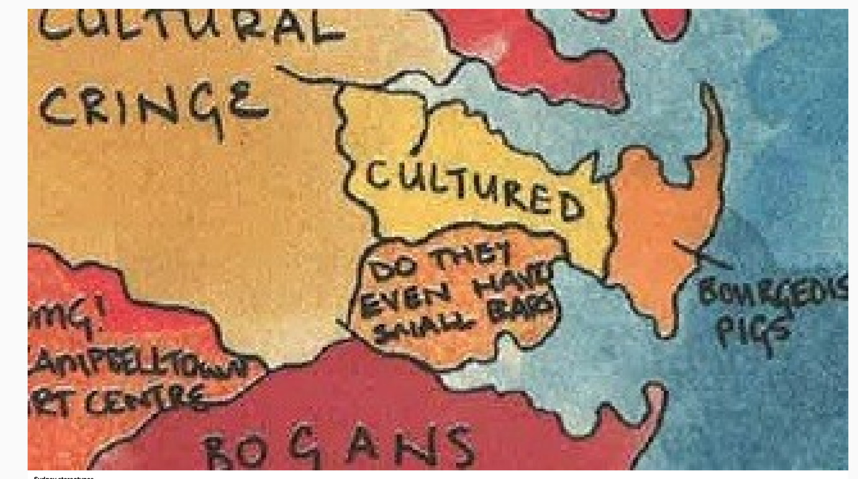
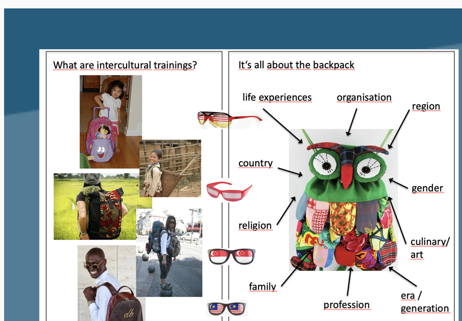
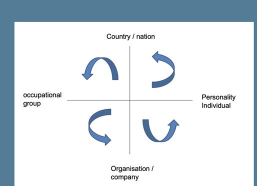

What do you see?



Sydney stereotypes

Take notes to remember later





Let's have a chat:
- What's your name, where does it come from?
- Where were you born, where have you lived in your life?
- How do people in your culture greet each other, what would they say, what gestures are common?
- Looking at your cultural backpack, what has influenced who you are today?

Your cultural background

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Intercultural Training
Australia through a German/Austrian lens, and Australia through a Malaysian/Singaporean lens

Duration: 3 Days (1 slot per day, total 8 hours)
Participants: 5–10 persons
Trainer: Silke Noll
Tools: Zoom (digital training room), MURAL (digital whiteboard)

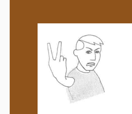
Slot 1 (3 hours)
Cultural Foundations & First Reflections
- Welcome, objectives, expectations
- What is culture? – key concepts, values, norms, behavior patterns
- Cultural standards: Australia vs. Germany/Austria; Australia vs. Malaysia/Singapore
- Simulation: "Culture Shock" – interactive exercise
- Interactive mapping: cultural dimensions
- Reflection: personal cultural imprint and experiences

Slot 2 (3 hours)
Business Communication & Virtual Collaboration
- Communication styles, leadership, hierarchy, feedback and trust (Australia vs. Germany/Austria; Australia vs. Malaysia/Singapore)
- Videoconference etiquette
- Case examples: Small Talk, The Boss, Building Trust
- Reflection: strategies for adapting communication and collaboration

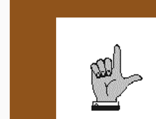
Slot 3 (2 hours)
Project Work & Business Etiquette
- Project management and decision-making in Australian teams (perceived from German/Austrian and Malaysian/Singaporean perspectives)
- Case study: project planning across contexts
- Business dining etiquette & relationship-building (Australia vs. Germany/Austria; Australia vs. Malaysia/Singapore)
- Practical tips: dress code, table manners, small talk, food rules, tipping practices
- Closing: action plans, transfer, feedback & wrap-up

Agenda

What is this person trying to tell you?


Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malta: Up yours!
USA: Two
Germany: Victory
France: Peace
Italy: Peace, Two
Ancient Rome: Julius Caesar ordering five beers

Europe: One, Ok
Australia: Sit on this! (upward jerk)
Widespread: Hitchhike, Good, OK
Greece: Up yours! (thrust forward)
Japan: Man, five


Europe: Two
Britain, Australia, New Zealand: One
USA: Waiter!
Japan: An insult
Italy: reading the "L" ☺

What learning environment would we like to have this week? How would we like to communicate with each other?

Important call - could be interrupted

Just ask

In groups, discuss similarities and differences you might see between your own and the Australian culture - how do you look at Australia through different "glasses"?

Austrian culture standards by Alexander Thomas:
- Relationship orientation
- Overlap of private and business life
- Indirect communication
- Aiming for harmony and avoiding conflicts
- Importance of titles
- Rules relativization
- Network management
- Befriended neighbours

German culture standards by Alexander Thomas:
- Protection of privacy
- Rules orientation
- Facts orientation
- Direct, fact-based communication
- Individualism
- Flat hierarchy
- (Time-) Planning
- Self-monitoring, internalised control

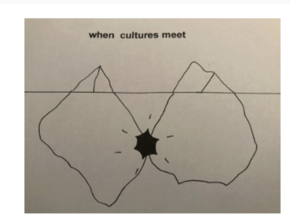
Malaysian culture standards by Alexander Thomas:
- Ethnotraditional everyday orientation
- Hierarchical orientation
- Saving face
- Indirectness
- Relationship orientation
- Family orientation
- Polychronic perception of time
- Subjective rules interpretation

When cultures meet

Iceberg

Australian culture standards by Alexander Thomas
- Mateship
- Australian Humour
- Egalitarianism
- Performance relativization
- Serenity
- British Heritage
- Indirectness in conflicts
- Relationship orientation

Intercultural iceberg model



Iceberg

Intercultural lenses

Seen from Austria
Formality & Titles
Australians skipping titles and using first names straight away feels especially casual to Austrians. Titles like "Mag.", "Dr.", or "Ing." are taken seriously and show respect. Dropping them can feel dismissive
Dress Code
Australians showing up in polos may seem underdressed – Austrians often expect a jacket and shirt in professional contexts.
Communication Style
Australians' relaxed, humorous exchanges can feel less structured compared to the Austrian preference for clarity and thoroughness.
Hierarchy
Australians treat managers almost like equals, which may feel unusual in Austria, where formal respect for hierarchy is stronger and on-time completion.

Seen from Malaysia
Formality & Respect
Australians' use of first names right away may feel overly casual to Malaysians, where polite distance shows respect.
Camera & Participation
Australians expect equal participation, which can feel demanding for Malaysians, where juniors normally wait to be invited to speak.
Humor & Casual Tone
Australians lighten meetings with humor, which may seem unprofessional to Malaysians in formal business contexts.
Hierarchy
Australian flatness in hierarchy can be perceived as disrespectful by Malaysians, who are used to strong deference to senior roles.

Seen from Germany
Formality & Titles
Australians dropping formal titles may come across as disrespectful to Germans, who are accustomed to 'Herr/Frau' and professional titles.
Dress Code
Polo shirts can seem too informal to Germans, who typically associate professionalism with business attire.
Communication Style
Germans may perceive Australian conversation as too short and casual – lacking the detail and structured arguments they value.
Hierarchy
Flat Australian hierarchies may look like a lack of respect to Germans, who expect visible acknowledgment of authority.

Seen from Singapore
Formality & Respect
Singaporeans may view Australians' immediate use of first names as too informal, since respectful address is standard in Singaporean business culture.
Camera & Participation
Australians expect everyone to speak up, which can feel uncomfortable in Singapore, where juniors are more reserved in front of seniors.
Humor & Casual Tone
The casual humor Australians bring into business meetings can feel risky or distracting to Singaporeans, who often keep meetings serious and efficient.
Hierarchy
Australians treat leaders as peers, which can strike Singaporeans as a lack of proper respect for authority.

Videoconference Etiquette in Australia

Checklist

Do's ✅	Don'ts ❌
Log in on time (1–2 minutes before is fine).	Don't be overly formal (titles like "Mr./Ms." or stiff, bureaucratic language).
Switch on your camera, unless it's a very large group.	Don't keep your camera off permanently, especially if the goal is building team relationships.
Address people by first name – colleagues and managers alike.	Don't give long monologues or dominate – equality is valued.
Start off casually and friendly – small talk about the weather, weekend, sports, or travel works well.	Don't speak negatively about managers or colleagues – Australians place high value on "mateship" (camaraderie).
Test your audio and tech beforehand (microphone, camera, internet).	Don't brag or emphasize hierarchy – quickly seen as uncollegial.
Smart casual look – a clean shirt or polo is often enough.	Don't communicate in overly complicated or indirect ways – clarity beats diplomatic detours.
Give everyone a fair chance to speak – don't interrupt, listen actively.	
Keep your wording short and direct, but stay friendly.	
Allow a bit of humor, as long as it's respectful.	

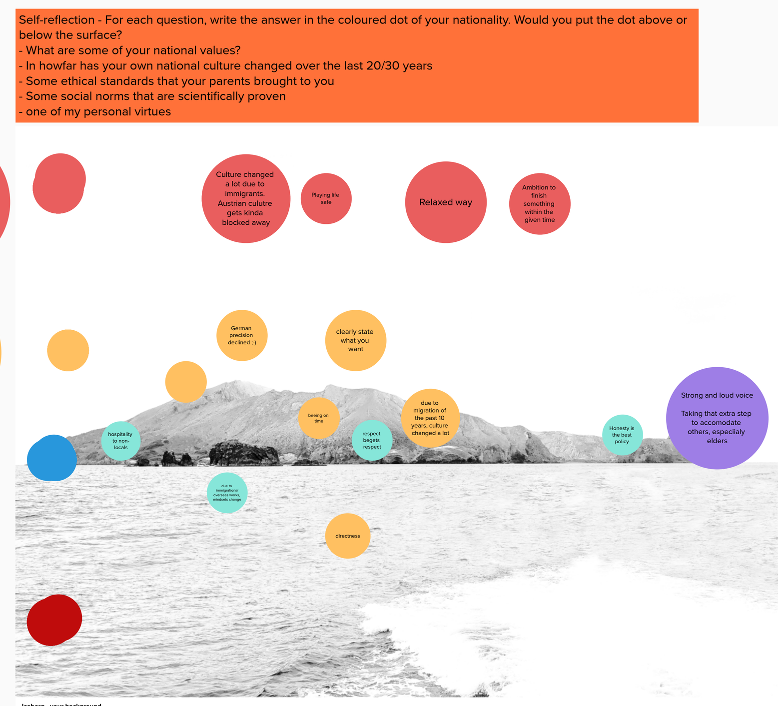
Self-reflection - For each question, write the answer in the coloured dot of your nationality. Would you put the dot above or below the surface?
- What are some of your national values?
- In howfar has your own national culture changed over the last 20/30 years
- Some ethical standards that your parents brought to you
- Some social norms that are scientifically proven
- one of my personal virtues

Austrian culture

German culture

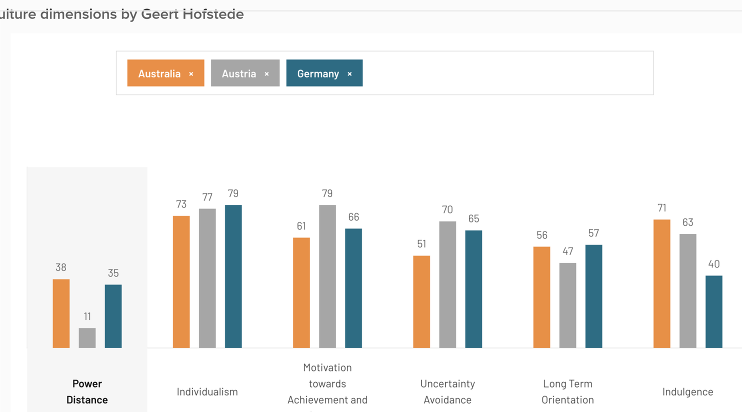
Malaysian culture

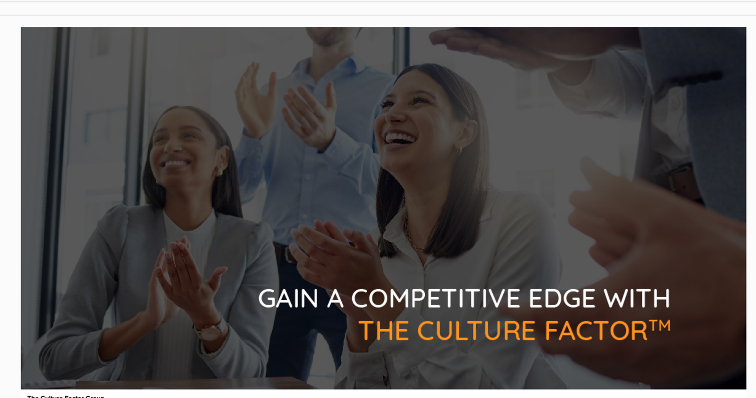
Singaporean culture



Iceberg - your background

Culture dimensions by Geert Hofstede





The Culture Factor Group

POWER DISTANCE
This dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal – it expresses the attitude of the culture towards these inequalities amongst us. Power Distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE
The dimension Uncertainty Avoidance has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings with it anxiety and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these is reflected in the score on Uncertainty Avoidance.

INDIVIDUALISM
The fundamental issue addressed by this dimension is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. It has to do with whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We". In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In Collectivist societies people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

LONG TERM ORIENTATION
This dimension describes how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future, and societies prioritise these two existential goals differently. Normative societies, which score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

MOTIVATION TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS
A high score (Decisive) on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner / best in field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organisational life. A low score (Consensus-oriented) on the dimension means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. A Consensus-oriented society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Decisive) or liking what you do (Consensus-oriented).

INDULGENCE
One challenge that confronts humanity, now and in the past, is the degree to which small children are socialized. Without socialization we do not become "human". This dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called "Indulgence" and relatively strong control is called "Restraint". Cultures can, therefore, be described as Indulgent or Restrained.

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