INTERNATIONAL MANAGERS IN NORWAY

Cross-Cultural Challenges in the Norwegian Work Context

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ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural literature and research have described cultural differences that exist between countries. These differences are reasons to why international managers may experience cross-cultural challenges in other cultural work contexts. Several frameworks have been established to illustrate cultural dimensions, which have been used to create national culture profiles. By comparing the cultural differences, cross-cultural challenges may be indicated. Concrete challenges are not often described in detail, therefore the focus in this research project was to connect cross-cultural challenges, experienced in the oil industry in Norway, to the cultural differences described in the theory and the literature. The research question in this master thesis was *"what cross-cultural challenges, caused by cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust, do international managers in Norway experience?".*

The study had three purposes. First and foremost, to connect concrete examples of cross-cultural challenges to cultural differences. Secondly, to measure how well the Norwegian culture profile was reflected in the data collection, and lastly, to discuss the findings in the light of convergence and divergence theory. A triangulation of quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interviews) methods was used to answer the research question.

The findings indicated that international managers experienced challenges in all areas focused on – communication, hierarchy, and trust. The main findings were firstly that Norwegian employees were very direct in communication. This caused challenges where Norwegians was understood as rude. Other challenges were that different languages prolonged implementation processes of new strategies, and Norwegians' reserved body language were difficult to read and caused misunderstandings. Cultural hierarchy differences caused challenges related to consensus management. Norwegian employees demanded to participate in managements' decisions and this prolonged decision-making processes. Lastly, challenges caused by differences in trust were related to Norwegians' deal-focused behaviour, and the structuring and planning in the companies got in the way for bonding and trust building.

Preface

I would like to thank my supervisor, Gunnar Thesen, for his support and guidance throughout the entire process.

I cannot mention most of the people I would like to thank, as it would indicate were my study has been conducted. Therefore, to maintain the participants' anonymity, I would like to thank all the contact persons from the different companies, as well as the informants themselves. The contact persons were very helpful during my data collection, and I appreciate all help I received.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theme, Background, and Research Purposes

This research project studies cross-cultural challenges experienced by international managers in Norway. An international manager must balance a workday operating on *"several different premises at any one time. These premises arise from their culture of origin, the culture in which they are working, and the culture of the organisation that employs them"* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 4). E.g. an international manager[1] meets challenges in another cultural work context when he must relate to other cultural norms, mind-sets, behaviours, traditions, etc., that are different to his or her own. It is the interaction between cultures that causes problems such as communication misunderstandings or trust issues (Deresky, 2014).

Globalisation and internationalisation puts more pressure on international managers, as they must balance the aforementioned premises on top of the practical work required in their job description. An effect of globalisation and internationalisation is cross-cultural interdependence, where there is a need to learn more about other cultures, simply to be able to understand how to do business effectively and efficiently. This does not only apply to business-to-business relationships of different cultural origins, but also to the relationships within companies between managers and employees of different cultural origins. "G*lobalisation, in all its forms of personal and business contacts and information crossing borders, brings about changes that result in cultural diffusion"* (Deresky, 2014, p. 94). This means that people are more and more exposed to other cultures, and they may become more alike. However, cultural differences still exist.

Therefore, the aim of this research project is to explore challenges international managers experience, caused by the cultural differences that exist between the Norwegian culture and other cultures. The research question is:

What cross-cultural challenges, caused by cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust, do international managers in Norway experience?

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[1] In this context, the term 'international manager' refers to a manager operating in a different country than their home country. In other words, the international manager was not a Norwegian managing operations abroad.

There are other areas in which international managers may experience challenges, such as time orientation, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance, etc. (to briefly mention other cultural dimensions) (Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). However, the time scope allocated this project must be considered, and therefore only some areas of cultural differences are manageable to be addressed. The main reasons for choosing communication, hierarchy, and trust were firstly because the field of cross-cultural studies contain much information about these topics. There are several cross-cultural frameworks established by previous research that can be used to construct a profile for the Norwegian culture. Another reason is because the concepts used within the chosen topics, such as authority, partnership, relationship, politeness in language etc., are the same within nations and cultures. However, they have different <u>meanings and explanations</u> - therefore this gives reason to believe that misunderstandings occur in cross-cultural relations (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). In other words, this implies that international managers in Norway may experience cross-cultural challenges in the areas of communication, hierarchy, and trust.

The aim of this thesis is to create a better understanding of how international managers, independent of where they come from, experience the Norwegian cultural context. Established theories describe cultural differences, but concrete problems that arise from these differences are not always described in detail. Connecting specific cross-cultural challenges to the cultural differences may help to figure out what to be aware of in particular. A better awareness of cross-cultural challenges may further help to create a better work environment. Thus, one of the research purposes is to connect specific cross-cultural challenges in Norway to the cultural differences described in cross-cultural theory. Another purpose is to explore how relevant the Norwegian profile is in the companies studied. The Norwegian profile is compared to the international managers' feedback in the data collection, to study the degree to which its characteristics are reflected. The third purpose is to discuss the findings in the light of globalisation. Two effects of globalisation, convergence and divergence, is considered. These constitute two different perceptions and interpretations of the findings. In sum, the research purposes are to:

- *Connect cross-cultural challenges (in communication, hierarchy, and trust) experienced by international managers in Norway to established theories of cultural differences.*

- *Explore how well the Norwegian culture profile is reflected in the international managers' experiences.*
- *Discuss the results in the light of convergence and divergence theory.*

The first purpose, which is solely the research question, weigh the most in this study. This purpose is accounted for in the presentation of the data collection and by discussing the main findings. Followed by this, the two other purposes are addressed in the discussion chapter by connecting the literature and theory from chapter three to the results of the study.

Legitimising the study - Why is it important to study culture and cross-cultural interactions?

Organisations internationalise, the world globalises, and they both digitalise, all of which expose us to other cultures more often and more aggressively than before. It is important to study cultures and cross-cultural interactions as culture is often blamed when something goes wrong, either in national communities or in business organisations (Hennestad, 2015). The fact that culture can be held responsible for success and failure (Jaruzelski, Loehr, and Holman, 2011) illustrates the power and meaning culture has on people, systems, and actions. Studying cross-cultural interactions may help people become more aware of their cultural biases, and how it may contribute to misunderstandings in other cultural contexts. Hence, by explaining the challenges that arise in cross-cultural interactions, people learn more about themselves, and about others. In other words, the study may help people reflect upon how their behaviour is understood, and how it affects others. Consequently, the exploration of cross-cultural challenges may be helpful to improve relations within organisations.

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast" is an expression often used in the cross-culture literature (Hughes, 2013; Hanson and Melnyk, 2014). The meaning of this statement is that no matter what structure, written strategy, or plan an organisation has, success is impossible unless *"...it is supported by the appropriate cultural attributes"* (Jaruzelski, Loehr, and Holman, 2011, p. 3). The Daimler-Chrysler merger can be used as an example where the strategic intent was overruled by culture (Lasserre, 2012). The German and American companies had trouble overcoming differences in cultural business behaviours in their merger. For instance, poor communication damaged the trust relationship between the two. Different decision-making styles were also causing challenges. One party consulted their employees at lower levels in

the company, which resulted in prolonged decision-making processes. The other party made decisions on the top management level and did not involve other employees. Hence, the opposing management methods made the cooperation between the merging companies very challenging. The cultural differences were not given any attention until they eventually became a problem, which is often the case in mergers and acquisitions (ibid.). The different management styles are closely related to culture – from culture, different perceptions of how to manage derive. As a result of cultural barriers and opposing intentions, Daimler decided to sell Chrysler in 2007 (ibid.). In DaimlerChrysler's case, cultural differences posed barriers too large to overcome. The aim of this example is to illustrate how culture may stand in the way for success, how deeply rooted practices and behaviours formed by cultural contexts, overrule written strategy and plans. In other words, how culture eats strategy for breakfast.

1.2 Disposition of The Thesis

Chapter 2 – presents established theories about cultural differences. Culture is firstly defined, and the term is separated into different layers – most importantly national and organisational. Three frameworks are described and elements from them are used to compile a framework for this thesis, which is presented at the end of the chapter. The chosen elements are discussed under the areas of communication, hierarchy, and trust. This is followed by a closer look at the Norwegian context, where the same elements are used to portray the Norwegian culture profile. Lastly, in the end of the chapter, cross-cultural skills for international managers are presented, and the effects of globalisation, convergence and divergence, are discussed.

Chapter 3 – the methods chapter, discusses the choice of research strategy, informants and industry, and methods. The data was collected using a method triangulation. The chapter discusses the procedures in the data collection process, the validity and reliability of the methods, and ethical aspects of research.

Chapter 4 – presents the analysis and the findings of the data collection. A constant comparative strategy was adhered to by connecting the findings to the theories previously presented (compiled framework).

Chapter 5 – discusses the main findings from the data collection. It also discusses how well the Norwegian culture profile is reflected in the data collection. Lastly, the results are connected to convergence and divergence theory.

Chapter 6 – includes a summary and the conclusion of the study. The choice of the methods and the theories are reflected upon, and the limitations for the study are discussed. Additionally, the study's contribution and suggestions for future research are presented.

CHAPTER 2 – THEORY

2.1 Introduction

As previously presented, the research question was "*what cross-cultural challenges, caused by cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust, do international managers in Norway experience?".* To position the research question in a broader perspective, globalisation and its consequences for international managers has briefly been touched upon. The effects of globalisation are elaborated upon later in this chapter. Moreover, to further depict the context of the research problem, culture must be defined. Culture and its different levels (national, organisational) are firstly discussed in this chapter. Followed by this, three frameworks, established by Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner and Richard Gesteland, are reviewed. Elements from their frameworks are used in the discussion of cross-cultural differences in the areas of communication, hierarchy, and trust. The section on communication differences discusses cultural dimensions such as Indirect (High-Context) vs. Direct (Low-Context) cultures and Emotionally Expressive vs. Emotionally Reserved cultural behaviours (Gesteland, 2012). The section on hierarchy differences discusses cultural dimensions such as Power Distance (Hofstede, 2001), Egalitarian (Informal) vs. Hierarchical (Formal) cultures (Gesteland, 2012), and Achieved-status vs. Ascribed-status cultures (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). The section on trust differences discusses cultural dimensions such as Deal-focused vs. Relationship-focused cultures (Gesteland, 2012), and Individualism vs. Collectivism (Hofstede, 2001).

Hereupon, the common Norwegian management model, and the Norwegian cultural context is closely examined under the three areas of communication, hierarchy, and trust. Moreover, skills for international managers are addressed, followed by a presentation of convergence and divergence theory. Lastly, the elements referred to in the three frameworks, are compiled into a new framework to illustrate how the analysis and the discussion will be structured. The aim throughout this chapter is to discuss the elements that make up the compiled framework step-by-step.

Cross-Cultural Studies

Before moving onto the definition of culture, this section briefly reflects upon the width of cultural studies. The aim of many cross-cultural projects, research, and papers has been to establish an understanding of cultural values and preferences in specific nations or cultures; how cultural differences are experienced; the affect it has on people, systems, and processes; and very often in comparison to others in order to portray the cultural distance (Brown et. al., 2015; Ladhari, Souiden, Choi, 2015; Tjoflåt, Razaonandrianina, Karlsen, and Hansen, 2017; Feldberga and Grike, 2015; Grover, Segars, and Durand, 1994; Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars and Coebergh, 2015; Tjosvold and Leung, 2003). Hence, cross-cultural research is not limited to management, which this thesis revolves around, but may be studied in various disciplines. This being cultural preferences in different countries in relation to e.g. nature conservation, shopping behaviour, marketing, education, tourism, etc. Cultural values are available to be study everywhere, as cultural expressions can be found everywhere. This is evident in how different studies have applied Hofstede's cultural dimensions (later presented) to their research, where the field of interest has varied from cultural differences in online shopping behaviour (Smith et. al, 2013), cross-cultural factors in project management (Bredillet, Yatim, and Ruiz, 2010), cultural differences in networking among entrepreneurial firms (McGrath and O'Toole, 2014), human resource management and training (Yang, Wang, and Drewry, 2009), and studying sport tourists' motives for international travels (Funk and Bruun, 2007). Moreover, as culture can be studied in most areas in life, findings might be relatable to other arenas, because the key focus is how we act and interpret differently than others. The findings of cross-cultural studies have included that cultural groups, which we might expect would adhere to strict national frames, do transcend national borders (Ladhari, Souiden, and Choi, 2015). This argument is further supported by Henderson, Guzmán, Huff, and Motley (2011), who argue that digitalisation has provided the opportunity for virtual tribes to develop cultures that go beyond national borders. Hence, globalisation and internationalisation expose people to other countries, making it possible for <u>hybrid</u> cultures to form (Hollinshead, 2010), but digitalisation also makes it possible for <u>new</u> cultures to form.

2.2 What is Culture?

The concept of culture is quite diffuse. The word itself denotes conditions constructed by humans and society (Hennestad, 2015). It can be viewed as the opposite of nature, where culture is created by man, and used to describe our way of life. In other words, from culture we construe meanings to everyday situations - it helps us understand and judge, all within different contexts. Hennestad (2015) describes the individual's tool to understand and judge the world around us as an interpretation system. Every individual's interpretation system is influenced and even shaped by the individual's context. These contexts are nations, organisations, institutions, etc., and differ between a university in California, a family in Hong Kong, and a company in Stavanger. Therefore, challenges may arise, when e.g. a student from California comes to work for a company in Stavanger, or stay as a host student with a family in Hong Kong. It is in the interaction between people, who have different interpretation systems, that cultural misunderstandings happen. Every person interprets actions, messages, situations, and behaviours differently. Additionally, the person is not necessarily aware of his or her own cultural views. The interpretation system holds a unique recipe for understanding, a pre-understanding towards others, and fundamental, subconscious explanation of what happens around us. Furthermore, if not already implied, culture is something individuals share as a group, and Hofstede (2001, p. 1 and p. 5) defines it as the *"...collective programming of the mind"* and states that *"...culture presupposes a collectivity"*. Individuals bear their own beliefs, mindsets, and orientations in life, and when they share this in groups, their common perspectives on life constitute a culture.

Other common definitions of culture can be summarised as follow: culture is a set of key values, norms, and assumptions, which are shared between members of a society (nations, organisations, families, etc.), and taught to new members of the group (children in a family, new employees in an organisation) (Daft, 2011); culture is *"the way things are done around here"* (Marx, 2001, p. 42); culture is *"a set of basic tacit assumptions about how the world is and ought to be that is shared by a set of people and determines their perceptions, thoughts, feelings and, to some degree, their overt behaviour."* (Schein, 1992, cited in Rosenfield and Wilson, 1999, p. 269). Furthermore, *"culture is not a substance out there which can merely be described. The concept of culture is an invention into which we load meaning. It then circulates*

and accumulates layers of significance in different contexts" (Abram, 2011, p. 17). Abram's (2011) statement correlates with Hennestad's (2015) argument of culture being human made.
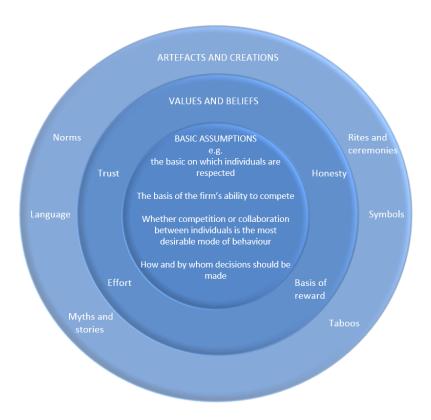
2.2.1 National and Organisational Culture

Culture can be investigated geographically, e.g. in nations. A nation will have different regional cultures and sub-cultures, and these make up the varieties found in national cultures. Hofstede's (2001) framework may describe tendencies for different nations, but these descriptions of tendencies cannot capture all varieties. A sub-culture may be an indigenous people in a country, e.g. the aboriginals in Australia, who have their own culture which is not captured in the description of tendencies for the whole country. Furthermore, another level of culture is the organisational culture. Organisational cultures are influenced by national cultures – the national position of the organisation and the diverse cultures of the employees, being both other national cultures and sub-cultures. There may even exist sub-cultures within organisations that are different from sub-cultures found outside. These sub-cultures constitute the specific members within e.g. departments or teams –> the relationship between the members in the group, and the values they have in common. Employees may be part of the culture in an organisation as a whole, and in sub-cultures in different groups. The main point to highlight in this part is that national cultures are present in organisational cultures – they are not detachable (Deresky, 2014).

Moreover, Hennestad (2015) argues that we may say that organisations <u>are</u> culture, or that culture is an aspect of organisations. Culture is the mindset and the heart of an individual, where behaviours and actions are just expressions of culture (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Therefore, to study culture, researchers look at people's actions, behaviours, and values in life (Hofstede 2001; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Gesteland, 2012). Studying culture is a complex task as there are many factors influencing people's actions and behaviours. Even the mood of the day may influence actions. In this case, actions are not solely based on traditional values. The focus of most cultural studies has been to observe constant values over time. Hofstede (2001, p. 5) states that *"a value is a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others"*. The measures of different values are presented for example in different cultural dimensions, such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, relationship orientation, etc., which is further explored in this chapter. Categorising values into such dimensions makes it possible to understand the differences that

cause challenges and what should be managed in cross-cultural business (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012).

Edgar Schein's 'Three Level of Culture' model (1985) may further distinguish the different layers of an organisational culture (Schein, 2004, in Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010; Trompenaars and Coebergh, 2015). The first level is 'surface manifestation of culture', and this is the product of culture (what we are able to see) i.e. objects and behaviours. This can be anything from languages, norms, and rites. The second level is called 'organisational values', and is the beliefs and assumptions held by employees. This is what guides the employee's behaviours – how they work, how they handle challenges, etc. These values may be spoken and expressed in the organisation. On the other hand, the final level, 'basic assumptions', is invisible (ibid.). These basic assumptions constitute an individual's understanding of how to behave. *"As persons act in accordance with their values and beliefs, these become embedded as organisational basic assumptions, and direct their actions"* (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010, p. 106). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) add to this description of culture as follows: The 'surface manifestation' is the explicit culture, and it is from this that people first get to experience a different culture. Stereotypes and prejudices are mostly created from this visible part of culture. The explicit culture is a reflection of what lies deeper, i.e. the 'organisational values'. The levels of 'basic assumptions' are implicit culture, and very difficult to describe. These are the values found in a culture, which people are unaware of. Trompenaars and Hampden-Tuner describe it this way: *"The problems of daily life are solved in such obvious ways that the solutions disappear from our consciousness"* (2012, p. 31).

(Edgar Schein's 'Three Level of Culture' model, 1985)

Understanding organisational culture and all its elements may help an international manager work better with his or her employees. The international manager can make use of the information the organisational culture holds, such as the company's approaches to problems, behaviours towards negative and positive situations, and what is acceptable behaviour and not, etc. (Hennestad, 2015). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) further support Hennestad's statement by arguing that cultures are different problem-solving methods. People's cultural mindsets involve different methods for handling difficulties and dilemmas. Understanding the culture, and therefore behaviours and methods, may help international managers avoid misunderstandings.

2.2.2 National Cultural Dimensions – Hofstede

One of the most well-known researchers in cross-cultural studies is Hofstede. His Cultural Dimensions framework pioneered in the 1980s, and he has since then supplied the field, adding dimensions to the framework and participating in the cultural debate. His framework is based on studies done in over 64 countries (Trompenaars and Coebergh, 2015). The framework consists of the six dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, and the two dimensions later added to his framework, Short-term vs. Long-term Orientation, and Indulgence vs. Restraint (Hofstede and

Hofstede, 2005). The dimensions constitute two extreme opposites. E.g. a national culture positions itself between the two extremes of low or high in the dimension of Power Distance. It does not have to be either low or high, different nations position themselves anywhere along the dimension. The aim of the framework is to scan national cultures to further compare them (Trompenaars and Coebergh, 2015; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). The framework may therefore allow measuring compatibility, and to picture cultural gaps. It is in sum a tool for mapping cultural differences that create conflicts in cross-cultural interaction, for an international organisation to address. The final product of the 'scan' is a culture profile, which may guide international managers in their work context.

2.2.3 Seven Dimensions of Culture – Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner

Another well-known cultural dimension framework is compiled by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993), and is called the Seven Dimensions of Culture. Trompenaars and Coebergh (2015) state that the framework may look a lot like an elaboration of Hofstede's framework, however, they are distinct and solely view culture differently. The dimensions are: Universalism vs. Particularism, Individualism vs. Communitarianism, Specific vs. Diffuse, Neutral vs. Affective, Achievement vs. Ascription, Past-Present-Future, Internal vs. External Control (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). The first five dimensions are based on relationships with people, and are orientations originally presented by Parsons and Shils (1951) to explain what determines human action (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Hofstede, 2001). The latter two concern time orientation and environment. As with Hofstede's dimensions, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's dimensions also make up two extreme opposites. The original idea of their framework is to make visible the link between organisational and national culture, like mentioned above – aspects from national cultures are always present in organisational cultures, and the mix should be acknowledged. The framework aims at presenting variations in values among cultures and can help to understand how these may clash with each other (Trompenaars and Coebergh, 2015). The dimensions present different values commonly held in national cultures, and this might help international managers understand why their employees behave the way they do.

2.2.4 Cross-Cultural Business Behaviours – Gesteland

Gesteland focuses specifically on business cultural behaviours, and defines business culture as *"a unique set of expectations and assumptions about how to do business"* (Gesteland, 2012, p. 21). Gesteland discusses expectations and assumptions we have towards other cultures by using five variables or dimensions with two extreme opposites. The dimensions he discusses are: Deal-focused vs. Relationship-focused Cultures, Hierarchical (formal) and Egalitarian (Informal) Cultures, Rigid-Time (monochronic) vs. Fluid-Time (polychromic) Cultures, Emotionally Expressive vs. Emotionally Reserved Cultures, Direct (Low-Context) vs. Indirect (High-Context) Communication (Gesteland, 2012). The framework is based on three decades of observation of cross-cultural business behaviours, in addition to previous studies and research (ibid.). For instance, low-context and high-context are terms established by Edgar Hall (1976) (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010; Hollinshead, 2010). The aim of the framework is to present typical tendencies in behaviours in international business interactions, and from this he has created business culture profiles for 43 nations. The framework may help international managers prepare for cross-cultural business negotiations, and at the same time understand the behaviour of employees from different cultures.

In sum, the purpose of the three frameworks presented is to describe characteristics of cultures by measuring values and behaviours in the different dimensions.

2.2.5 Criticism of Cultural Studies

Cultural studies are often criticised as researchers try to categorise and put a label on national cultures. The main critique is that the different established cultural dimension frameworks, which are frequently used in the cultural debate, might be outdated; that too few questions have been asked the informants in the development of the frameworks; and that some of the dimensions are not well enough grounded in theory (Jackson and Parry, 2011). However, to be able to study culture, it is necessary to establish such dimensions in order to compare – without a comparison, cultural studies are nothing (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Others criticise cultural studies' validity and reliability, as the studies cannot cover all aspects of a culture. This was discussed earlier in this chapter – that sub-cultures or regional cultures may not always be captured in the description. In the light of this criticism, cultural researchers must keep in mind not to create stereotypes, but rather describe <u>cultural tendencies</u>

(Gesteland, 2012; Hofstede 2001; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Furthermore, when describing tendencies, it is important to remember that this implies that every individual in a group <u>does not</u> necessarily behave accordingly, or identify with the cultural tendencies uncovered.

2.3 Cross-Cultural Communication, Hierarchy, and Trust Differences

Three frameworks by Hofstede, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, and Gesteland have been presented, and in this section, some elements from these frameworks are used to discuss cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust. As far as possible, the three areas are discussed in isolation from other cultural factors. Yet, it is important to remember that other factors influence cultural behaviours, and not just those presented below. One example is that trust may be affected by hierarchy and communication differences, as this section argues, but also by time orientation, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, and other aspects not discussed in this thesis. This section discusses the cultural differences, within the chosen three areas, focusing on the international manager – employee relationship. The next section looks more closely at the Norwegian context, and the typical characteristics within the three areas.

In addition, what bears repeating is that the dimensions portray two extreme opposites. E.g., power distance depicts two opposite views, either high-power distance or low-power distance. Even though the acceptance of power distance is discussed as being 'either or', this is not the case for all nations. A nation may position itself anywhere in-between. Although nations usually tend to lean more towards one side *"….it is rare for any national result to be anywhere near 100 percent in favour of any priority"* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 224).

2.3.1 Cross-Cultural Differences in Communication

Language, both verbal and non-verbal, poses potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings (Hofstede, 2001). Gesteland (2012) discusses how we communicate with each other in three ways: verbally, para-verbally, and non-verbally, and when discussing cross-cultural communication, it is important to include all these forms of communication. Verbal communication involves the spoken language and the semantics (the meaning of words). Para-verbal refers to our tone of voice, and the use of silence in speech. Lastly, non-verbal

communication (also called body language) refers to everything we communicate with our facial expressions, eye contact, hand gestures, etc. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) state that 75% of communication is non-verbal. Common measures to prevent cross-cultural misunderstandings can be to learn other languages. However, every culture has its own traditions for body language as well, therefore, one is not fully reserved from experiencing misunderstandings, as learning another language does not always teach one how to <u>behave</u> in another culture. This means that international managers in Norway may still experience communication challenges despite knowing the Norwegian language.

<p align="center">*<u>The Spoken and Written Language</u>*</p>

Misunderstandings in communication happen when the receiver and sender of a message, do not share the same terminology for the message. The receiver understands the message in the light of the cultural, situational, and professional context (Mead, 1992), or in other words, with their interpretation system (Hennestad, 2015). A word in English does not necessarily have the same meaning in the Norwegian language. Mead (1992) uses an example of culture X and Y to illustrate this. A person from culture X (e.g. the international manager) may express a concept to a person in culture Y (e.g. a Norwegian employee), but in culture Y this concept does not exist. The Norwegian employee can have difficulties understanding the meaning of the international manager's message, as he has no 'hook' to hang the idea on. What this means is that the Norwegian employee does not have the codes in his or her language to decode the international manager's message (Hennestad, 2015). When the receiver is unsure of how to interpret a message, ambiguity arises – the receiver does not have anything familiar in his or her 'code book' to refer to. The message may be very clear grammatically, but the meaning (semantics) of the message is not. In this case, the message might not be decoded. In another case, the message, or word, in the international manager's culture may actually have a <u>different meaning</u> in the Norwegian culture (Mead, 1992). Therefore, the Norwegian employee will understand the message by decoding it with the meanings that are familiar to him or her, hence giving the message a <u>different meaning</u> than what was intended. *"This defines ambiguity in terms of conflict between individual receivers' interests, and implies that each individual has a clear understanding of his or her interest, interprets the message to fit these interest, and is unaware that other receivers deduce a different message"* (Mead, 1992, p. 135).

Direct (Low-Context) and Indirect (High-Context) Communication

Arguably, the most common challenge in cross-cultural communication is differences in language directness. Gesteland (2012) believes the distance between direct and indirect language is the root of the biggest misunderstandings. Directness in language is connected to deal-focused vs. relationship focused cultures. As the terms imply, deal-focused people mainly focus on discussing 'the deal' (negotiating) in business interactions, and shaping a relationship while doing business together, and relationship-focused people tend to emphasise building a relationship before discussing 'the deal' (ibid.). As a result, deal-focused people are more direct in communication, because their goal is firstly to start making money, and relationship-focused people are indirect, as making money comes after establishing a relationship [2]. Relationship-focused people have an indirect language 'coloured' by several polite phrases. Whenever meeting other people, presenting or negotiating deals, it is highly important to include additional phrases for politeness purposes – negative answers might be 'camouflaged' in metaphors, symbols or in other semantical ways to make the answer less 'rude' (ibid.). Deal-focused people are also polite, however politeness is not expressed in the same way, thus including phrases just for politeness' sake, is less usual. Being 'straight to the point', is perceived as being honest, assertive, and reliable, and one might argue that this is seen as politeness. This is where misunderstandings occur in interactions between direct and indirect people – indirect people may be stunned by direct people's communication, as leaving out the polite approach may come off as rude. Of course, these terms depict two extreme opposites, meaning that one does not only meet one or the other type of people. Nevertheless, the argument is that this type of cultural difference is what an international manager might experience in his or her work. E.g., a manager who sends short, descriptive answers via e-mail, to employees who are used to polite wording, might experience that his or her employees respond to their management style differently than he or she would expect.

Moreover, the terms 'direct' and 'indirect' (Gesteland, 2012) are related to high-context and low-context cultures (Hall, 1976, in Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010; Gesteland, 2012). In high-context (indirect) communication *"the meaning of what they say at the bargaining table is often found more in the context surrounding the words rather than in the words themselves"* (Gesteland, 2012, p. 45). This means that in order to understand what is said, one has to

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[2] Deal-focused vs. relationship-focused cultures are further explained in the section 2.3.3 about trust.

understand the situation, place, people, setting, etc. connected to- and present in the conversation. The present context supports the choice of words and way of speech. In low-context (direct) communication, the language is less dependent on the present situation. It is clear what a person talks about, no matter the location the conversation is conducted, as the meaning is in the words themselves (ibid.). Thus, one is less required to refer to the contextual environment.

Body Language

Body language is an important part of communication, as facial expressions and gestures can provide additional messages that cannot be expressed through spoken words alone. Gesteland (2012) mentions two opposing cultural behaviours in communication: Emotionally Expressive and Emotionally Reserved. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) also discuss differences in acceptable business behaviour, and use the terms Affective for Expressive cultures, and Neutral for Reserved cultures. For the sake of simplicity, Gesteland's terms will be used here. Expressive people use a lot of gestures in conversations, and might be more comfortable with small personal spaces (space bubble), therefore, more touching in business behaviour i.e. touch on the elbow and back. They might also, much more often than reserved people, *"find immediate outlets for their feelings"* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Reserved people have an opposite behaviour – less facial expressions, touching is limited to handshakes, and feelings are usually controlled in order not to bring 'confusing matters' to the conversation (ibid.). In the international manager – employee relationship, this may mean that an expressive manager could experience reserved Norwegians as cold and distant. Misunderstandings may be that expressive people use many gestures in communication, and it leads reserved people to perceive them as 'too much', or not being serious. In addition, a positive hand gesture in one culture – might be an offensive one in another culture.

Para-Verbal Communication

When it comes to para-verbal communication, differences are found in how loud or soft the volume of speech is, also referred to as soft-spoken business people (Gesteland, 2012). An example may be a person from an emotionally reserved culture, used to soft-spoken business behaviour, in conversation with a person from an emotionally expressive culture, used to speaking louder. This person might come across as aggressive, and this simple difference is enough to result in miscommunication. Moreover, para-verbal communication also involves

'the silence' in speech (ibid). Reserved people may be more comfortable with longer silences in meetings or conversations. The silence constitutes a respectful sign that one has finished speaking and allows the other part time to think of an answer. Expressive people might read the silence as negative, where silence is understood as disagreement or failure. This may create tension because they might believe that no one wishes to say anything, and they might feel uneasy and nervous when they finish speaking (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). An expressive person might try to fill the silence with talk and does therefore often talk over others to avoid any awkwardness, which, however, might result in irritating reserved people, who feel they do not get the opportunity to express themselves (ibid.).

2.3.2 Cross-Cultural Differences in Hierarchy

Power Distance

Power distance is one of the cultural dimensions in Hofstede's framework (Hofstede, 2001). Inequality among individuals in national societies is measured in this dimension. The results of the measurement are supposed to depict the degree of acceptance of inequalities, and the focus in this thesis is inequalities in companies, also called the 'boss-subordinate' relationship (i.e. international manager – employee) (ibid.). *"Power distance will affect the degree of centralisation of the control and decision-making structure and the importance of the status of the negotiators"* (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p. 339). Hofstede (2001) states that the hierarchical relationship between manager and employees may say little about their actual 'power' relationship, as the hierarchical structure on paper does not describe how the manager uses his or her higher status and how his or her personality shapes the 'power' relationship.

To elaborate on the two extreme opposites of the dimension, the characteristics of the cultures that position themselves on the 'high' end, is that power does not need the same degree of legitimation than for the cultures that position themselves in the 'low' end. Attitudes or beliefs held on the 'high' end might be that the person in power (the manager) is entitled to privileges; that the manager's superiors are of a different kind; and that a prominent position in the hierarchy, in itself, provides existential inequality (ibid.). On the other, 'low' end, attitudes and beliefs are oppositions to those just mentioned – everyone is worthy enough to have equal rights; and (in opposition to existential inequality) power roles

in the hierarchy constitute a convenience; and inequality among individuals should be at a minimum (ibid.).

Egalitarian (informal) and hierarchical (formal) cultures are two other terms that also refer to hierarchy, power, respect, and status in a company (Gesteland, 2012). One may argue that cultures with lower power distance tend to be more informal, while cultures with higher power distance tend to be more formal. Egalitarian cultures hold the belief that employees and managers are equals, to a certain degree; employees can address managers informally, i.e. by their first name, leaving out job title and surname, and can easily speak to managers face-to-face (ibid.). These characteristics may also be found in low power distance cultures as presented above. Hierarchical cultures tend to have the opposite as the rule, however, it is not necessarily more difficult for employees to reach their managers in person, unless the case is a very strict formal culture (ibid.). This is much like a high-power distance culture. Hierarchical cultures emphasise and value the manager's power and status over employees. An important term in this topic is respect. Respect is shown differently in egalitarian and hierarchical cultures. In egalitarian cultures, respect is given by treating everyone as equals, where managers relate to their employees in a more informal way. Managers from hierarchical cultures may expect to be approached by employees as an important (sometimes feared) person.

Age, gender, and social status are also relevant in the level of respect. Many hierarchical cultures, may not let women acquire higher positions in companies. The same goes for younger men, and people with lower social status. Hierarchical cultures may, despite this tradition, give young women from egalitarian cultures a chance to prove themselves (ibid.). Lastly, differences between these cultures also create challenges when it comes to the seller and buyer position in business, as they may have completely different expectations regarding respect. E.g., as the customer is the part paying for a service, they would expect to be treated with some level of respect. In some cultures, the customer is always right, and therefore, the customer is the part holding most of the power in negotiations. However, this might crash with the fundamental values in hierarchical cultures, where respect is ascribed to the older person or the larger company with better reputation. Customers from egalitarian cultures may

experience sellers from hierarchical cultures as arrogant in that they demand customers to respect them, and not the other way around.

Achievement vs. Ascription

The final relevant concepts in the discussion of hierarchy differences are achievement and ascription, and they refer to how and why people in organisations are given higher status than others (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Both egalitarian and hierarchical cultures assign a higher status to some people, but there are different 'rules' for legitimising it (Tjosvold and Leung, 2003). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012, p. 125) state that 'achieved status' is status given to a person based on his <u>achievements</u>, and refers to *doing*, while 'ascribed status' is given to a person *"by the virtue of <u>age, class, gender, education"</u>*, and refers to *being*. Again, age, gender, and social status, previously mentioned, have the same importance here. To exemplify: an older person may have more experience and can therefore be trusted with more responsibility; the class of the person refers to network and connections to other important people, and this implies that the person has more resources; the person's education can come from a top university, and this might imply better personal competences. To put this in the international manager – employee relationship: a young person who, has achieved superior results in his or her company (e.g. commercial success), and has therefore earned respect based on achievements, might be confused when he or she is not respected by a manager who comes from a culture where status is ascribed, as the manager might look past his achievements and base the level of respect on the employee's young age. Hence, the focus on age and experience surpasses achievements. A person with an ascribed status might demand respect simply because of his or her title, but this does not mean that their knowledge and competence exceed others'. This is mainly where misunderstandings and irritation occur in cross-cultural manager – employee relations with opposing views on status. Achieved-focused employees in interaction with an ascribed-focused manager, may experience that those with achieved status must behave as superiors to others who have ascribed status and 'know less' technically (ibid.). In sum, the problem is that ascribed-status people is offended when younger achieved-status people have the equal right to participate in decisions; achieved-status people are offended that their achievements, which might outperform others, are not valued simply because they are younger.

2.3.3 Cross-Cultural Differences in Trust

Firstly, it is not easy to treat trust as an independent topic. The reason is that trust is dependent on everything else going smoothly. Hence, when discussing trust, it is difficult to exclude topics such as, and not limited to: communication and gestures, power distance and hierarchy, corruption, time orientation, uncertainty avoidance, etc. In other words, cross-cultural trust is connected to all differences experienced in cross-cultural interaction. To give some examples: Mistrust may arise in situations where two parties have different time orientations – one party views appropriate 'show-up time' for meetings as five minutes before the actual meeting, and the other party views appropriate 'show-up-time' as thirty minutes later; mistrust may arise if one party uses a lot of hand gestures, and the other party does not. The party that does not use gestures in conversations may experience the other party as not being serious, while the party that does use gestures might experience the other party as not being interested. Such differences have already been touched upon previously, but they are repeated here to further exemplify that they are also roots for mistrust. The point is – the different perceptions cultures have about what acceptable behaviour is, cause people to judge others when they act in ways that diverge from what is regarded as acceptable. What is regarded as acceptable or natural in any given context, provides guidance on how individuals act in any given situation (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). Therefore, mistrust may simply be born when others act in ways you do not understand, cannot predict, or is too different from what you would have done yourself. Nevertheless, this section will attempt to discuss how mistrust arises in cross-cultural manager – employee interactions by looking at the difference between deal-focused vs. relationship-focused cultures, and collectivist vs. individualist cultures.

Deal-focused vs. Relationship-focused Cultures and Individualist vs. Collectivist Cultures

As previously mentioned, deal-focused cultures prefer to get to know the other party (manager, employee, customer, etc.) while doing business together, and relationship-focused cultures prefer to establish a relationship before doing business (Gesteland, 2012). These two opposite preferences are also found in Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) terms Individualism and Collectivism (not in a political sense). In individualistic societies, people look after themselves – they leave parents when they are able to support themselves and are not required to maintain a strong relationship with family; they treat everyone the same (family

members, friends, customers, business partners); and promotion or hiring is based on an individual's achievements and skills (following specific written rules) (ibid.). In collectivist societies, the family which people are born into are the group of members they are forever loyal and strongly connected to. This also leads them to treat people around them differently, thus family members and close friends are given better opportunities when it comes to promotion and hiring, where other rules, such as in individualistic societies, do not apply (ibid.). A further difference, which ties Hofstede's observations to Gesteland's, is that individualistic people, just like deal-focused people, value tasks over relationships, and collectivistic people, just like relationship-focused people, value relationships over tasks (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005; Gesteland, 2012). It is evident that both Hofstede and Gesteland measure the same types of values in people's orientations in life. However, the different dimensions, of which they are studying (individualism vs. collectivism, and deal-focused vs. relationship-focused), and how they are studied, may <u>not</u> be mutually exclusive. This means e.g. that Hofstede does not only discuss challenges found in deal-focused vs. relationship-focused interaction in his research.

For relationship-focused people, a written agreement is not a final and overruling document in negotiations. The advantage of the relationship is that terms and negotiations can be rearranged (Gesteland, 2012). The idea of building a relationship before doing business is not only that people get to know the intentions of others better, but that the most important product which comes out of it, is trust. Moreover, the relationship needs to be made with a person – creating a relationship with a company is not the same. *"…Only natural persons are worthy of trust… not impersonal legal entities like companies…."* (Hofstede, 2001, p. 239). Furthermore, if the people personally engaged in the relationship are replaced, a new relationship must be established (ibid.). The fact that relationships prevail deals conflicts with the individualist and deal-focused people. A written agreement is often the final product of a negotiation in deal-focused cultures (Gesteland, 2012). After signing an agreement, it is taken for granted that you are committed and obligated to stick to the terms and conditions negotiated at the time the agreement was settled. The idea is that you should make things work the best way possible to stick to what agreed upon. Trying to renegotiate agreements may harm the level of trust, as deal-focused people rely on the written agreement and not on the relationship (ibid.). Deal-focused people seek quick results, which means that as soon as

hands have been shaken, negotiations may take place, and terms may be settled. There are no exclusive requirements to spend time on relationship building beforehand, as this comes naturally later in the process. These differences may pose challenges if the manager and the employees have opposing views of the relationship. A relationship-focused manager might prefer to get to know employees to a higher degree than the deal-focused employees are prepared for. Deal-focused employees might experience that they have to allow more time for bonding for the relationship-focused manager to listen to them.

2.4 The Norwegian Context – A Closer Look

Norwegian culture is often presented along with other Nordic cultures such as Danish, Swedish, and Finnish. However, as mentioned previously, there are variations within national cultures, and there are certainly variations and differences between nations. The reason why they are often not differentiated is that the differences (perceived by the rest of the world) are not significant. All the Nordic cultures share an equal emphasis and belief in the same values such as democracy, egalitarianism, preference to avoid conflict and confrontation, and a focus on the environment (Gesteland, 2012). This section discusses the Norwegian culture by presenting the common Norwegian management model, and culture characteristics in communication, hierarchy, and trust. This section aims at portraying the Norwegian context the international manager meets, as it is depicted in the literature.

2.4.1 The Norwegian Management Model

The Norwegian management model (also called the Nordic model) does not only concern the individual manager and his or her beliefs, but how the manager together with other employees is able to manage an organisation efficiently. The Norwegian model puts emphasis on how 'a group' outperforms 'an individual'. The idea is that in order to reach the best decision, the width of rationality, information, and reflection from more than one person is better than the single individual's. Lima (2013) presents the model with this idea and supports the logic behind it by referring to research that has proven that a group's final decision is better than the decision the most intellectual person within the group would have made. Furthermore, in her research she states that *"the Norwegian manager is less authoritarian, more participative, delegates and coaches more than foreign managers"* (Grennes, cited in

Lima, 2013, p. 14). She also points out that these characteristics coincide with the ideology behind the Norwegian welfare state.

The Norwegian management model derives its function and components from the Nordic 'working model', which is made up of the tripartite cooperation between the state, employer, and employee (*in a company = owner, manager, and employee*) (Lima, 2013; Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). Moreover, the tripartite cooperation is based on mutual trust, and the intention is to reach a common goal together. The fundament of every organisation is the people within. They are the most valuable resource. The model implies that if the manager focuses on facilitating for his or her employees, it will in turn give the company economic growth. This makes up one aspect of the model, which is power equality. The second aspect of importance is gender equality (Lima, 2013). Norway was the first country (2006) to introduce a gender quota law, requiring public limited liability companies (PLC) to have corporate boards where 40% should be represented by women (Strøm, 2015). Today, women make up almost 4/10 of board members in PLCs, and 2/10 in limited liability companies (SSB, 2017). Lastly, the third aspect relevant in the model is the relationship between attitudes and results (Lima, 2013). Attitudes are part of how an individual chooses to act in different situations. The point is that attitudes have a major influence on results.

In sum, the Norwegian management model is characterised by: *"equality, justice, individualism and freedom (at the same time solidarity and community), and trust"* (Lima, 2013, p. 18). She found these values to be reflected in the leadership styles of eight different managers (CEOs) in Norway.

Moving on, to properly describe the Norwegian management model, pressures from globalisation, and a historic view on developments and changes in cultural, political, economic, etc. areas are relevant to include. However, this would be too much to cover in this thesis, and will not be discussed in detail. Yet, some of the latest influences should be mentioned. What might be most relevant to mention is how American Human Resource Management (HRM) trends have influenced the Norwegian model. What has been most visible in the literature research is that strategic HR practices affect Norwegian employees' influence on the organisation's governance (Lima, 2013). The introduction of new HR practices contributes to a change in how management is perceived, and does not amplify the Norwegian

tradition of encouraging employees to speak up and participate in management (egalitarianism). However, the new focus is that employees should commit to *"contribute to the company's visions which is defined by the top management"* (Lima, 2013, p. 58). Such HRM practices have spread from the USA to the rest of the world (Hollinshead and Leat, 1995, cited in Hollinshead, 2010), and organisations gradually adopt management practices and features of American HRM systems because of pressures from globalisation (Kaufman, 2016).

Globalisation and internationalisation are reasons to why organisations try to implement other organisational management practices. These trends (practices) do not only involve the structure and systems of organisations, but also management processes for the individual manager (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). The exposure to the rest of the world makes it easier to pick up on other organisations' 'success practices'. Trends or recipes on management may blindly be understood as truths (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Røvik, 2007). They (for instance: total quality management, just-in-time manufacturing, management by objective) have been universal trends that have been difficult for managers to avoid – there is pressure to implement trends as they come along, because they may be perceived as 'best practice' (Røvik, 2007). However, all trends might not necessarily work in every context, meaning that a successful management practice in Australia would not necessarily be successful in Norway. It comes down to the contextual conditions – the people, culture, economy, customers, politics, etc., and the total complexity they make up together. Yet, if the trends are not taken into consideration, organisations may fear lagging behind competition. Many organisations might adopt a new management trend, or an aspect of a trend, but will not necessarily implement it and 'live by it' (ibid.). In this respect, it has more to do with reputation and how the world around the organisation perceives it. Organisations might send a message to its shareholders that they are keeping up with what is happening in the external environment.

In sum, the discussion has briefly considered the present state of the Norwegian model, pressures and influences. Globalisation makes today's Norwegian organisations less likely to be completely Norwegian institutional contexts (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). The organisations may be located in Norway, but its practices (for instance HR), operations, systems, and employees may be of other national origins. This means that international managers would not be exposed to only the Norwegian mind-set, norms, and

traditions. This gives room to question the degree of cross-cultural challenges international managers in Norway would experience.

2.4.2 Communication - The Norwegian Context

The Norwegian culture is characterised as direct (low-context), moderately reserved (neutral), and deal-focused (Gesteland, 2012; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Norwegians are classified as direct communicators because they are clear and specific, and say exactly what they mean (Gesteland, 2012). If a Norwegian turns down an invitation or proposal, he would not necessarily include endless phrases of politeness. Hence, the answer 'no' would also not be hidden behind metaphors to make the answer less direct (or rude). This approach may be perceived as rude for indirect communicators, though Norwegians find conciseness to be honest, respectful, and professional. This applies to the manager – employee relationship – communication is straight to the point. Furthermore, as Norwegians are deal-focused and direct communicators, they might not be prepared to spend a lot of time building a relationship <u>before</u> cooperating (ibid.). A written agreement provides a good enough foundation to start working together. This implies that what the parties have agreed upon and signed is finite. Formal written agreements provide security, and any small talk around business cooperation is not a necessity, but positive input for building a relationship as they go along.

When it comes to the non-verbal communication, such as personal space (space bubble), hand gestures, and touching, Norwegian culture is perceived as emotionally reserved (moderately reserved), and to some cultures, where touching is very common, Norwegians may come off as cold, distant, or arrogant (Gesteland, 2012). Touching, as in patting on the back, touching elbow, holding arms, is not common in Norwegian business communication. Physical contact reach as far as to a hand-shake at the beginning and end of a meeting. Moreover, being a reserved people, Norwegians also do not show emotions (in the work place) the same way as in expressive cultures. It is less acceptable to openly show anger and despair, and to raise your voice loudly in disagreements. Norwegians perceive such behaviour as unprofessional, and might even believe the person is unstable as he or she cannot control his or her emotions (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). This correlates with Gesteland's (2012) para-verbal term 'soft-spoken'. Norwegians are most often soft-spoken, and there are also often moments of silence. As previously mentioned, these moments of silence may be experienced

as awkward for expressive people who may be used to interrupting and to be quick on comments and feedback. Nevertheless, these moments of silence are common after presentations, or in conversations (ibid.), and interrupting others is perceived as very rude.

2.4.3 Hierarchy - The Norwegian Context

As previously mentioned, Norway is an egalitarian society (Gesteland, 2012; Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013) based on the belief that people should have the same opportunities in life, as people are equal. Hofstede's cultural studies have proven that Norway is one of the countries with the least acceptance of inequality and power distance among individuals (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). On the power distance dimension, Norway has a low score of 31/100, and characteristics attributed to Norway are: a focus on independence; that hierarchy is only for convenience; everyone is equal – where managers are reachable for employees; employees are empowered and coached by managers; employees are involved in decision-making (focus on consensus) as managers depend on them; employees dislike being controlled and address managers informally (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Centre, 2017). As the Norwegian society focuses on treating everyone equally, age and gender are not supposed to be barriers in the work environment. Status is also very seldom ascribed to people, but given on the basis of achievements (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012).

This mentality is reflected in organisations, and more specifically the hierarchy. When discussing hierarchy in this thesis, the thought is on how employees behave towards managers, how easily employees can reach their managers in person, and how managers choose to involve employees in decision-making. Hofstede uncovered in his studies that in Scandinavian cultures, *"powerful people should try to look less powerful than they are"* (Hofstede, 2001, p. 98). The discussion about the Norwegian management model has already highlighted how Norwegian managers involve employees in decision-making, and that the Norwegian managers are less authoritarian, as other employees have the chance to openly criticise them. It may be argued that trying to look less powerful is achieved by involving others and by decentralising power. Norwegian employees respond negatively to authoritarian leaders (Strand, 2007), and responsive actions might be to look down on the manager, thus being characterised as an authoritarian manager is not necessarily an advantage (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). What further supports this argument is

Hofstede's statement on authority and its possible existence: *"Authority exists only where it is matched by obedience"* (Hofstede, 2001, p. 82). Hence, even though Norwegian organisations have hierarchical structures, either high or flat, the egalitarian mentality evens out the power distance.

The informality in the Norwegian culture is exemplified in the preference to decrease the distance between manager and employees (Gesteland, 2012). For example, *"the term 'co-worker' is preferred over the term 'subordinate'"* (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013, p. 19). This may confuse non-Norwegians (international managers) as 'co-worker' usually refers to employees on the same hierarchical level, but now refers to subordinates, in addition to same-level workers. *"Legitimate individual behaviour in leadership positions in a Norwegian context must therefore recognise egalitarianism and tone down hierarchical differences".* (ibid., p. 20). A down-side to this is that it might be difficult for managers to function in a formal leader position if he or she constantly has to make concessions to the equality norm (ibid.).

An additional point to this discussion of hierarchy is The Law of Jante (Janteloven), which may be explained as a set of culturally rooted norms. The main message in The Law of Jante is that the individual should not believe that he or she is better than anyone else. Talking too much or too highly of oneself is not a behaviour people applaud. In Scandinavian countries, *"assertive behaviour and attempts at excelling are easily ridiculed. Excellence is not something one flaunts…."* (Hofstede, 2001, p. 137). This idea is similar to Hofstede's previous statement, that people should look less powerful than they really are. The degree of emphasis on this law in society may be discussed, but its presence may inhibit individuals (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).

2.4.4 Trust - The Norwegian Context

Gesteland (2012) states that Norwegians are deal-focused, and do not need to establish relationships with people in the work context before they work together. The written contract is what provides security, and those who sign a legal document are also trusted. The fact that Norwegians do not require meeting business partners or co-workers in person before negotiating, demonstrates how they expect sincerity and honesty from most people – moreover, this demonstrates the egalitarian values in society. This behaviour is also reflected

in the low-power distance in society and organisations, where employees are trusted more easily than in high-power distance cultures (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). It is also more often taken for granted that others will act in good spirit. Furthermore, Norway scores a 69/100 on Hofstede's individualism dimension (Hofstede Centre, 2017; Hofstede, 2001). As an individualist society, there is a focus on people looking after themselves (Jackson and Parry, 2011), and the expectation that one can trust others to do what is agreed upon may derive from the individualism characteristics. In individualist societies *"the relationship between employer and employee is primarily conceived as a business transaction"* (Hofstede, 2001, p. 237), the contract is what connects the two. Thus, if the employee performs poorly, the personal- and work relationship may be terminated (ibid.). Individuals are rewarded on the basis of achievements and written rules are followed for promotion and appraise.

Another relevant factor when it comes to trust is corruption. Norway scores 85/100 points in the Corruption Perceptions Index 2016 (Transparency International, 2016). This is in the top rank of corruption-free countries. Countries above Norway are Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland (only 1-5 points in difference). This supports what was previously mentioned, that Norwegians trust others without knowing them personally, and emphasises the belief they have that others will stick to what agreed upon. However, there will always be incidents of cheaters who do not live up to these expectations. The sole idea is that it is very uncommon to expect corruption in the sense of bribes, serious rule breaking (governmental, human rights) etc. in the normal Norwegian work context. Norwegian business cultural behaviour does therefore also not involve a strong gift-giving tradition – only very small 'attention gifts' (a bottle of wine) are acceptable (Gesteland, 2012).

2.5 Skills for International Managers

The literature discusses skills international workers should have when employed in another cultural context (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Marx, 2001; Joynt and Warner, 1996; Cavusgil, Knight, and Riesenberger, 2014; Deresky, 2014; Hollinshead, 2010; Tjosvold and Leung, 2003). This section considers terms such as cultural knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and intelligence – abilities and skills for improving cross-cultural work experience.

Firstly, cultural knowledge concerns what a manager knows about another culture, involving the beliefs, attitudes, lifestyles, and values (Cavusgil, Knight, and Riesenberger, 2014). The

manager has the necessary competence and interpretative and factual knowledge, about the culture, which make it easier to understand the intentions behind employees' actions. Cultural awareness refers to *"…understanding states of mind.…"*, in other words, understanding your own cultural beliefs and values, as well as others' (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012, p. 242). Moreover, the idea is to accept the cultural views that one holds, and to accept that people from other cultures have other views, even though they might collide. An elaboration of this is cultural sensitivity (also called cultural empathy), which concerns not only cultural awareness, but also to have *"an honest caring about another individual's culture...the ability to understand the perspective of those living in other…societies and the willingness to put oneself in another's shoes"* (Deresky, 2014, p. 93). An international manager who is capable of this has the advantage to plan and lead in a manner that is most appropriate for the employees, which in turn helps implementation and execution of strategies.

Lastly, cultural intelligence refers to the manager's ability to adapt and function effectively in cultural diverse contexts (Deresky, 2014; Cavusgil, Knight, and Riesenberger, 2014). This term may involve all of the above, as it implies that the manager is culturally aware, possesses cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Thus, cultural intelligence may be seen as a collection of capabilities and competences possessed. Cultural intelligence is a skill that can be learnt (Deresky, 2014), and organisations may provide cross-cultural training to enhance managers' and employees' abilities. The focus of such training programmes is to make employees aware that they, unconsciously or not, assign meaning to behaviours and actions to others around them (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Employees should be made aware of their thought and feelings processes towards situations, behaviours, actions, etc. that are dissimilar to what they find familiar. People feel most comfortable with what they perceive as similar or normal, and whatever diverge from this, may evoke negative reactions. This might be anger, irritation, or fear. Therefore, acknowledging these reactions and the reason to why they arise might help managers and employees become more self-aware (Tjosvold and Leung, 2003). Attaining such cultural insight is an investment to avoid or to ease future cross-cultural challenges.

2.6 Convergence and Divergence – The Effects of Globalisation

Globalisation and internationalisation have increasingly received attention in Norway the last 20 years (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). The previous section about the Norwegian context briefly discussed influences and changes in the Norwegian management model caused by globalisation and internationalisation. What does globalisation and internationalisation mean? Globalisation is *"the progressive change in competitive structures from multinational (country by country) to global (worldwide)"* (Lasserre, 2012, p. 498), and internationalisation is the act of companies expanding and establishing a presence in international markets. Globalisation and internationalisation demand more from companies and managers as they are competing on a global level. This requires sharpening of competence, to be more productive, and to be more flexible (because if they cannot adjust to meet market demands, others will take their place) (Dølvik, et al. 2007, in Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).

The literature discusses different effects of globalisation, and two of them are convergence and divergence. Convergence theory describes the phenomenon of management styles, operations, and practices becoming similar around the world (Deresky, 2014). *"Convergence implies that as nations become industrialised, there is a significant change in values towards common behavioural patterns"* (Tjosvold and Leung, 2003, p. 169). Hollinshead (2010, p. 224) argues that convergence of business practices and systems is caused by "…*MNCs, the Internet, the consolidation of trade blocs and international labour mobility".* Industrialisation, technology, and worldwide competition are reasons for, why and how, plausible solutions to effective management are imitated and replicated. Organisations try to copy others to achieve successful results by implementing 'best practices' (systems and practices that are perceived to be superior because they have been successful) (Røvik, 2007). Moreover, there are disagreements around the convergence phenomenon. Some say that the convergence of practices, systems, and management styles, harms local cultures (Cavusgil, Knight, and Riesenberger, 2014). It is seen as a negative effect, where the *"artistic expression and sensibilities"* of cultures are replaced and become homogenous (ibid, p. 134). On the other hand, the effect can be viewed as positive as cultural values and beliefs can move freely across nations (ibid.).

Divergence is also an effect of globalisation. Forces that lead to divergence have been listed as *"variety of capitalism, distinct national business systems, and diverse and unique legal set-up"* (Budhwar, Varma, and Patel, 2016, p. 312). *"Proponents of the divergence approach to the understanding of cross-cultural management argue that national culture, not economic ideology, drives values"* (Tjosvold and Leung, 2003, p. 169). Divergence theory describes the phenomenon of practices, operations, and systems across nations becoming dissimilar (Deresky, 2014). Reasons for this might be national scepticism to cross-national practices (Kaufman, 2016) – in one way, a self-defence act. There is an awareness that what might work perfectly in one cultural context, does not necessarily work well in other cultural contexts. Other arguments for divergence being the main effect of globalisation is that the differences between nations (values and cultural norms) make convergence less likely (Budhwar, Varma, and Patel, 2016).

The purpose of this section is to highlight that the convergence theory attempts to explain why international managers might not experience extreme challenges in other cultural contexts, and divergence theory attempts to explain why they do. If organisations become more alike, workers that move work place from one country to another might recognise practices and more quickly become accustomed. On the other hand, divergence would argue that the international managers would meet cross-cultural challenges as cultural values and norms prevent identical practice.

Globalisation may also create hybrid versions of the global management trends (Hollinshead, 2010). The reason being that even though a trend may be the same on paper, they are understood differently in different contexts, and are therefore further shaped and changed in different directions. Thus, a dominating global trend is not necessarily identical in practice everywhere. Each context has its own culture, mind-set, government, traditions, and norms that influence the final outcome of implementation and execution.

2.7 The Complied Theoretical Framework – A Summary

This chapter has so far elaborated on three areas of cross-cultural differences (communication, hierarchy, and trust). Elements from three frameworks have been used in the discussions of these areas, and the elements are compiled into a new framework below. Thus, this part serves as a summary of the elements that have been used to construct the

Norwegian culture profile, and as a presentation of the compiled framework that will guide the analysis and discussion of the data collection.

Elements used to discuss differences and challenges in cross-cultural communication are Direct (low-context) vs. Indirect (high-context) cultures, and Emotionally Expressive vs. Emotionally Reserved cultures (Gesteland, 2012). In the discussion of hierarchy, differences and challenges were discussed using elements such as Power Distance (Hofstede, 2001), Hierarchical (formal) vs. Egalitarian (informal) cultures (Gesteland, 2012), and Achieved status vs. Ascribed status (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). Lastly, Deal-focused vs. Relationship-focused cultures (Gesteland, 2012), and Individualism vs. Collectivism (Hofstede, 2001) were used to discuss differences and challenges related to trust.

Area	Elements
Communication	• Direct (Low-Context) vs. Indirect (High-Context) Cultures (Gesteland, 2012) • Emotionally Expressive vs. Emotionally Reserved cultures (Gesteland, 2012)
Hierarchy	• Power Distance (Hofstede, 2001) • Hierarchical (Formal) vs. Egalitarian (Informal) Cultures (Gesteland, 2012) • Achieved-status vs. Ascribed-status Cultures (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012)
Trust	• Deal-focused vs. Relationship-focused cultures (Gesteland, 2012) • Individualism vs. Collectivism (Hofstede, 2001)

What Can Be Expected?

What cross-cultural challenges may be expected in the data collection? For instance, the Norwegian culture emphasises consensus management, involving employees in decision-making and coaching employees. Could the consensus management style be a challenge for international managers used to a more authoritarian management style? Could the Norwegian informal approach to management cause challenges related to respect? Could the deal-focused behaviour pose challenges in the employee – manager relationship?

CHAPTER 3 – METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The research question was *"what cross-cultural challenges, caused by cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust, do international managers in Norway experience?"*. In order to discuss the challenges that international managers face, this thesis used cross-cultural theory from Hofstede, Trompenaars, and Hampden-Turner, and Gesteland, which described differences between cultures. From these frameworks, a new framework was compiled to guide the analysis. The purposes of the study were to identify challenges caused by cultural differences, to discuss how well the Norwegian culture profile was reflected in the data collection, and to discuss the findings in the light of convergence and divergence theory. This chapter explains the methods used to meet these purposes and to answer the research question. This chapter starts off with section 3.2, presenting the research strategies adhered to, both for answering the research question and for the data analysis process. Followed by this, section 3.3 presents the choice of industry and informants, and section 3.4 discusses the choice of data collection methods. The data was collected using a method triangulation of quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interviews) methods, and section 3.5 goes through the step-by-step procedures of the data collection methods. It presents the construction of the questionnaire and the interviews. Section 3.6 discusses validity and reliability in the method triangulation. Lastly, section 3.7 concerns the ethical aspects of research.

3.2 Research Strategies

Strategy for Answering the Research Question

The three main research strategies often discussed in the methods literature and theory are inductive, deductive, and abductive (Blaikie, 2010). Inductive and deductive strategies are oppositions, where inductive reasoning involves moving from the particular to the general, and deductive reasoning moves from the general to the particular. The abductive research strategy involves describing and understanding *"social life in terms of social actors' meanings and motives"* (Blaikie, 2010, p. 84). A deductive research strategy was adhered to, as the study

relied on what previous research had uncovered. Established theories indicated what types of cross-cultural challenges that international managers could experience, and from this, the study aimed at exploring concrete challenges in the Norwegian context. Thus, moving from the information found in the field of cross-cultural studies (the general), to challenges experienced in the oil industry in Norway (the particular). Using established knowledge in the research field is one aspect of deductive research strategy. *"Rather than searching for the truth, any deductive explanation should be regarded as one amongst other possible explanations"* (ibid, p. 87). In this respect, the conclusion of this study is one in many possible outcomes. The specific experiences uncovered in this study presents conditions from one point in time.

In addition, this study collected data through an online survey and interviews, a so called mixed-method study (Blaikie, 2010; Hjerm and Lindgren, 2011; Maxell, 2013). A sequential transformative strategy was adhered to for combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. This is further elaborated on in section 3.4.

Strategy for the Data Analysis Process

A constant comparative method was employed in the analysis process of the data collection (Hjerm and Lindgren, 2011). This means that the data collected was constantly compared to previous research and theories presented in the thesis. The aim was to keep a constant dialog between the empirical data and theories. This method commonly involves firstly a reduction of data where elements are coded and from there placed into categories or themes. Questions in the interviews and the questionnaire were already themed, and thus the categories for the analysis was also obvious. The last step of this method involved using the categorised data as the basis for the analysis. The three steps in the method may be done in parallel. Hence, the analysis process was therefore also a heuristic process, where the interpretation of the data evolved by constantly going back and forth between previous research and established theories, and collected data (ibid.).

3.3 Choice of Informants and Industry

The term 'International Manager' in this thesis referred to a person who had another cultural background than Norwegian. The informants in this study were therefore foreign people, who may have had a work position in Norway for a few months, twenty years, or longer, and they

might even identify themselves as Norwegians today. However, the main criterion was that they had another cultural background than Norwegian, and could therefore view the Norwegian culture from an outside-in perspective. Thus, the international manager in this context was <u>not</u> a Norwegian manager who managed divisions abroad from Norway.

International managers may be employed in any type of company or industry in Norway, yet for practical reasons, to structure and narrow the search for participants, only one industry was chosen. The Norwegian oil industry seemed to be the best option for this study as it is highly international, representing over 100 nationalities (Norsk Olje&Gass, 2012). The chances of reaching a higher number of international managers were arguably better in this industry than in others. Other theoretical reasons were that choosing a highly international industry as the case for studying the general phenomenon of cross-cultural challenges could arguably make the results from the data collection more transferrable to other industries. In other words, if international managers in the oil industry experienced cross-cultural challenges, one could assume that international managers in other Norwegian industries also experience these challenges. Lastly, the companies were therefore strategically selected (Johannessen, Tufte, and Chistofferesen, 2016) – oil companies were the target group. Whereas the selection of the individual informants were done by a contact person in the different companies. Section 3.5 further elaborates on the selection of informants.

3.4 Choice of Methods – Research Design

3.4.1 Method Triangulation

Quantitative and qualitative methods are very often described as two completely separated paradigms, but this is not necessarily the case (Hjerm and Lindgren, 2011; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). The differences between the methods are not extreme. The reason why they argue this is because the methods are often confused with methodology. Methods are concerned with the systematic procedures with data collection, while methodology is concerned with the epistemological view point the methods rest on (Hjerm and Lindgren, 2011). As the methods have been strongly connected to the researchers' view-point, it is commonly argued that methods and methodology cannot be separated. The common distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is that quantitative methods build on numbers, dealing with *"how much of a kind"*, and the latter on words, dealing with *"what*

kind" (Hjerm and Lindgren, 2011; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). However, methods may be used interchangeably and in combination, depending on how the researcher wishes to analyse a topic of interest. Hence, information collected through both methods may be analysed in numbers or words.

The research question allowed for combining methods, as experiences in cross-cultural interactions may be collected in interviews and in questionnaires. There were several reasons for combining methods. First and foremost, the main reason was that a mixed-method could help meet the need for in-depth explanations and information about the cross-cultural challenges. The combination of the two could complete each other, in that the questionnaire gathered information through pre-coded answers, and the interviews gathered the more detailed explanations, not covered in the questionnaire.

Secondly, the research question aimed at exploring challenges for international managers in different companies. Since these managers have busy days and therefore little time for interviews, conducting a questionnaire (online survey) was thought to gather more respondents than interviews alone. The online survey was estimated to 8 – 10 minutes, which hopefully was short enough for informants to spare some time. Furthermore, the questionnaire allowed informants to be anonymous, which may be a criterion for participation. The choice to use a quantitative method was therefore both for convenience and to ensure a certain amount of data. The main reason for using qualitative methods (interviews), as mentioned, was to gather more information around the challenges experienced. Another reason was related to the concern that the questionnaire would not secure a high number of informants alone, as the survey was limited to managers with a different cultural background than Norwegian[3].

In addition, the online survey was distributed before the interviews were conducted. This allowed to pick up certain points from the survey, and to investigate them more closely in the interviews. The aim was <u>not</u> to conduct a pilot study or to finish one method before the other – which is commonly the case in mixed-methods (sequential explanatory strategy and sequential exploratory strategy) (Hjerm and Lindgren, 2011). On the contrary, a sequential

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[3] Considering the resent cuts in the oil industry, it was likely that the number of international managers employed in Norwegian-based companies had decreased.

transformative strategy (ibid.) was adhered to. This involves integrating the interpretations of the results from both methods, instead of comparing the results. None of the methods were seen as the primary one.

Moreover, the reason for choosing a questionnaire was also because previous cultural studies have relied upon quantitative methods. *"Most studies comparing cultures…use data collected from individuals within cultures, such as responses on questionnaires"* (Hofstede, 2001, p. 15). As the limitation of informants would be a weakness in the quantitative method, qualitative methods were also used. *'Strengths of one method offset weaknesses in other methods'* (Blaikie, 2010, p. 219). In addition, the questionnaire would not allow for collection of more detailed descriptions of the international manager's experiences. Thus, interviews could cover this part. *"Interviews are applicable when the researcher needs to give the informants more freedom to express themselves, compared to what the structured questionnaire allows"* (Johannessen, Tufte, and Christoffersen, 2016, p. 145). In sum, the mixed-method would *"help answer research questions that cannot be answered by one method alone"* (Blaikie, 2010, p. 219).

3.5 Data Collection

A request to participate in the study was sent to 33 companies in the oil industry. The data collection was anonymous, meaning that the survey-profiles could not be traced back to any informant or company. Therefore, it is not possible to report how many respondents came from the different companies, but all in all 23 respondents participated through the online survey and three respondents participated on interviews. The respondents came from a total of 9 different companies. There was a contact person in every company which distributed the survey-link to international managers in the companies, and who scheduled the interviews. The contact person was asked to only send the link to people who could meet two criteria: 1. To have a different national background than Norwegian, and 2. To have a management position. As the selection of informants were left to the contact person, and because there was limited access to information about the number of international managers, it is difficult to indicate the response rate.

The companies were contacted in January/February, and agreements for participation were settled. A few companies could not participate as they did not have any international

managers, and some wished not to participate due to various other reasons, one of them being tight schedules and busy managers. The study involved collecting indirect personal information (such as nationality) and it was necessary to report the research project to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) to get an approval. The application process took 8 weeks. After the project had been approved and adjusted according to NSD's recommendations, the questionnaire was ready to be distributed and the interviews could be conducted.

The questions in the interview-guide and the questionnaire, were inspired by the questionnaire formats from several previous studies. These were AFF's Manager Surveys 2002 (Colbjørnsen, 2004) and 2011 (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013), and a questionnaire format from NSD (2015).

3.5.1 Quantitative Methods

Questionnaire and Survey Process

The online questionnaire was semi-structured, a combination of pre-coded-answer questions and open-answer questions (Johannessen, Tufte, and Christoffersen, 2016). As the aim of the questionnaire was to be convenient and easy to fill out, most of the questions were pre-coded. The survey was made in SurveyXact (an online survey service, data processor), and a link was distributed to respondents through a contact person in the companies.

The questions from the online survey that have been considered in the analysis and discussion are presented in this section. The entire questionnaire format can be found in the appendix.

Demography:

Questions 1 to 6 asked for general information (demography) such as nationality, gender, and age. They also mapped the length of stay in Norway, and position in the company. The questions had pre-coded answers. The answer options for Q1 was adopted from Q32 in the AFF Manager Survey 2011 (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).

About the Management Position and Experience:

Q4 (How long have you been living on Norway) had the pre-coded answer options: <1/2 year, ½-1 year, 1-2 years, 2-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, and more than 20 years.

Q6 mapped the manager's position in the company. The answer options were: CEO, Senior Vice President, Vice President, General Manager, Country Manager, Department Manager, Support Function Manager, Team Leader, or Other (specify).

Q15 asked for how long the international managers had had their current position. The pre-coded answers were identical to Q4.

Q11 mapped if the manager worked for a company of Norwegian origin. Pre-coded answers were 'yes' or 'no'.

Questions 12, 13, and 14 focused on previous international experience. The first question (Q12) mapped if the managers had had a previous position abroad, other than their home country and Norway. If the answer was 'no', the respondent was sent directly to Q15. If the answer was 'yes', the respondent got two follow-up questions Q13 and Q14.

Q13 'How much of your past work experience can you make use of in your present job?' (adopted from Q20 NSD, 2015).

Q14 'Did you have a management position abroad?' (pre-coded answers 'yes' or 'no'). The question referred to experience in terms of working in a different cultural context. The answers were pre-coded in a so-called 'likert scale', with the answer possibilities: almost none, a little, a lot, almost all. In addition, respondents had the option to answer 'can't choose' to avoid pressuring them to answer any of the other options if they did not appeal to them (ibid.). Including a 'can't choose' option avoids the risk of respondents answering on the basis of rough estimates (Johannesse, Tufte, and Christofferesen, 2016).

Cultural Awareness and Knowledge:

Question 16 and 17 mapped the international managers opinions about their cultural awareness and knowledge. To ensure that the respondents had a similar understanding of these terms, the questions came with clarifications. Q16 asked about cultural awareness, and

this referred to being aware of one's own cultural beliefs and values, and to be able to put one's own views aside while perceiving other cultures (Cavusgil, Knight, and Riesenberger, 2014). Q17 mapped the respondents' Norwegian cultural knowledge. The explanation of the term stated that cultural knowledge refers to what a person knows about a certain culture's norms, beliefs, values, and practices (ibid.). The respondents were asked to rate their awareness and knowledge on a number scale from 1 (very high) to 7 (very low). The following question (18) asked if the respondents would say they had enough insight in how to handle cross-cultural challenges at work. The answers were pre-coded on a likert scale, with the options: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, and can't choose.

Approach to Cross-Cultural Challenges:

Question 19 and 20 concerned the companies' approach to cross-cultural challenges. It mapped if the managers had received any training related to cross-cultural work over the past 12 months (Q19), and if they knew about any written strategy towards cross-cultural differences within the company (Q20). Q19 had the answer options 'yes', 'no', and 'can't choose', and was adopted from NSD Q21 (NSD, 2015). Q20 was an open-answer and could be left blank if the manager did not know of any strategy.

Communication:

Q21 concerned etymology and semantics. The terms were defined as the history and meaning of words, and that this may differ widely between languages, causing for example English words to recieve a different meaning when translated to Norwegian. Respondents were asked how often they experienced that the meaning had changed in translation from English to Norwegian, or vice versa. The answers were pre-coded on a scale ranging from: very often, often, rarely, very seldom, never, and can't choose.

Question 22 and 23 mapped the managers experiences of how well they understood Norwegian employees, and how well they thought Norwegian employees understood them. Pre-coded answers were on a scale from: very good, good, neither good nor bad, bad, very bad, and can't choose.

Q24 asked about how often the managers experienced communication misunderstandings. The pre-coded answers where on a scale identical to Q21. This question was aimed at capturing the overall experience with communication challenges.

To map the usual communication style between the managers and the employees which reported directly to the manager, Q25 consisted of answer alternatives such as E-mail, Skype-chat for business, Telephone, Face-to-Face, and Meetings.

Hierarchy:

Question 26, 27, and 28 presented statements, and the managers were asked to indicate how they agreed or disagreed.

The statement in Q26 was: 'it is easy to get respect form my Norwegian employees..' (modified statement from Q16 AFF 2002 (Colbjørnsen, 2004)).

The statement in Q27 was: 'managers should make most decisions without consulting their employees..' (modified statement from Q12 AFF 2011, (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013)).

The statement in Q28 was: 'employees should not openly disagree with management's decision-making' (Q12 AFF 2011, ibid.). All questions had the same answer options identical to Q18.

Q30 asked 'When your employees disagree with you, do you adapt to their wishes?' (Q63, AFF, 2011, ibid.). The answer options were identical to Q21.

Trust:

Question 31 and 32 were also statements the respondents were asked to indicate how they agreed or disagreed with. The statement in Q31 was: 'In order to trust other employees I feel the need to establish a relationship. This involves engagements where we do not discuss work topics'. The statement in Q32 was: 'I can trust my Norwegian employees to hold their part of an agreement'. The answer options were the same for both questions and identical to Q18.

Two of the three last questions concerned the international managers overall experience with cross-cultural challenges. Q33 asked 'All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?', and Q34 'Would you say you have experienced cross-cultural challenges so big they have kept you from doing your work?'. The answer options were identical to Q18.

The final question was an open-answer. Q35 asked if the managers had anything they wanted to share about what they thought the biggest cultural difference for them in Norway was. Respondents could leave the question blank if they did not have anything to share. The question could gather additional comments on experiences other than what could be collected in the rest of the questionnaire.

3.5.2 Qualitative Methods

Interview-Guide and Interview Process

The interviews were semi-structured. This means that the interviews were partly planned, some questions and themes were already set, but the order of the questions were up to the moment of the interview. The interviewer considers that new questions may arise during the interview, and it is the particular situation the interviewer and informant find themselves in that guides the interview process (Johannessen, Tufte, and Christofferesen, 2016). The interview-guide was structured into three main themes: communication, hierarchy, and trust cultural differences. The interviews started off with some basic questions about nationality and the international manager's position in the company. It was followed by an open question: What is the first thing you can think of, when I ask you what you believe the biggest cultural difference in Norway is? The intent was to make the informant start thinking and to use his or her answers as guidance for which questions to ask next. E.g., one informant mentioned challenges related to communication, and from here it was natural to move further to the questions planned for the topic of communication. During each theme, all planned questions were asked, in addition to new follow-up questions to answers which related to the study's topics. Follow-up and interpretative questions are one strength with qualitative interviews. It allows the interviewer to explore topics in more detail (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). E.g. one

informant talked about an experience related to hierarchy in the Norwegian context, and immediate follow-up questions allowed to move deeper into the topic. Consequently, each individual interview was different from the other, as all informants were not asked all the same questions. Interpretative questions were used to double-check that the answer had been understood correctly. The informant's answer was formulated back as a question.

Each interview lasted for about 30 minutes, where the last ten to five minutes were meant for additional comments or questions. Two of the interviews were conducted on the international managers' work place, and the third was conducted on the phone. A dictaphone was used to record the interviews in order to ensure a detailed transcription of the data afterwards. While transcribing the interviews, the data collected were categorised into the three themes (communication, hierarchy, and trust). The data reduction and categorisation process was made easier as the interview-guide was already structured around these themes.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather additional comments and detailed experiences, which the questionnaire could not collect on its own. The amount of data from the interviews were satisfactory to what was aimed for, as all informants had many stories and experiences to share. As the questionnaire was distributed before the interviews were conducted, it uncovered some aspects that seemed interesting to include in the interviews for further exploration. The open-questions in the questionnaire collected comments on Norwegian employees. E.g., some had commented that the biggest difference they saw in the Norwegian context were The Law of Jante and work/life balance (that Norwegians work fewer hours than employees in other countries). These comments were integrated into the interview guide. For instance, the informants were asked if they knew about The Law of Jante, and if they thought it was visible in their work environment. Furthermore, some informants were also asked if they thought the claim that Norwegians work less was applicable. Please see the appendix for the semi-structured interview guide.

3.6 Reliability and Validity in Method Triangulation

Validity and reliability is often discussed and treated differently in qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. This section discusses the topic of validity and reliability in relation to mixed-methods.

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability concerns the data used in the study, how it is collected, and how it is processed (Johannesse, Tufte, and Christoffersen, 2016). For quantitative methods, reliability may be tested by conducting different statistical tests of the data collection. For pure quantitative studies which may involve bivariate- and regression analyses, reliability is treated very differently than for qualitative data (ibid.). However, the data collection in this study did not allow for any bivariate- or regression analysis because of its size. As the quantitative methods did not allow for standardised reliability tests, and qualitative methods generally cannot be tested in such manners (Grønmo, 2007), reliability has been strengthened by giving a thoroughly description of the context of the study, and by stating the intention of every step along the research process (methods and research decisions) (ibid.). Thus, the reader is provided with an open presentation of the research process.

3.6.2 Validity

There are two sides to validity, internal validity and external validity (Johannessen, Tufte, and Christoffersen, 2016). Internal validity in quantitative methods may be measured. This concerns the causal interpretations of data, for example data may be subject to spurious correlation (Skog, 2013). However, as mentioned in the section above, the data collected by quantitative methods were not of applicable size to conduct correlation analysis. Validity concerns whether the methods employed actually examine, and reflects the phenomenon intended to study in a proper way (ibid.). In other words, the validity is high if the data collected is relevant to the problem statement, or research questions (Grønmo, 2007). The data collection was sufficient to answer the research questions. The choice of questions in the study did ensure information directed towards the purpose of the study. Yet, in hindsight, some adjustments could have been made in the online questionnaire. For instance, there could have been more questions referring directly to the experience of different challenges. E.g., informants could have been asked 'how often do you encounter situations where it is difficult to trust your Norwegian employees?', and 'how often do you experience challenges linked to the hierarchical system in the company?'. During the analysis of the data, it was evident that more direct questions, using the word experience, would have benefitted the process of answering the research question. This is because the questions formulated this way was easier to connect to the research question.

External validity concerns the transferability of results from one research project to other similar phenomena (Johannessen, Tufte, and Christoffersen, 2016). E.g. can the results from this study, challenges experienced by international managers in the oil industry, be transferred to other industries? This involves the generality of the results, hence for the results to be transferrable, the descriptions and interpretations of the data must be useful in relation to other phenomena.

The researcher is also involved in the degree of validity. The researcher has his or her own background and identity, a subjectivity, which are referred to as research bias (Maxwell, 2013). One goal is to be as objective as possible in research, but avoiding subjectivity completely is not possible (ibid.). The researcher's assumptions and pre-understandings of the phenomenon studied is impossible to exclude. However, the researcher's bias, a threat to validity, can be dealt with by the researcher being aware of the influence he or she has (ibid.). This issue was dealt with by comparing interpretation of data to other previous studies. Was the challenges uncovered similar to other challenges uncovered in other studies?

The online survey was sent to seven people before distributing it to the participants in the study. The aim was to receive some feedback on the survey's structure and wording. The people testing the survey had management experiences, therefore they could comment on the surveys standard. Some adjustments were made before distributing it. In addition, the questions in the survey was adopted from other research survey formats. This was an attempt to avoid research bias in the creation of the survey, to avoid phrasing questions that would imply a certain answer. Using questions developed and tested by other researchers might add to the credibility.

3.7 Ethical Aspects of Research

There are several aspects to consider in social science research. First and foremost, informants and respondents that participate in the study have the right to be informed about the purposes and contents of the study (Aase and Fossåskaret, 2015). This was done by providing an information sheet to the participants. The information sheet was sent to the informants by e-mail in advance. The sheet was also brought to the interview to ensure that the informants had the chance to read it if they had not. One interview was conducted on the phone, and the informant was asked if he or she had had a chance to read through it. The participants in the

online survey were provided the information sheet on the first page of the survey. They were informed that by clicking next in the survey, they agreed to that the information they provided would be used in the study of international managers in Norway.

Furthermore, another aspect to consider is anonymity. Informants have the right to be anonymous and can require the information they provide to be confidential (ibid.). This applies throughout the research process, from collection, analysis, and publication. Identifiable personal data was not distributed, and will not, be distributed to other institutions or research projects. To ensure anonymity, respondents were never mentioned by name or by company name. Respondents were also not mentioned as he or she in the data analysis. The online data processor (SurveyXact) collected data anonymously – the informants' profiles were not linked to e-mails or addresses. Participation was also voluntary, and if informants wished to withdraw from the study, they could do so without defending their decision (Johannessen, Tufte, and Christoffersen, 2016). All participants were informed of these rights on the information sheet. Please see information sheet in the appendix.

Another ethical aspect is that informants should be represented with dignity (ibid.). The information provided by the respondents are not represented as good or bad in the study. It was important to emphasise in the collection of data, that the information would not be treated as wrong or right.

The study involved collecting personal information (nationality, age, and position in the company), and the questionnaire was also conducted online, and therefore stored online (SurveyXact). The interviews were recorded on a dictaphone. As the project involved the aforementioned collection and processing of data, it required an approval from NSD. The research purpose, intention, content, and data processor were approved by NSD[4]. Adhering to NSD's guidelines, the data collection will also be deleted on the 15th of June 2017.

There are also ethical aspects related to the use of other researchers work. Plagiarism is for instance a major ethical violation (Booth et al., 2016). The utmost attention has been given to ensure that researcher's work have been referenced to correctly.

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[4] Appendix number 20

CHAPTER 4 – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The research question was *"what cross-cultural challenges, caused by cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust, do international managers in Norway experience?".* This chapter analyses the data collection sorted into these sections: communication challenges, hierarchy challenges, and trust challenges. In addition to these main categories, other issues discovered in the analysis process are presented, followed by a section addressing the overall experience of cross-cultural challenges. The main findings are further addressed in the next chapter. The methods chapter presented the data analysis strategy as constant comparative. This means that the data collected is constantly connected to the theories presented in this thesis. The purpose is to connect the findings to the elements in the compiled framework – to illustrate concrete challenges that derive from the cultural differences. The sections are made up of several sub-sections, this made it easier to structure the data related to the elements. This study was based on method triangulation as mentioned previously, and data from the interviews and questionnaire are presented parallelly. Citations from the interviews and questionnaire are written in italics, and are to some degree adjusted to comply to the requirements of anonymity.

4.2 Cross-Cultural Communication Challenges

The data collection uncovered mixed experiences on communication challenges. 44% of the respondents said they often experienced communication misunderstandings (Table 1), 48% said they often encountered that the meaning of words had changed in translation[5]. On the other hand, 57% of the respondents said they rarely or very seldom experienced misunderstandings, and 39% rarely encountered that the meaning had changed in translation[6].

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[5] Appendix number 1
[6] Appendix number 1

	Frequency	Percent
Often	10	43,5
Rarely	11	47,8
Very seldom	2	8,7
Missing	4	
Total	27	100,0

(Table 1: How often would you say you encounter communication misunderstandings?)

Managers that experienced communication misunderstandings came from Nordic Countries, West-European and East-European countries, North- and South America[7]. Fewer respondents between 32 to 39 years old said they experienced communication misunderstandings[8], and in addition, they rarely experienced that the meaning of words had changed in translation[9]. However, there were more respondents between the ages of 40 to 49, and 50 to 60, therefore it is difficult to conclude that younger mangers experienced fewer communication challenges. Both managers who have had their position for 5-10 years, and those who have had their position for one year experienced communication misunderstanding (Table 2).

	Often	Rarely	Very seldom	Total
½ - 1 year	1	1	0	2
1-2 years	1	3	1	5
2-5 years	6	6	1	13
5-10 years	2	1	0	3
Total	10	11	2	23

(Table 2: How long have you had the position you currently hold in Norway? How often would you say you encounter communication misunderstandings?)

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[7] Appendix number 2
[8] Appendix number 3
[9] Appendix number 4

Most of the managers usually communicate face-to-face with their employees (Table 3).

	Frequency	Percent
E-mail	2	8,7
Telephone	1	4,3
Face-to-face	15	65,2
Meetings	2	8,7
All of the above	3	13,0
Missing	4	
Total	27	100,0

(Table 3: How do you usually communicate at work with employees who directly report to you?)

4.2.1 Different 'Code Books'

One respondent reported that even though misunderstandings caused by language differences often happen, they are less common when it comes to technical terms. This concerns practical work and product specifications, where it is vital that everyone has the same understanding in order for operations to run safely and efficiently. Technical terms should have the same meaning in any language. This, however, may not be the case for terms and ideas in plans and strategies. It may take up to several months to ensure that employees fully understand the intent of a new strategy. The respondent said that they might find themselves discussing the definitions of terms used in the description of a strategy or a plan, and then less on the actual consequences of it. Managers spend more time on making sure that everyone is on the same page, and can walk away with the same understanding. What might be the case here is that employees give terms and ideas different meanings than what they really have. As discussed earlier, Mead (1992) discusses how the receiver of a message do not have the same 'code book' as the sender of the message. Moreover, Hennestad (2015) discusses this as the person's interpretation system. One could argue that this is the issue manager and employees are challenged with. As the international manager and employees have different mother tongues, they will naturally use different 'code books' to interpret messages i.e. plans and strategies.

4.2.2 Norwegians and Directness in Language

Established theories have categorised Norwegians as being direct in communication and deal-focused (Gesteland, 2012). This was also evident in the data collection. Several of the respondents said that the Norwegian employees are very often direct in communication, and

this involved communication in e-mails, meetings, negotiation with partners and customers, and face-to-face conversations between colleagues. One respondent talked about how Norwegians do not have the same courtesy protocol as they have in other countries. *"I experience the Norwegian mentality in communication as very direct very often. Other countries have an unwritten rule, or courtesy protocol, to follow in communication. The Norwegian way is harsher and straight forward."* Another respondent said that *"there are rarely any hidden agenda. A 'no' is a 'no, and a 'yes' is a 'yes'"*.

Furthermore, being deal-focused and direct in communication may also have posed challenges in negotiations. One respondent talked about how Norwegians previously have turned down suggestions from other people from abroad. The intention might have been to let the other party know that the suggestion was not possible, but that other methods could be used to arrive at the same, or similar result. However, the Norwegian employees, in one case, was too direct in communicating that the original suggestion was not plausible by bluntly saying 'no'. As the employees phrased themselves so directly, the other party understood them as arrogant. Some respondents interpreted Norwegians' directness as an expression of being honest and professional, but that other people might not understand this.

4.2.3 English Language Skills

Another point that stood out in the data collection was that Norwegians might not be the best English speakers. A respondent said that Norwegian employees are very proud of their English skills, but it seemed like they almost did not wish to speak English. For instance, Norwegians have the tendency to keep speaking Norwegian, even when they are aware that there are people present that do not speak the language. There were new employees in the company that knew little Norwegian, or never learnt it properly, who stuck to their own language, or relied on English. The respondent said that this *"created a separation between employees"*. The respondent believed that remembering to speak English could help to integrate new foreign employees in the company.

4.2.4 Paraverbal Language and Body Language

Other observations international managers have made in their Norwegian work context is that Norwegians are 'colourless' or reserved in their body language. None of the informants did however think this was negative, it is just the Norwegian way of behaving. They saw

Norwegians as modest people, with some exceptions of people acting like superheroes. They are usually not big-mouthed, but restrained. Their observations go hand in hand with what previous research has shown. Norwegians are as discussed categorised as a moderately reserved people (Gesteland, 2012). A very colourful body language is not common. In relation to paraverbal communication, one respondent said that Norwegians are quiet after presentations, there are more 'silent pauses', which was different from other experiences from other countries. Another respondent said that *"obvious body language is rarely used by Norwegians to express negative feelings or disagreement, which is not bad, but it may lead people from other cultures to misread Norwegian's behaviours. They might be left with the feeling that all went fine, when it actually did not. Negative criticism is seldom expressed, instead it may be shown as nodding your head. This takes a while to really capture and understand".* Furthermore, respondents said that Norwegian employees were *"reluctant to discuss negative performance to enable improvement".*

The respondents were also asked about how well they would say they understand Norwegians and their way of communicating, in terms of body language, written, and spoken language. 78% of the respondents said they understand their Norwegian employees well[10], and 65% said they believed Norwegians understand them well.[11]

4.3 Cross-Cultural Hierarchy Challenges

4.3.1 Low Power Distance

Firstly, the Norwegian culture have a low score in power distance (Hofstede, 2001, and Hofstede Centre, 2017). This seemed to be relevant in the international managers experiences. One respondent said that they focused on empowering their employees, giving them more responsibility and freedom over their own work. E.g. middle managers are given more power to make decisions more freely, and must therefore also meet higher demands. They do have to listen to top management, but may not have to consult them before every decision. The decentralisation of power gives the managers who used to have a lot of decision-making power less control.

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[10] Appendix number 5
[11] Appendix number 6

Another point emphasising low-power distance was Norwegian employees' behaviour towards management. One respondent said that *"hierarchy does not matter so much here. People are free to express their opinions to management".* Another respondent experienced that Norwegian employees demanded to be heard by management, often criticised their managers, and felt the need to correct them. The respondent said that Norwegians sometimes seem to think that *"we do not need you, I can do this on my own".* The respondent's experience was that Norwegians are proud of what they know and what they can do, and are therefore quick to let others, even their manager, know if they are doing something they consider as wrong. This was for instance mostly observed between employees doing technical work towards managers operating on a higher level in the company.

70% of the respondents said they agreed that employees should openly show disagreement towards management (Table 4).

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	3	13,0
Neither agree nor disagree	4	17,4
Disagree	10	43,5
Strongly disagree	6	26,1
Missing	4	
Total	27	100,0

(Table 4: Statement: Employees should not disagree openly with management…)

Even though Norwegians often comment on their managers, another observation was that they do not necessarily pressure their opinions on others. One respondent said that Norwegians feel very free to speak their mind, and are indeed very direct. However, they are also humble at the same time. The respondent said Norwegians express their concerns and thoughts, but may add to their comments that they are not experts in what they are talking about. *"They are cautious when they challenge their manager, as they express themselves directly, but emphasise that they do not claim to know everything".* There is an 'open-dialog' environment, promoting employees to speak, which employees actively make use of.

One respondent believed that the *"I can do this on my own"* or *"do not tell me how to do what I know how to do"* attitudes, together with the Norwegian mind-set of including everyone, make Norwegian employees often talk over their managers' orders and suggestions. The respondents also added that Norwegians feel free to speak as they are raised to be critical. It

is evident that Norwegians are raised to be critical to most things, as they continuously question their managers decisions. The respondent believed that the demand to constantly consider employees opinions may make mangers less flexible. It is impossible to always make everyone happy, therefore everyone should not be consulted before every decision.

The respondents were asked if they thought it was easy to get respect from Norwegian employees. 52% of the respondents said that they think it is easy get respect from their Norwegian employees (Table 5).

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	1	4,3
Agree	11	47,8
Neither agree nor disagree	7	30,4
Disagree	2	8,7
Can't choose	2	8,7
Missing	4	
Total	27	100,0

(Table 5: Statement: It is easy to get respect from my Norwegian employees..)

4.3.2 Consensus Management

The international managers experienced how the Norwegian work context relied heavily on consensus management. The respondents reported that *"Norwegians are very consensus oriented"*, *"there is a focus on integrating and involving many employees in decision-making"* and *"employees expect to be consulted and part of decision-making processes"*. Most of the respondents experienced this as positive, and some have been in Norway for so long, they find themselves preferring the consensus leadership style over an authoritarian style. One respondent stated that *"Norwegian employees do not have the same barriers as employees in other countries when it comes to participation in decision-making"*. It is taken for granted that everyone should be allowed to speak their mind, and everyone should be heard. Furthermore, the respondent said *"I experience the Norwegian form of management to be very open. There is an open-door policy, which allows employees to stop by the manager's office. There is an open dialog between management and employees"*. This was experienced positively, as being open for comments and feedback from employees, would allow managers to develop and become better managers. In addition, one respondent also believed that if the managers listen to and involve employees in decisions, they may respect managers' decisions in times when they are not able to take employees' opinions into consideration.

Furthermore, 78% of the respondents agreed that managers should consult employees before making decisions (Table 6), and 65% of the respondents said they would often adapt to employees' wishes, if they should disagree (Table 7). A respondent believed it is very important to involve employees. To make a good decision, managers should consult employees who have competences that the managers do not possess themselves. This way, good decisions are more likely to be made. However, the respondent witnessed that the focus on involving a lot of employees delayed decision processes, and in some cases no decision was made. Some decision-making processes may be very time consuming if too many employees have a say. If employees do not agree with the manager, it is very difficult to move further. One respondent stated that *".... it can be challenging for managers as they have to justify the majority of decisions, and they may face more resistance".* Not only do managers have to defend their proposals to their employees, but they also have to take their employees proposals into consideration. Another respondent compared the consensus management to other management forms experienced in other countries. In other countries, the manager would give orders and directions, and expect employees to follow, regardless of their own opinions. While in the Norwegian context, managers might be held back as it is expected of them to involve a larger group of people. In this case, the consensus management can be a negative aspect too. For instance, an observation made was that if a manager had to make a decision not favoured by the majority of employees, the employees may continue to do things the way they best see fit. Hence, if a manager makes decisions that employees do not agree with, his or her decisions may not be respected.

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	1	4,3
Neither agree nor disagree	4	17,4
Disagree	11	47,8
Strongly disagree	7	30,4
Missing	4	
Total	27	100

(Table 6: Statement: Managers should make most decisions without consulting their employees.)

	Frequency	Percent
Very often	2	8,7
Often	13	56,5
Rarely	6	26,1
Can't choose	2	8,7
Missing	4	
Total	27	100

(Table 7: When your employees disagree with you, do you adapt to their wishes?)

4.4 Cross-Cultural Trust Challenges

One respondent said Norwegian employees can be trusted. The respondent's experienced that managers do not have to follow up on their employees like they might do in other countries. This meant that after managers agreed on something with their employees, they trusted that the employees would work on what they agreed upon. Managers did not have to check up on their employees excessively to make sure they were working. This was also the experience of another respondent who stated that there is an *"ultimate trust in following given procedures"*.

Another respondent's experience with trust in the Norwegian work context, was that it was easier to trust other as employees often seemed to know each other from e.g. school. Especially in Stavanger, which is not the biggest city, there are fewer people, and therefore a better chance of having met your employees at an earlier stage in life. Of course, this concerns the trust relationship between the Norwegian employees, and not necessarily the relationship between international managers and Norwegian employees.

Furthermore, 48% of the respondents said they feel the need to establish a relationship, that involves not discussion work related topics[12]. 78% of the respondents said that they could trust their Norwegian employees to hold their part of an agreement (none of the respondents said that they could not trust their Norwegian employees) (Table 8). The numbers indicate that despite that some international mangers feel the need to establish a relationship in order to trust, most of the managers do trust Norwegian employees who are characterised for not putting aside extra time for bonding (Gesteland, 2012). One respondent said that even though there are different nationalities involved in the Norwegian work context, most meetings do not involve relationship-focused behaviour. As meetings are planned and everyone has their

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[12] Appendix number 7

own busy timetable, people normally only discuss what is on the agenda, and do not talk about family and personal life. Contract and money are the most important topic, and the experience is that this is given all the attention.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	4	17,4
Agree	14	60,9
Neither agree nor disagree	4	17,4
Can't choose	1	4,3
Missing	4	
Total	27	100

(Table 8: Statement: I can trust my Norwegian employees to hold their part of an agreement...)

Another respondent related the topic of trust to structuring and planning. Norwegian employees were eager to plan and wished to execute the plan as soon as possible. What the respondent believed was that as employees wished to start and finish work quickly, they did not have enough time to establish trust. The respondent said they seemed to think *"we have decided what to do, now let us do it".* There was little time for people to settle into tasks and to get to know each other. In this sense, being structured might be a negative aspect. The respondent said that as they were too focused on executing the plan, the plan might be scratched if results did not show quickly enough. Instead of adding more time for adjustment and relationship building, and trust, they could decide to pull back. This is related to what was mentioned above. The main focus was on costs and costs increase when time is added.

4.5 Other Issues Uncovered in the Data Collection

4.5.1 Work/Life Balance

Many respondents also commented that Norwegians had a different work/life balance. Respondents said that Norwegians *"socialise less often than British and American colleagues outside work".* Moreover, a few respondents commented that they *"would like to see work prioritised a little more during challenging times",* that Norwegians *"do not work much",* or they have *"few working hours".* Hence, some international manger's experiences were that Norwegian employees did not spend as much time at work as employees do in other countries. However, one respondent explained this as a myth. The respondent's experience was that Norwegians do not necessarily do less when they work fewer hours. The respondent compared to other countries where employees do not leave work before their manager

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leaves. The observation was that employees that stay at work longer, do not necessarily get more done. It has to do with how effective the employees are at work.

4.5.2 Cultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Insight

The respondents were asked to rate their level of cultural awareness and knowledge. As previously mentioned, awareness referred to a person's ability to be aware of his or her own cultural beliefs and values, and to put this aside while viewing other cultures. Cultural knowledge referred to what the manager knew about the Norwegian culture, involving norms, values, practices, and beliefs. 83% of the respondents rated their cultural awareness as high (scale rate 5-7), and the rest rated their awareness at lower level or at medium level[13]. Most of the international managers did believe they had a good understanding of their own cultural views and that they do not let their beliefs affect their perception of others. 96% of the respondents rated their Norwegian cultural knowledge as high (scale rate 5-7), and the rest at a medium level[14]. This means that almost all of the respondents thought they have a good understanding of the Norwegian culture.

91% of the respondents said that they have enough insight in how to handle cross-cultural challenges at work (Table 9).

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	4	17,4
Agree	17	73,9
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4,3
Disagree	1	4,3
Missing	4	
Total	23	100,0

(Table 9: Would you say you have enough insight in how to handle cross-cultural challenges encountered at work?)

4.5.3 The Organisation's Approach to Cross-Cultural Challenges

The respondents were asked if they knew of any written strategy their organisation had, directed towards cross-cultural differences. 8 respondents said they did not know of any strategy[15]. Others reported that they had culture and diversity training, and knew of a

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[13] Appendix number 8
[14] Appendix number 9
[15] Appendix number 10

strategy. For some, diversity training had been cancelled because it was not considered a priority. 87% said they had not received any training related to cross-cultural work[16].

4.6 All in All Experience of Cross-Cultural Challenges

This section considers the questions in the study that mapped the overall experiences of cross cultural challenges.

34% of the respondents said they regularly experienced cross-cultural challenges at work, and 43% said that they did not (Table 10). Managers that regularly experienced cross-cultural challenges came from Nordic-, West-, and South- European countries, and North America[17]. Most of the managers that regularly experienced challenges were between 40 to 60 years old, and managers between 32 to 39 years experienced challenges less often[18]. Both managers who have been living in Norway for 20 years, and those who have been living in Norway for only one year experienced challenges regularly (Table 11). Hence, there were no strong indications that managers with more experience in the Norwegian culture faced fewer challenges. The same goes for the length of period in their position. Managers who have had their position for several years did regularly experience challenges, like those who have had their position for one year (Table, 12).

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	8	34,8
Neither agree nor disagree	5	21,7
Disagree	9	39,1
Strongly disagree	1	4,3
Missing	4	
Total	27	100

(Table 10: All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?)

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[16] Appendix number 11
[17] Appendix number 12
[18] Appendix number 13

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
½ - 1 year	1	1	0	1	3
1-2 years	0	0	1	0	1
2-5 years	2	1	3	0	6
5-10 years	2	1	2	0	5
10-15 years	1	1	1	0	3
15-20 years	0	0	1	0	1
More than 20 years	2	1	1	0	4
Total	8	5	9	1	23

(Table 11: How long have you been living in Norway? All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
½-1 year	1	1	0	0	2
1-2 years	0	1	4	0	5
2-5 years	6	3	3	1	13
5-10 years	1	0	2	0	3
Total	8	5	9	1	23

(Table 12: How long have you had the position you currently hold in Norway? All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?)

It did not seem to make a difference if the company they worked for was of Norwegian or non-Norwegian origin. Meaning that the data collected indicated close similarity in distribution of answers (Table 13). Furthermore, managers that regularly experienced challenges had positions such as Vice President, Country Manager, Department Manager, Support Function Manager, and Team Leader[19]. Managers in positions such as CEO, Senior Vice President, and General manger did not say that they experienced challenges regularly[20]. Arguably, one could argue that cross-cultural challenges are experienced in most positions.

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[19] Appendix number 14
[20] Appendix number 14

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Yes	3	3	4	0	10
No	5	2	5	1	13
Total	8	5	9	1	23

(Table 13: Is the company you work for of Norwegian origin? All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?)

78% of the respondents said they did not experience challenges so big that it has kept them from doing their work, and 17% said they experienced challenges so big that it kept them from doing their work (Table 14). These managers were from West-European and Nordic Countries[21]. Lastly, 15 of the managers had previously had a management position abroad, less than half of them did regularly experience cross-cultural challenges in Norway, whilst the other half strongly disagree that they did[22].

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	4	17,4
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4,3
Disagree	9	39,1
Strongly disagree	9	39,1
Missing	4	
Total	27	100

(Table 14: Would you say you have experienced cross-cultural challenges so big they have kept you from doing your work?)

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[21] Appendix number 15
[22] Appendix number 16

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings of the data collection presented in chapter 4. The first section revisits the main findings of cross-cultural challenges. The second part of this section (5.3) discusses the reflection of the Norwegian culture profile in the data collection, and discusses the findings in the light of the effects of globalisation – convergence and divergence.

5.2 Main findings - Cross-Cultural Challenges Caused by Cultural Differences

The research question was *"what cross-cultural challenges, caused by cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust, do international managers in Norway experience?"*, and the first purpose of the study was to connect specific challenges to cultural differences described in established theories and the literature. This is the aim of the following section.

Firstly, cultural differences in communication caused challenges related to implementation of new strategies and plans. Additional time was spent to define meanings and terms in new plans and strategies because of language differences. In addition, 44% of the respondents reported that they experienced communication misunderstandings (Table 1). Arguably, it was evident that having different mother tongues (different interpretation systems and 'code books') (Hennestad, 2015; Mead, 1992), affected the efficiency of communication. Furthermore, in some instances, Norwegians' direct communication could cause them to come off as arrogant, and messages could be confusing to others of different nationality. The direct communication style also played a role in courtesy, where attempts to be concise and 'to the point' was interpreted as less polite. Norwegian employees' moderately reserved body language made it challenging to capture disagreements or negative feedback. This could lead to confusion on how propositions were received. Related to this was the reluctance to discuss negative performance, and the preference to avoid confrontations (Gesteland, 2012).

Communication challenges in the Norwegian context caused by cultural differences

- *Concise and specific messages in communication may come off as impolite, even though it is not the intention.*
- *Different 'code books' or interpretation systems prolong the implementation process of new strategies and plans.*
- *Norwegian employees' body language is reserved. It is difficult to catch negative feelings, based on body language, not on spoken language.*

Secondly, cultural differences in hierarchy caused challenges related to decision-making processes. The emphasis on consensus management, consulting employees in decision-making may delay or stall the process. However, this is not a challenge exclusive to international manager – employee relations as a Norwegian manager must relate to the same demand of consensus (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013). Nevertheless, for international managers, whom may be used to a more authoritarian management style and demands, may experience this more challenging than a Norwegian manager who is used to the cultural mind-set. In addition, even though decisions are made, Norwegian employees may continue to do things the way they best see fit. Thus, international managers could experience that their decisions are not respected[23]. There may be several reasons for these actions. E.g. the data collection uncovered that some Norwegian employees tend to think that their manager do not know what the employees know. This is mainly related to employees doing technical work and managers at higher levels focusing on the business' direction. If the employees disagree with managers proposals, they may decide to continue working as they were, hence the mind-set *"do not tell me how to do what I know how to do"*. The point is that unless the manager can relate and understand the practical work of their employees, some decisions might be very difficult to comply to. Therefore, if employees do not follow given directions, it can be understood as disrespectful to international managers who come from cultures where management have more or less complete power in decision-making. However, these actions are arguably a result of the Norwegian culture's emphasis on egalitarianism, informality, and encouragement to be critical. Another challenge related to

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[23] 30% could neither agree nor disagree that it was easy to get respect from Norwegian employees, and 9% disagreed that it was easy (Table 5).

this was that employees would 'speak over' their manager, making it difficult to give final orders.

Hierarchy challenges in the Norwegian context caused by cultural differences

- *Norwegian employees require to be involved in management's decision-making. The consensus management style prolongs decision-making processes.*
- *Respect is not given based on a manager's title, but on his or her previous achievements. In addition to consensus management style, Norwegians also emphasise egalitarian values. A critical mind-set and the demand that everyone should be heard may cause challenges for managers who are used to being entitled complete power in decision-making, and respected for their title.*

Thirdly, as mentioned multiple times, cultural differences related to trust is somewhat difficult to discuss, because trust is dependent on that everything else runs smoothly. Overall, respondents did not seem to experience big challenges for trust. The sole impression was that Norwegian employees could be trusted and managers could depend on them. One issue that stood out was that the structuring and planning in the companies could sometimes get in the way for relationship building. In the execution of plans or projects, Norwegians may not wait long enough to see results. If it takes too long to see an effect or a result, they might terminate the project. The point was that in the rush towards results, not enough time is given to let situations or relations unfold and settle. This might disturb the process of getting to know other people, practices, or conditions, which require time. The conclusion was that time equals costs, and added time increase cost. The added time does also not ensure results.

In addition, several respondents commented on Norwegian employees' work/life balance. This might relate to being deal-focused. As they, compared to other cultures, do not spend the same amount of time to bond, people from other cultures might experience that they are not interested in establishing a private relationship outside work. This might arguably affect trust in the work relationship, with for instance employees from cultures that emphasise knowing their colleagues personally, not only professionally.

Trust challenges in Norwegian context caused by cultural difference

- *Structuring, planning, and the rush towards immediate execution and results, give less time for situations and processes to unfold and settle, Hence, it may be disruptive for trust to evolve as it requires time.*
- *Being deal-focused may arguably affect trust relationships at work.*

5.3 The Results Compared to the Literature and Previous Research

The sections below consider the two latter research purposes of this study. The results are firstly measured up against the Norwegian culture profile. The research purpose was to see how well the profile was reflected in the data collection. The second section (5.3.2) considers two effects of globalisation, and the purpose is to illustrate two different interpretations of the results.

5.3.1 Is the Norwegian Culture Profile Reflected in the International Managers Experiences of the Norwegian Culture?

To start of this section, the table below depicts the dimensions in the compiled framework, and the characteristics that make up the Norwegian profile. The following discussion will look at each dimension and discuss how well each is reflected.

Dimensions	The Norwegian profile
Emotionally Expressive vs. Emotionally Reserved Cultures	**Moderately reserved**
Direct (Low-Context) and Indirect (High-Context) Cultures	**Direct (low-context)**
High Power distance vs. Low Power distance	**Low-Power distance**
Hierarchical (Formal) vs. Egalitarian (Informal) Cultures	**Egalitarian (Informal)**
Achieved status vs. Ascribed status	**Achieved status**
Deal-focused vs. Relationship focused culture	**Deal-focused**
Individualism vs. Collectivism	**Individualism**

(Gesteland, 2012; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Hofstede, 2001)

Moderately Reserved

The data collection uncovered no perceptions of Norwegians as emotionally expressive people. This is due to Norwegian's 'colourless' body language. Respondents commented, as mentioned, that Norwegians do not use a lot of gestures or body language. Other respondents also said that there is a *"reluctance to discuss negative performance"* among Norwegian employees and that *"negative criticism is seldom expressed"*. Negative responses are vaguely communicated, for example, *"by nodding head".* This reflects Norwegian's preference to avoid confrontations (Gesteland, 2012). Respondents said that Norwegian employees tend to be modest and that it is difficult to know when they disagree (based on their body language). Conclusively, the data collection showed no signs of expressive behaviour as Gesteland (2012) defines it, but only experiences that support the characterisation of Norwegians as reserved people.

Direct (Low-Context) Communication

The respondents were never asked specifically if they experienced Norwegian employees as direct in communication, however, many respondents chose this word themselves when describing their experiences. The Norwegian courtesy protocol is harsher and more straight forward that in other countries, and when proposals are declined a blunt 'no' may be a sufficient answer. The data collection indicated a clear emphasis on Norwegians as direct in communication. However, as mentioned in the section above, Norwegians are also moderately reserved. The combination of being direct, and at the same time reserved might explain why some managers also experience the Norwegian employees as *indirectly direct*. Referring to the experience of one manager, where Norwegian employees may be direct in what they say, but that they often acknowledge that they do not know everything. In other words, Norwegian employees may express an opinion, but add that they are not sure if what they say is completely correct. The Law of Jante might also be one of the factors for indirect directness. It might lead employees to avoid thinking they are better than other people, therefore ensure managers that they do not believe that their opinions are more worth than theirs. In conclusion, based on these data it would seem that the characteristic of being direct in communication is well reflected in the data collection.

Low-Power Distance

The Norwegian culture scores a low score, 31/100, in the power distance dimension (Hofstede, 2001). The data collection reflected this very well. All respondents experienced that Norwegian employees believed they had the right to approach management in person, to express their opinions, agreements, or disagreements openly. They expected to be consulted in decision-making, and that their wishes should be heard.

Egalitarian (Informal)

The section above has confirmed that low-power distance was reflected in the data collection. The hierarchical (formal) vs. egalitarian (informal) dimension is closely connected to this characteristic. Approaching management in person, without using title or last names, and to require an involvement are informal behaviours in this dimension. Employees also speak over their managers when they believe they have valuable arguments and opinions that contradict with the managers decision and orders. Conclusively, this characteristic in the Norwegian culture profile is very well reflected.

Achieved Status

Previous research show that Norwegians believe status is something a person achieves (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012). There is a strong belief that no one should be valued more or have a better status, only because of a title. This coincides very well with egalitarianism and the Law of Jante. Firstly, the egalitarian values emphasise that everyone is equal, secondly, the Law of Jante, emphasise that no one is better than anyone else. Thus, they both promote the same idea. No respondents observed people being respected solely on their title in the company, on the contrary, the data collection only emphasised the opposition. The best example is how employees approached managers informally, and how authoritarian personalities do not receive positive responses.

Deal-Focused

The characteristic of being deal-focused is connected to direct communication, as already explained (Gesteland, 2012). The deal-focused vs. relationship-focused dimension was used to discuss trust differences as it revolves around how people connect, or establish relationship. The feedback that indicated that Norwegians are deal-focused, was that Norwegians were eager to execute plans as soon are they had been decided, and if results did

not show rather immediately, they tend to withdraw. Furthermore, other observations were that money and contracts are more important than spending time on relationship building. In addition, some respondents also mentioned Norwegians work/life balance, commenting on that they socialise less often than other nationalities. In sum, one could argue that the deal-focused characteristic is in fact reflected in the data collection.

Individualism

The Norwegian culture scores a 69/100 on the individualism dimension. The data collection reflected this characteristic in different ways. Firstly, respondents said that they did not have to excessively check-up on their Norwegian employees to ensure that they did as they were ordered to. Secondly, middle managers are also given more responsibility. Decentralisation of power and the increased demands on employees at lower levels illustrates individualism (Hofstede, 2001).

Closing remarks

All in all, the Norwegian culture profile is well reflected in the data collection. Even though every characteristic is not supported with the same amount of comments and feedback, there were no indications that the opposing end of the dimension was relevant.

The table below illustrates the Norwegian profile with feedback.

Dimensions	The Norwegian profile	Reflected in the data collection
Emotionally expressive vs. Emotionally reserved cultures	Moderately reserved	Reserved body language, modest, difficult to know when people disagree (based on body language).
Direct (low-context) and Indirect (high-context) language	Direct (low-context)	'Harsher' courtesy protocol, and no hidden agenda, a 'yes' is a 'yes'.
High Power distance vs. Low Power distance	Low-Power distance	Express their opinions directly to management, open-door policy, requirements to involve employees in decision-making.
Egalitarian (informal) vs. Hierarchical (formal) Cultures	Informal	Approach management in person, and treat management as equals.
Achieved status vs. Ascribed status	Achieved status	Everyone is equal, and status is given to people who have achieved it through hard work.
Deal-focused vs. Relationship focused culture	Deal-focused	Wish to execute plans as soon as possible, but quick to withdraw if results take too long. Less time on bonding.
Individualism vs. Collectivism	Individualism	Decentralisation of power, and trust in that employees can manage their own tasks.

(Gesteland, 2012; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Hofstede, 2001; Data Collection)

5.3.2 The Effects of Globalisation

The third purpose of this study was to discuss the results in the light of convergence and divergence theory. This purpose weighed the least in this research project, and is briefly discussed to illustrate two different interpretations of the results. The aim is to acknowledge different views, found in the literature, that may explain the reasons for cross-cultural challenges. On the other hand, the aim is <u>not</u> to measure the effects of globalisation, as this would require several follow-up studies and historical studies, to observe changes over time. This was a cross-sectional study (Skog, 2013), where observations have only been collected at one point in time, and the results can therefore only give some indication but no clear answers or conclusions. Moreover, the findings in this study were collected from 25 informants, hence the rather small amount of data makes it difficult to give any broad explanations. Section 2.6

has already elaborated on the definitions and meanings of convergence and divergence theory, and this section will discuss these theories up against some of the main findings.

35% of the international managers participating in the survey said that they regular experience cross-cultural challenges, and 43% said that they did not (Table 10). How can these results be explained? What arguments do the literature have for experiencing and not experiencing cross-cultural challenges?

The convergence theory argues that we experience fewer cross-cultural challenges as business practices, systems, etc. become similar (Deresky, 2014). This means that the mechanisms in Norwegian companies, or companies positioned in Norway might be similar to what the international managers were already familiar with. Exposure to other cultures also improves abilities to cope in cross-cultural conflicts, hence, the challenges that international managers meet may become easier to handle over time. 43% (Table 10) of the respondents do not regularly experience challenges as communication, hierarchy, and trust differences fade. 57% (Table 1) said they rarely or less seldom experienced communication misunderstandings. The fact that more than half of the respondents do not report that they often experience communication challenges might imply that cross-cultural language barriers fade as cultures converge. Furthermore, 78% (Table 8) say they can trust their Norwegian employees. Convergence theory would argue that cross-cultural interaction has made it easier to trust other nationalities, as we are more exposed to them.

Other results that would support the convergence point of view is that respondents rated their cultural awareness and cultural knowledge as high[24]. An effect of internationalisation and globalisation is that people need to learn more about other cultures, to manage operations abroad. One could argue that convergence is evident in these results as respondents are familiar with the Norwegian culture, and at the same time possess self-awareness of their own culture. 91% of the respondents said they had enough insight in how to handle cross-cultural challenges (Table 9). In other words, this means that almost all international managers would say they are able to aid in a cross-cultural conflict at work. Proponents of the convergence approach may argue that this is one of the positive results of globalisation.

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[24] Appendix number 8 and 9

In sum, when looking at the results with a convergence point of view, some findings may be used to argue that globalisation has made cultures more similar, and this is the reason why about half of the international managers do not regularly experience cross-cultural challenges.

Moving on to divergence theory, 35% (Table 10) of the international managers might experience challenges regularly because the organisational mechanisms in their company is not similar to what they have previously encountered in other countries. Communication, hierarchy, and trust differences do not fade, but become or remain diverse (Deresky, 2014).

44% said they encountered communication misunderstandings (Table 1), and 17% said they have encountered cross-cultural challenges so big it has kept them from doing their work (Table 14). From a divergence point of view, these results would arguably support that substantial cultural differences still exists, or are growing, and therefore cause international managers to experience challenges.

In sum, not only may the results be connected to convergence theory, but it may also be connected to divergence. Despite that some results might support the view of divergence, most the findings in this study does indicate that international managers experience challenges in such a degree it favours the theory of convergence. Yet, as the study was a cross-sectional study (Skog, 2014), where observations have only been collected at one point in time (no follow-up study), the results cannot elaborate further or conclude on the effects of globalisation as these must be measured over time. Consequently, the attempt was to illustrate two different interpretations of the findings to acknowledge what the literature discusses about cross-cultural differences and challenges.

CHAPTER 6 - CONLUSIONS

6.1 Conclusion and Summary

The research question for this thesis was *"what cross-cultural challenges, caused by cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust, do international managers in Norway experience?".* To answer this question a mix of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was employed. The online survey aimed at collecting international managers' experiences from companies in the oil industry, and the interviews focused on collecting more detailed descriptions of their experiences.

Established theory and elements from three frameworks were used to compile a new framework. The elements in the compiled framework were used to construct a profile for the Norwegian culture. Furthermore, this framework guided the structure of the analysis and discussion. The study had three purposes. Firstly, to connect cross-cultural challenges to cultural differences described in the three frameworks and cross-cultural theory. This purpose weighed the most as it was directly linked to the research question. The other two purposes concerned measuring and discussing the findings up against the literature and theory presented in chapter three. The second purpose was to measure how well the Norwegian profile was reflected in the data collection, and the third purpose was to discuss the findings in the light of convergence and divergence theory.

In conclusion, the findings indicated that international managers do experience cross-cultural challenges in the areas of communication, hierarchy, and trust. The main cross-cultural challenges that can be connected to communication differences were directness in communication (harsher courtesy protocol), having different 'code books' which prolonged implementation processes of strategies, and reserved body language (which caused misunderstandings in relation to negative topics). The main cross-cultural challenges that can be connected to hierarchy differences were the emphasis on consensus management and low-power distance (employees demanded to participate in managements' decisions which prolonged decision-making processes). Furthermore, the consensus management style also inhibited international managers to make decisions on their own, they always had to justify and consider employees' proposals. The main challenges that can be connected to trust

differences were the structuring and planning in companies, and the deal-focused behaviours that to a degree disturb the building of trust relationship. In sum, these cross-cultural challenges provide the answer for the research question in this thesis. They are connected to the cultural differences described in the literature and they present concrete challenges experienced by international managers in the oil industry.

In addition to the conclusion of the findings it may be interesting to highlight one particular issue uncovered in the study. It was evident in the data collection that Norwegians were experienced as direct in communication, they expressed disagreement and criticised their managers. In addition, they were also, <u>simultaneously,</u> experienced as reserved people, that were difficult to read, especially when it came to disagreements and negative feedback. To brings this together, Norwegians are both easy to understand, as they speak their mind, but they are also difficult to understand, as they do not have a 'colourful' body language. These two behaviours may cause challenges for international managers. For instance, if an international manager learns that Norwegians express their opinions directly, he or she might expect them to this all the time. However, later be surprised when he or she did not catch or understand that Norwegians disagreed. Consequently, these two behaviours contradict each other, the combination cause challenges for international managers.

The second purpose of this study was met by comparing the Norwegian culture profile to the cultural characteristics found in the data collection. The findings did also reflect the Norwegian culture profile. In other words, the characteristics attributed Norwegian culture were proven to be relevant. The results confirmed what previous research have uncovered about the Norwegian culture. However, it is important to remember that the culture profile can only describe the main tendencies in the culture. Stereotypes should be avoided, as the profile cannot speak for every individual.

Lastly, the third purpose of this study was met by linking the results to the effects of globalisation – convergence and divergence theory. This was a brief discussion on how the findings of the study could be interpreted, and how different point of views in the literature could explain why the challenges exits. Yet, to be able to conclude if the findings were in fact results from convergence or divergence, several follow-up studies and historic studies must

be conducted. The reason is that the effects of globalisation happen over time, longitudinal studies are most applicable for this.

6.2 Reflecting upon the Choice of Theories and Methods, and the Study's Limitations

Adhering to a deductive research strategy, the study relied on previous theories and frameworks about cultural differences. These frameworks have been established over several years of research (Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Gesteland, 2012). There are other cultural dimensions frameworks that could have been employed, for instance the GLOBE study, which in many ways is an elaboration of Hofstede's framework (Buchanan, and Huczynski, 2010). However, the three frameworks chosen represented a broad selection of cultural dimensions, which covered a great amount of the most commonly discussed cultural issues and cultural differences. Most importantly they covered the topics of communication, hierarchy, and trust. The theories satisfied the most important aspects of the focus topics.

The method triangulation of the online survey and interviews ensured enough material for analysis and discussion. During the analysis process, the data was structured into the themes of communication, hierarchy, and trust. This was when it became apparent that the survey should have included additional questions for challenges experienced related to trust. This could have made it easier to say more about the area of trust. This was clear in the process of analysing the data, but it was also noticed soon after the survey had been distributed and participants had started to answer. The interviews were conducted a while after the survey was distributed, therefore, in order to make up for the anticipated potential loss of data about trust in the survey, questions specifically directed to the experience of trust was focused on in the interviews. In a sense, this limitation in the survey was possible to correct by the help of the interviews.

Another limitation was related to the discussion in convergence and divergence. This was already mentioned in the previous section, but it is stated under the section of limitations again, to highlight the importance that cross-sectional studies cannot give conclusions on phenomena that requires to be studied and measured over time. In other words, this study could not present final conclusions on the relevance of convergence or divergence.

Another limitation in the study was the number of participants. As the data collection consisted of answers from 25 respondents, this study may not have the same explanatory power as previous cultural studies. A higher number of participants could have allowed for an even more detailed and comprehensive data collection, and the opportunity to do statistical analysis. Nevertheless, though keeping this in mind, the findings of the study do represent a particular group of international managers, and the outcome of the study may describe tendencies that can help create understanding of cross-cultural challenges in the Norwegian cultural context.

As the oil industry is highly international, the institutional context in which the international managers work may not be entirely Norwegian. In other words, as the industry is highly international, the companies within are strongly influenced by foreign practices and management trends. The study proved that the international mangers in this industry do experience cross-cultural challenges. The fact that 1.) the institutional context is not completely Norwegian, and 2.) that cross-cultural challenges occurs, gives reason to believe that international managers, working in other Norwegian industries which are <u>less</u> influenced by foreign practices, might experience cross-cultural challenges to a higher degree. This argument supports the transferability of the results to other company contexts.

Every researcher has a self-reference criterion, and this means that other cultures will be viewed *"through the lens of your own culture"* (Cavusgil, Knight, and Riesenberger, 2014, p. 138). As mentioned, the bias of the researcher is difficult to exclude from the research (Maxwell, 2013). In this case the researcher's nationality was Norwegian, and the culture in focus was Norwegian. Other readers may argue that the study has been coloured by the researcher's views. To avoid biased questions in the survey and to avoid bias in interpretation of the findings, the survey was constructed using questions from previous studies and the findings were compared to other cultural studies' findings.

In addition to the researcher's self-reference criterion and bias, the participants do also have their own bias. A limitation related to this may be that respondents understood the questions differently. As this study have already discussed, everyone has their own 'code books' that they refer to when they de-code messages. It is possible that different interpretations of the questions have lead respondents to answer differently. This is a flaw the researcher is unable

to control, but the best attempts were made to present the answer as clear as possible (in the English language), and whenever 'uncommon' terms were used, they were defined to increase the chances of the questions being understood the same way.

6.3 Contributions and Suggestions for Future Studies

This thesis linked concrete cross-cultural challenges to cultural differences in communication, hierarchy, and trust. As previously mentioned this study may not have as much explanatory power as other previous studies. However, the findings may contribute to awareness about cross-cultural challenges for the companies whose managers participated in the study. Furthermore, as argued, the findings may also be transferrable to other industries, meaning that other international managers may find use in the results. In addition, it may also be useful for managers who will be positioned in Norway in the future to read up on challenges other managers have experienced. In sum, the main contribution of the study has been to highlight the specific challenges linked to the focus areas, in Norway.

Future studies may research the same focus areas in other industries, and compare the results of this study. Another suggestion might be to choose some other focus areas from the same cultural dimensions framework, and explore what types of cross-cultural challenges international managers experience from other cultural differences. Furthermore, the debate on globalisation's effects on cultural differences could be further explored, in order to say more about the actual changes across nations.

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  <http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016>

  [Accessed: 30 March 17]

Appendices

Tables not included in the analysis:

Appendix 1

How often do you encounter that the meaning has changed in translation?

	Frequency	Percent
Very often	1	4,3
Often	10	43,5
Rarely	7	30,4
Very seldom	2	8,7
Can't choose	3	13,0
Missing	4	
Total	27	100,0

Appendix 2

Crosstabulation: What is your nationality? How often would you say you encounter communication misunderstanding?

	Often	Rarely	Very seldom	Total
Nordic Countries (Finland, Island, Sweden, Denmark)	3	1	0	4
West-European	4	8	2	14
East-European	1	0	0	1
South-European	0	1	0	1
North America	1	0	0	1
South America	1	1	0	2
Total	10	11	2	23

Appendix 3

Crosstabulation: Age? How often would you say you encounter communication misunderstandings?

	Often	Rarely	Very seldom	Total
32 to 39	1	4	0	5
40 to 49	4	3	1	8
50 to 60	5	4	1	10
Total	10	11	2	23

Appendix 4

Crosstabulation: Age? How often do you encounter that the meaning has changed in translation?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Very seldom	Can't choose	Total
32 to 39	0	0	4	1	0	5
40 to 49	1	5	2	0	0	8
50 to 60	0	5	1	1	3	10
Total	1	10	7	2	3	23

Appendix 5

How well would you say you understand Norwegians and their way of communicating, in terms of body language, written and spoken language?

	Frequency	Percent
Very good	4	17,4
Good	14	60,9
Neither god nor bad	5	21,7
Missing	4	
Total	27	100,0

Appendix 6

How well would you say your Norwegian employees understand you, in terms of body language, written and spoken language?

	Frequency	Percent
Very good	4	17,4
Good	11	47,8
Neither good nor bad	7	30,4
Can't choose	1	4,3
Missing	4	
Total	27	100,0

Statement: In order to trust other employees, I feel the need to establish a relationship. This involves engagements where we do not discuss work topics...

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	2	8,7
Agree	9	39,1
Neither agree nor disagree	8	34,8
Disagree	4	17,4
Missing	4	
Total	27	100

Appendix 8

How would you rate your Cultural Awareness on a scale from1 (low) to 7 (high)?

	Frequency	Percent
3	2	8,7
4	2	8,7
5	3	13,0
6	12	52,2
7 high	4	17,4
Missing	4	
Total	23	100

Appendix 9

How would you rate your Norwegian Cultural Knowledge on a scale from1 (low) to 7 (high)?

	Frequency	Percent
4	1	4,3
5	11	47,8
6	7	30,4
7 high	4	17,4
Missing	4	
Total	23	100

Do you know of any written strategy your organisation has, directed towards cross-cultural difference?

	Respondents
Yes	9
No	8
No answer	6

Appendix 11

Over the past 12 months, have you received any training related to cross-cultural work, through your workplace?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	8,7
No	20	87,0
Can't choose	1	4,3
Missing	4	
Total	23	100

Appendix 12

Crosstabulation: What is your nationality? All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Nordic Countries	1	1	2	0	4
West-European Countries	5	2	6	1	14
East-European Countries	0	1	0	0	1
South-European Countries	1	0	0	0	1
North America	1	0	0	0	1
South America	0	1	1	0	2
Total	8	5	9	1	23

Crosstabulation: Age? All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
32 to 39	1	2	2	0	5
40 to 49	4	1	3	0	8
50 to 60	3	2	4	1	10
Total	8	5	9	1	23

Appendix 14

Crosstabulation: What is your position in the company? All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
CEO	0	1	0	0	1
Senior Vice President	0	0	2	0	2
Vice President	1	0	0	0	1
General Manager	0	1	1	0	2
Country Manager	2	1	0	0	3
Department Manager	1	1	6	0	8
Support Function Manager	2	1	0	0	3
Team Leader	1	0	0	1	2
Other please specify: Executive Assistant	1	0	0	0	1
Total	8	5	9	1	23

Crosstabulation: What is your nationality? Would you say you have experienced cross-cultural challenges so big they have kept you from doing your work?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Nordic Countries	1	0	1	2	4
West-European Countries	3	1	5	5	14
East-European Countries	0	0	1	0	1
South-European Countries	0	0	0	1	1
North America	0	0	1	0	1
South America	0	0	1	1	2
Total	4	1	9	9	23

Crosstabulation: Did you have a management position abroad? All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?

	Agree	*Neither agree nor disagree*	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Yes	5	2	7	1	15
No	2	1	0	0	3
Total	7	3	7	1	18

Interview Guide

These are the planned questions for the semi-structured interview. Several follow-up questions, different from every interview, were also asked.

What is your nationality?

How long have you had your position in Norway?

What is your position in the company?

What is the first thing you can think of when I ask you what the biggest cultural difference in Norway is?

Communication:

- Have you ever come across situations where misunderstandings have been caused by language differences?
- Have you experienced that the meaning of messages has changed in translation?
- How do you usually communicate? (e-mail, skype, face-to-face, etc.)

Hierarchy:

- How much do you prefer to involve your employees in decision-making?
- Do you witness anything significant about how Norwegians behave towards managers, in contrast to other cultures?
- Is there a difference in formality and respect?

Trust:

- Do you experience any differences or challenges in Norway when it comes to trust?

Other:

- Do you know about the Law of Jante? Is it present in your work place?
- How would you say your own cultural awareness is?
- Do you every think about how cultural background may affect choices and actions?
- Have you had any training, through your work place, related to cross-cultural work (anything focused on cultural differences/diversity)?
- Do you know of any written strategy or programme your organisation has for cross-cultural challenges? (directed towards increasing cultural awareness?)
- Do you have any questions or anything you would like to add?

Questionnaire

1. What is your nationality? *(Adopted from Q32 AFF Manager Survey 2011, Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).*	• Nordic Countries (Finland, Island, Sweden, Denmark) • West-European Countries • East-European Countries • South-European Countries • North-America • South-America • Asia • Africa • Oceania/Australia
2. Gender:	• Male • Female
3. Age:	• Trop down menu
4. How long have you been living in Norway?	• < ½ year • ½ - 1 year • 1-2 years • 2-5 years • 5-10 years • 10-15 • 15-20 years • More than 20 years
5. What is your highest level of education? *(Adopted from Q9 AFF Manager Survey 2011, (Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).*	• High School • Vocational college or similar • Up to 4 years education at college, university, or similar • More than 4 years education at college, university, or similar
6. What is your position in your company?	• CEO • Senior Vice President • Vice President • General Manager • Country Manager • Department Manager • Support Function Manager • Team Leader • Other: open field

7. Please rate your skill level for the Norwegian <u>written</u> language, on a scale form 1 (none) to 10 (fluent).	• Scale 1 (none) to 10 (fluent)
8. Please rate your skill level for the Norwegian <u>spoken</u> language, on a scale form 1 (none) to 10 (fluent).	• Scale 1 (none) to 10 (fluent)

9. How many employees report directly to you? *(Adopted form Q7 AFF Manager Survey 2002, Colbjørnsen, 2004).*	• Open field
10. How many of these employees are international?	• Open field
11. Is the company you work for of Norwegian origin?	• Yes • No

12. Have you previously had a <u>work</u> position abroad (other than your home country and Norway)?	• I have worked in 1 other country • I have worked in 2 other countries • I have worked in 3 or more • No
13. How much of your past international <u>work</u> experience can you make use of in your present job? (in terms of working in a different cultural context) *(Adopted from Q20 NSD, 2015).*	• Almost none • A little • A lot • Almost all • Can't choose
14. Did you have a managerial position abroad?	• Yes • No
15. How long have you had the position you currently hold in Norway?	• < ½ year • ½ - 1 year • 1-2 years • 2-5 years • 5- 10 years • 10-15

	• 15-20 years • More than 20 years

16. **'Cultural Awareness'** *refers to being aware of your own cultural beliefs and values, and to <u>be able to put your own views aside</u> when perceiving other cultures.* How would you rate your cultural awareness on a scale form 1 to 7, where 1 is very high and 7 is very low?	▪ Scale 1 to 7
17.**'Cultural Knowledge'** *refers to what a person <u>knows about</u> a particular culture, being about norms, beliefs, values, and practices.* How would you rate your Norwegian cultural knowledge on a scale form 1 to 7, where 1 is very high and 7 is very low??	▪ Scale 1 to 7
18. Would you say you have enough insight in how to handle cross-cultural challenges encountered at work?	• Strongly agree • Agree • Neither agree nor disagree • Disagree • Strongly disagree • Can't choose

19. Over the past 12 months, have you received any training related to cross-cultural work, through your workplace? *(Adopted from Q21 NSD 2015).*	▪ Yes ▪ No ▪ Can't choose
20. Do you know of any written strategy your organisation has directed towards cross-cultural differences?	*Please leave a comment:*

'Etymology' refers to the meaning of words, which may differ widely between languages. This means that an English word directly translated from Norwegian may hold a different meaning/idea. 21. How often do you encounter situations where it is evident that the meaning has changed in	▪ Very often ▪ Often ▪ Rarely ▪ Very seldom ▪ Never ▪ Can't choose

translations from Norwegian to English or vice versa?	
22. How well would you say you understand Norwegians and their way of communicating, in terms of body language, written and spoken language?	▪ Very good ▪ Good ▪ Neither good nor bad ▪ Bad ▪ Very bad ▪ Can't choose
23. How well would you say your Norwegian co-workers understand you, in terms of body language, written and spoken language?	▪ Very good ▪ Good ▪ Neither good nor bad ▪ Bad ▪ Very bad ▪ Can't choose
24. How often would you say you encounter communication misunderstandings?	▪ Very often ▪ Often ▪ Rarely ▪ Very seldom ▪ Never ▪ Can't choose
25. How do you usually communicate at work with employees who directly report to you?	▪ E-mail ▪ Skype-chat for business ▪ Telephone ▪ Face-to-face ▪ Meetings ▪ Other: (multiple choice question)

Please indicate how you agree with the following statements:

26. It is easy to get respect from my Norwegian employees… *(Modified statement from Q16 AFF 2002, Colbjørnsen, 2004).*	▪ Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Neither agree nor disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree Can't choose
27. Managers should make most decisions without consulting their employees… *(Modified statement from Q12 AFF 2011, Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).*	▪ Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Neither agree nor disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Can't choose
28. Employee should not disagree with management's decision making…	▪ Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Neither agree nor disagree

(Adopted from Q12 AFF Manager Survey 2011, Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).	▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Can't choose
29. To what extent have your employees expressed clear expectations about what it takes for you to be a good leader? *(Adopted from Q42 AFF Manager Survey 2011, Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).*	• Scale (not at all) to (strongly).
30. When your employees disagree with you, do you adapt to their wishes? *(Adopted from Q63 AFF Manager Survey 2011, Rønning, Brochs-Haukeland, Glasø, and Matthiesen, 2013).*	▪ Very often ▪ Often ▪ Rarely ▪ Very seldom ▪ Never ▪ Can't choose

Please indicate how you agree with the following statements:

31. In order to trust other employees I feel the need to establish a relationship. This involves engagements where we do not discuss work topics..	▪ Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Neither agree nor disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Can't choose
32. I can trust my Norwegian co-workers to hold their part of an agreement…	▪ Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Neither agree nor disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Can't choose

33. All in all, would you say that you regularly experience cross-cultural challenges at work?	▪ Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Neither agree nor disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Can't choose
34. Would you say you have experienced cross-cultural challenges so big they have kept you from doing your work?	▪ Strongly agree ▪ Agree ▪ Neither agree nor disagree ▪ Disagree ▪ Strongly disagree ▪ Can't choose
35. What is the biggest cultural difference you see in Norway?	*Please leave any comments here if you have any:*

Information sheet to interview participants

Background and purposes

This project is a Master Thesis written by a student at the University of Stavanger. The purpose of this study is to map the experiences of International Managers in Norway. Furthermore, the project also focuses on how the managers' organisations approach challenges related to cross-cultural management. Several oil related firms, with offices in Norway, participate in this study.

What does your participation in this survey involve?

This interview is part of the research data this thesis will build upon, along with other interviews and a questionnaire. No other personal information about you is collected elsewhere. Both your name and the name of your organisation are anonymous – this information will not be mentioned anywhere in the thesis. Indirect personal information, such as age, gender, position, and nationality is requested. General information about your organisation's approach towards cross-cultural challenges may be collected from your organisation, but personal information is neither here requested.

Your own experiences with cross-cultural management in Norway are the focus of the interview. Questions include topics such as cultural awareness and knowledge, communication, and trust. Questions about cross-cultural challenges refers to whenever language, values, routines, and other parts a particular culture holds, together in the interaction with another culture, causes hindrances at work. There is no right or wrong, hence there will not be made implications that one culture is better than others.

Time: ca. 30 – 60 minutes.

What happens to the information you provide?

Information given in the interview is anonymous, and is not distributed or forwarded to any other institution or project. All information collected in this study will be <u>deleted</u> when the master thesis' deadline is due (15.06.17). During the project, those with permission to view collected data is the student writing the thesis, and the student's supervisor, who is employed at the University of Stavanger. It will not be possible to recognise participants either from interviews or questionnaire in the thesis.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw your consent at any point without stating a reason. If you choose to withdraw, any information you have given will be deleted.

If you have any questions about this study, you are welcome to contact the student or supervisor of this thesis:

Student: Silje Strand, e-mail: s.strand@stud.uis.no, Phone: 47 454 20 576

Supervisor: Gunnar Thesen, e-mail: gunnar.thesen@uis.no, Phone: 47 51 83 21 86

This study is approved by Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD – Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata AS).

Consent to participate in this study

I have received information about this study and I want to participate. I agree with my answers being part of the research data the thesis of 'Cross-Cultural Management in Norway' will build upon, and I know that all information I provide will be deleted on the 15.06.17.

…………………………………………..

(Signed by participant, date)

Information sheet for online survey participants

Background and purposes

This project is a Master Thesis written by a student at the University of Stavanger. The purpose of this study is to map the experiences of International Managers in Norway. Furthermore, the project also focuses on how the managers' organisations approach challenges related to cross-cultural management. Several oil related firms, with offices in Norway, participate in this questionnaire.

A contact person in your firm has agreed to distribute this survey to those who meet the criteria of being an International Manager in Norway. This involves any level of management, and the person should have a different cultural background than Norwegian.

What does your participation in this survey involve?

Your answers in this questionnaire constitute parts of the research data this thesis will build upon. No other personal information about you is collected elsewhere. This survey does not ask for your name or the name of your organisation. Indirect personal information, such as age, gender, position, and nationality is requested in the survey. General information about your organisation's approach towards cross-cultural challenges may be collected from your organisation, but personal information is neither here requested.

This questionnaire asks about your own cross-cultural management experiences in Norway. Some may have been working in Norway for a few months, and others for several years. This fact is taken into consideration, as different levels of experience with the Norwegian culture are interesting factors in this study. The questionnaire includes topics such as cultural awareness and knowledge, communication and trust. Questions about cross-cultural challenges refers to whenever language, values, routines, orientations and other parts a particular culture holds, together in the interaction with another culture, causes challenges at work. There is no right or wrong, hence there will not be made implications that one culture is better than others.

Estimated time: 8-10 minutes.

What happens to the information you provide?

The information you provide will be anonymised, and is not distributed or forwarded to any other institution or project. All information collected in this survey will be deleted when the project's deadline is due (15.06.17). During the project, those with permission to view collected data is the student writing the thesis, and the student's supervisor, who is employed at the University of Stavanger. It will not be possible to recognise participants of this questionnaire in the thesis.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may withdraw your consent at any point without stating a reason. If you choose to withdraw, any information you have entered will be deleted.

If you have any questions about this project, you are welcome to contact the student or supervisor:
Student: Silje Strand, e-mail: s.strand@stud.uis.no, Phone: 47 454 20 576
Supervisor: Gunnar Thesen, e-mail: gunnar.thesen@uis.no, Phone: 47 51 83 21 86

This study is approved by Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Centre for Research Data (Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD – Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata AS).

Consent to participate in this study

By clicking 'next' I agree with the terms of this questionnaire. I agree with my answers being part of the research

data the thesis of 'Cross-Cultural Management in Norway' will build upon, and I know that all information I provide will be deleted on the 15.06.17.

Gunnar Thesen

Institutt for medie-, kultur- og samfunnsfag Universitetet i Stavanger

Postboks 8002 Postterminalen

4068 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 28.03.2017   Vår ref: 52920 / 3 / ASF   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 10.02.2017. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

52920	*Cross-Cultural Management in Norway*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Gunnar Thesen*
Student	*Silje Strand*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 15.06.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Amalie Statland Fantoft

Kontaktperson: Amalie Statland Fantoft tlf: 55 58 36 41

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Kopi: Silje Strand silje2strand@gmail.com

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

FORMÅL

Formålet er å kartlegge kryss-kulturelle problemer internasjonale ledere opplever i norsk kontekst.

INFORMASJON OG SAMTYKKE

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet, men dere kan ikke skrive at undersøkelsen er anonym da det innhentes indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger. Dere kan imidlertid skrive at opplysningene vil anonymiseres i publikasjonen.

SENSITIVE PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Det behandles sensitive personopplysninger om etnisk bakgrunn eller politisk/filosofisk/religiøs oppfatning.

INFORMASJONSSIKKERHET

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at dere behandler alle data og personopplysninger i tråd med Universitetet i Stavanger sine retningslinjer for innsamling og videre behandling av forskningsdata og personopplysninger.

DATABEHANDLER

I meldeskjemaet har dere opplyst at dere skal ta i bruk den eksterne surveytjenesten SurveyXact. Vi legger derfor til grunn at foreligger en databehandleravtale. For råd om hva databehandleravtalen bør inneholde, se Datatilsynets veileder: http://www.datatilsynet.no/Sikkerhet-internkontroll/Databehandleravtale/.

PROSJEKTSLUTT OG ANONYMISERING

I meldeskjemaet har dere informert om at forventet prosjektslutt er 15.06.2017. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal dere da anonymisere innsamlede opplysninger. Anonymisering innebærer at dere bearbeider datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjør dere ved å slette direkte personopplysninger, slette eller omskrive indirekte personopplysninger og slette digitale lydopptak.