
Bridging the Gap: An Exploration of
American and Norwegian Communication
and Management Patterns in the
Workplace



Universitetet
i Stavanger

Master's Thesis in Change Management

Faculty of Social Science
University of Stavanger
Spring 2015
Natassja Kokonaski
Advisor: Kristin Engh

University of Stavanger
Master's of Change Management

Semester:

Spring 2015

Author:

Natassja Kokonaski

Advisor:

Kristin Engh

Title:

Bridging the Gap: An Exploration of American and Norwegian
Communication and Management Patterns in the Workplace

Key Words:

Change Management, Communication, Management, Workplace Culture,
Cross-Cultural Adjustment, Cultural Intelligence, the Inclusive Workplace

Pages:

82 (With references; excluding abstract, acknowledgements, and appendix)

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the nuances of Norwegian-American manager-employee relationships, particularly as they relate to the influence of cultural background upon workplace environment, management tactics, and communication efforts in each group. As globalization continues to be a driving force in the international market, American and Norwegian professionals are becoming increasingly interconnected. While these cultures may seem similar at a glance, subtle differences exist between the two that may lead to conflict in the workplace. This phenomenon is particularly common in instances where managers and their subordinates are of differing cultural backgrounds.

To gain a deeper understanding of these conflicts and how they may be mitigated at the managerial level, this thesis has run a qualitative research study to gather informant data regarding individual impressions of Norwegian and American workplaces, managers, and communication styles. This information was focused particularly on the way in which respondents' perceived the communication efforts of managers belonging to each cultural background. The data collected during this process was then analyzed against existing theoretical frameworks to produce an understanding of the relationship between cultural background and workplace interactions between Norwegian and American managers and employees. Further analysis produced recommendations for managerial tactics that may be useful in the successful navigation of these relationships.

This thesis concludes that Norwegian and American workplace patterns are influenced by varying attitudes regarding individualism, masculine vs. feminine values, and long-term orientation present in each society. These differences have been linked to organizational conflict due to incongruent mental programming regarding workplace behavior, management, and communication patterns. The resolution of these conflicts is dependent on managers' ability to successfully engage principles of cultural awareness and intelligence to mediate these divisive factors.

Acknowledgements

Embarking on this research project has been an extremely exciting, challenging, and ultimately rewarding experience. Its successful completion would not have been possible without the support of the below mentioned individuals:

First, I would like to thank the individuals who provided academic support through the duration of this research endeavor. This project would not be possible without the input of my advisor, Kristin Engh, and the talented professors and staff in the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Stavanger.

Secondly, I extend utmost gratitude to the six people who agreed to participate in this study. Without their valuable insight, this thesis would not have been possible. I am truly grateful that each of them took the time to from their incredibly busy schedules to contribute to my research.

Thirdly, I wish to thank my extended personal, professional, and academic network here in Stavanger. Their support has been so appreciated during my academic and other pursuits over the last two years.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank my family and friends at home in Seattle. Their support, albeit from a far, has meant the world to me throughout the duration of this academic endeavor.

Natassja Kokonaski

13 July 2015

Table of Contents

Abstract	<i>i</i>
Acknowledgements	<i>ii</i>
Table of Contents	<i>iii</i>
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose of the Study	1
1.2 Presentation of Thesis Problem Statement and Research Questions	2
1.3 Structural Overview	4
2. Theoretical Foundation	5
2.1 What is Culture?	5
2.1.1 Etics, Emics, and Universality	6
2.2 Globalization	6
2.2.1 Convergence and Divergence Theories	7
2.2.2 Workplace Diversity	8
2.3 Communication	8
2.3.1 Verbal Communication	8
2.3.2 Non-Verbal Communication	9
2.3.3 Networks and Channels	10
2.3.4 Symbolic Behavior	10
2.3.4.1 Social Learning Theory	11
2.3.5 Listening	11
2.3.6 Cultural Dimensions of Verbal Communication	12
2.4 Social Constructivist/Institutionalist Approach to Organizational Design	12
2.5 Socially Constructed Managerial Roles	13
2.6 Management and the Organization in Norway	14
2.7 Management and the Organization in the United States of America	15
2.8 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions	16
2.8.1 Power Distance (PDI)	16
2.8.1.1 Power Distance (PDI) in the Workplace	17
2.8.1.2 PDI Scores—United States of America and Norway	17
2.8.2 Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV)	18
2.8.2.1 Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV) in the Workplace	18
2.8.2.2 IDV Scores—United States of America and Norway	19
2.8.3 Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)	20
2.8.3.1 Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) in the Workplace	20
2.8.3.2 UAI Scores—United States of America and Norway	21
2.8.4 Masculinity Index (MAS)	21
2.8.4.1 Masculinity Index (MAS) in the Workplace	22
2.8.4.2 MAS Scores—United States of America and Norway	23
2.8.5 Long Versus Short Term Orientation (LTO)	24
2.8.5.1 Long Versus Short Term Orientation (LTO) in the Workplace	24
2.8.5.2 LTO Scores—United States of America and Norway	24
2.9 Cross-Cultural Adjustment	25
2.9.1 Black's Model for Cultural Adjustment	25

2.9.2	<i>Cultural Intelligent (CQ) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment</i>	26
2.9.3	<i>Socialization within the Organization</i>	26
2.9.4	<i>Sense-Making in the Adjustment Process</i>	27
2.9.5	<i>Translator Role of Management</i>	27
2.10	<i>Cultural Awareness Training</i>	27
2.11	<i>Diversity Management in the Inclusive Workplace</i>	28
2.12	<i>Summary of Theoretical Principles</i>	29
3.	Research Methodology	30
3.1	<i>Qualitative Methodological Approach</i>	30
3.2	<i>Selected Research Design Strategy</i>	30
3.3	<i>Data Collection Process</i>	31
3.3.1	<i>Source Definition</i>	31
3.3.2	<i>Sample Collection Process</i>	31
3.3.3	<i>Semi-Structured Informant Interviews</i>	33
3.3.3.1	<i>Interview Guide, Preparation, and Structure</i>	34
3.3.3.2	<i>Conducting the Interviews</i>	35
3.3.3.3	<i>Condition of Anonymity</i>	36
3.3.3.4	<i>Comments on Neutrality and Professionalism</i>	37
3.4	<i>Data Reduction and Analysis</i>	37
3.4.1	<i>Coding Participant Data for Anonymity</i>	38
3.4.2	<i>Transcribing Interview Data</i>	38
3.4.3	<i>Coding Interview Data</i>	39
3.5	<i>Comments on Methodological Reliability and Validity</i>	40
3.6	<i>Potential Challenges and Limitations to the Research Design</i>	43
4.	Presentation of Findings	44
4.1	<i>American and Norwegian Workplace Cultures</i>	44
4.1.1	<i>Top-Down vs. Flat Hierarchy</i>	45
4.1.2	<i>Informal vs. Formal Practices</i>	46
4.1.3	<i>Competitive vs. Collaborative Environment</i>	48
4.1.4	<i>Work First vs. Family First</i>	49
4.1.5	<i>Common Denominators—Ambition and Continuing Education</i>	49
4.2	<i>American and Norwegian Leadership Models</i>	50
4.2.1	<i>Authoritarian vs. Egalitarian</i>	51
4.2.2	<i>Accessible vs. Inaccessible</i>	51
4.2.3	<i>Commander vs. Coach</i>	53
4.2.4	<i>Assertive vs. Humble</i>	53
4.3	<i>American and Norwegian Workplace Communication Styles</i>	54
4.3.1	<i>Formalized vs. Informal</i>	54
4.3.2	<i>Task-Oriented vs. Relational</i>	56
4.3.3	<i>Direction vs. Dialogue</i>	56
4.4	<i>Workplace Interactions – Areas of Misunderstanding or Conflict</i>	58
4.5	<i>Informants’ Reflections on Each Working Culture</i>	58
4.6	<i>Key Skills and Measures Identified for Managers</i>	61

5. Discussion and Analysis	62
5.1 <i>Observed Variances Explored in Terms of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions</i>	62
5.1.1 <i>Power Distance (PDI) and the Organizational Hierarchy</i>	62
5.1.2 <i>The Individualism and Masculinity Indexes (IDV and MAS)</i>	63
5.1.2.1 <i>The American Workplace Culture</i>	64
5.1.2.1 <i>The Norwegian Workplace Culture</i>	65
5.1.3 <i>Individualism, Masculinity, and Identified Dimensions of Management</i>	65
5.1.3.1 <i>American Managerial Behavior</i>	65
5.1.3.2 <i>Norwegian Managerial Behavior</i>	66
5.1.4 <i>The Individualism Index, the Masculinity Index, and Identified Communication Patterns</i>	68
5.1.4.1 <i>American Workplace Communication Patterns</i>	68
5.1.4.2 <i>Norwegian Workplace Communication Patterns</i>	69
5.1.5 <i>Long Term Orientation and Perceived Levels of Formality</i>	70
5.1.6 <i>Shared Traits and Commonalities</i>	71
5.2 <i>Mutual Impressions, Misunderstandings, and Conflict</i>	71
5.3 <i>Measures, Skills, and Tools Necessary for Successful Management in the Norwegian-American Workplace</i>	72
5.3.1 <i>Cultural Awareness and Adjustment</i>	72
5.3.2 <i>Cultural Intelligence (CQ) for Managers</i>	73
5.3.3 <i>Enacting the Inclusive Workplace</i>	74
6. Concluding Remarks	78
7. Literature / Works Consulted	
APPENDIX	i
<i>Appendix A: Interview Guide and Probes</i>	ii
<i>Appendix B: Participant Matrix</i>	iv
<i>Appendix C: Transcript Template</i>	v
List of Figures	
<i>Figure 1: Power Distance Index (PDI)</i>	17
<i>Figure 2: Individualism Variance (IDV)</i>	19
<i>Figure 3: Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)</i>	21
<i>Figure 4: Masculinity Index (MAS)</i>	23
<i>Figure 5: Long Term Orientation (LTO)</i>	24
<i>Figure 6: The Inclusive Workplace</i>	28
<i>Figure 7: Workplace Culture</i>	44
<i>Figure 8: Management Style</i>	50
<i>Figure 9: Communication Style</i>	54

1. Introduction

Over the course of the last 30 years, globalization has exerted an unprecedented influence on organizational activity. Never before have individual actors within a corporate entity been more exposed to colleagues of varying cultural backgrounds (Naím 2009). As these individuals come together in pursuit of organizational goals, the danger of conflict or misunderstanding is unavoidable as these actors attempt to navigate these new relationships (Ciznkota 2005). Therefore, cultural awareness and keenly honed management skills are essential in ensuring the success of these interactions, both at the macro and micro level.

Much like their global counterparts, American and Norwegian organizations make increasing contributions to the international marketplace. While these two western countries may appear similar at a glance, nuanced differences between them can contribute to misunderstanding in the workplace. As an American student living in Norway for the past four years, this topic carries particular significance to my everyday life. Having worked at several American-owned companies in the United States prior to moving to Stavanger, I was surprised to notice variances in workplace behavior once I took my first job in Norway. My daily life since that time has consisted of subtle, internal negotiations of these cultural dichotomies. As a student of Change Management, this piqued my curiosity: am I the only one who has had these experiences? How do other Americans perceive the Norwegian workplace? How do my Norwegian colleagues perceive me? While previous studies in Norway rendered my transition into the professional world was a rather smooth one, I could easily see how such a situation may prove challenging for my countrymen, particularly those who have not spent a great deal of time in Norway. This sentiment inspired a desire to discover more about the cross-cultural relationship between American and Norwegian professionals and to explore the ways in which these bonds may be strengthened by an optimized level of mutual understanding in the workplace.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the nuances of Norwegian-American manager-employee relationships, particularly as they relate to the influence of cultural background upon workplace environment, management tactics, and communication efforts in each group. This topic gains mounting significance as our world becomes increasingly globalized. More than ever, top management, executive boards, and the general employee bases of the world's companies are influenced by this phenomenon. This is particularly true of Norwegian and American companies, with businesses such as Statoil expanding operations into the United States, and large

American organizations like Microsoft conducting business in Norway. As these corporations continue to expand, their working populations will become more diverse to increase the frequency of instances in which Norwegians and Americans must interact with each other on a manager-employee level. An unwelcome side effect of this trend is the increased likelihood for misunderstandings and miscommunications on cultural grounds. If not managed effectively, these conflicts may hinder organizational productivity. Identifying the reasons why these clashes occur provides a basis for mitigating them in the future, thus helping to maximize organizational efficiency (Czinkota 2005). If managers are enabled to successfully navigate these relationships, they can aid in improving the efficacy of the operations of the organizations they represent.

In identifying the potential areas for conflict in the Norwegian-American workplace, and outlining the skills that managers may employ to mitigate them, this study seeks to provide guidelines for shortening the adjustment process many organizations experience as they enter a new market (Gormoy 2004). If managers are properly equipped to understand and interact with their new colleagues (or even to mediate a tense relationship between other parties within the organization), they can contribute to the positive development of the organization in its new environment. Further, organizations may also benefit from this information, as it may be employed as curriculum in corporate cultural awareness programs or training for managers who may be expatriated.

Lastly, this study seeks to contribute to existing literature in the field of international business management. While management journals have placed increasing emphasis on the multi-cultural workplace, there is not a wealth of literature focusing on the exact relationships between Norwegian and American organizations and colleagues (Czinokta 2005). Therefore, this thesis seeks to contribute to existing management literature with its findings.

1.2 Presentation of Thesis Problem Statement and Research Questions

As indicated in Chapter 1.2, the primary aim of this study is to explore and explain the relationship between cultural background and workplace interactions involving American and Norwegian colleagues. Of main interest is the way in which managers of a Norwegian or American background communicate to employees of the opposite background. How does a Norwegian employee respond to the communication efforts an American manager? How does an American react to the management style of a Norwegian leader? What may cause these

relationships to go poorly, and how can they be improved? To gain an insight into these phenomena, this study has explored the following carefully crafted series of research questions.

The **main research problem statement** of this thesis is as follows:

How does personal cultural background influence manager-employee relations and communications between Norwegians and Americans? What skills and tools are needed for individual managers to successfully navigate these relationships?

The exploration of this research objective has been buttressed by a series supporting research questions categorized by four supplementary research purposes:

The first purpose is to define the **interpersonal communication patterns** at play across cultural lines:

- What are interpersonal communication patterns, and how do they operate?
- What characterizes the interpersonal communication patterns in each culture?
 - Norway
 - USA

The second purpose is to define the relationship between **cultural background and management style**:

- How are management and the organization defined?
- How does the culture an organization operates within influence the management style and organizational structure?
- What characterizes the general management and communication style in each country?
 - Norway/Scandinavia
 - USA

The third and final purpose is to explore and understand **the influence of cultural communication patterns and norms on workplace interactions**:

- How would Norwegian and American employees characterize each other in the workplace, particularly as it relates to managers of the opposite culture?
- How do these varying norms contribute to conflict or misunderstandings in the workplace?
- Are there specific advantages and disadvantages associated with one set of business communication norms and management practices over the other? What are they?

The fourth and final purpose is to **identify measures that should be taken by managers to improve workplace interactions**:

- What skills are needed for individual managers to successfully navigate these relationships?
- What measures can individual managers take to constructively manage employees of the opposite background?

1.3 Structural Overview

The structure of this thesis has been composed as follows:

Chapter 1	This chapter presents the background for choice of research topic, establishes the purpose of this study, presents the central research questions to be examined, and provides an overview for thesis structure.
Chapter 2	This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical principles informing this project. These include principles of cultural expansion and adaptation; characterizations of Norwegian and American workplace culture, management, and communications; and communications theory.
Chapter 3	This chapter outlines the qualitative research strategy employed in the exploration of the main research questions. This section shall delineate the research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and reduction and analysis process prior to assessing the study's reliability and validity and identifying challenges to the research design.
Chapter 4	This chapter presents the findings of the data collection process.
Chapter 5	This chapter discusses and analysis the findings presented in Chapter 4 against the main research questions and theoretical framework established in Chapter 2.
Chapter 6	This chapter draws final conclusions to the thesis in relation to the main problem statement. Further, this chapter discusses the implications and potential limitations of this study and highlights areas for further research.

2. Theoretical Foundation

This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical foundations for this study. It shall begin by outlining working definitions for culture and globalization before moving on to discuss the many nuances of interpersonal communications in the international workplace. Further discussion shall establish the socially constructivist or institutional approach this thesis takes to organizational studies. Various features of the Norwegian and American workplace shall be discussed. Lastly, the varying factors influencing cultural interaction shall be outlined, particularly as they relate to adjustment processes and navigating the multinational workplace.

2.1 What is Culture?

Central to the exploration of the relationship between communication, workplace, and management in the international setting is the concept of culture. Social scientist Geert Hofstede defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group of category of people from another” (Hofstede 2001, 9). This programming provides the basis for the most fundamental elements of a given society, laying the groundwork for a collective understanding of itself, its environment, and its perception of other social groups. Further interaction within this environment solidifies these mental programs, as individuals become socialized to exhibit certain behaviors or preferences over others (Hofstede 2001). Through this process, the culture identifies the values, artifacts, and symbols to be shared its bounds while simultaneously determining the values, artifacts, and symbols not to be shared with outside groups (Wallerstein 1991). In this way, culture can be regarded as a socially constructed phenomenon (Brown 1989).

In understanding culture, it is important to define the values, symbols, heroes, and rituals constructed within its bounds. Values represent the intangible “core elements” of communal understanding that ultimately motivate behavior in society, whether consciously or unconsciously (Hofstede 2001). In tandem with these factors, culture is manifested through the enactment of symbols, heroes, and rituals. Symbols consist of constantly evolving artifacts, either tangible or intangible, that denote meaning that can only be fully recognized within the parameters of their native environment. Heroes include revered figures, imaginary or real, alive or dead, that are widely recognized as personifications of that culture’s ideals. These idols can include characters from literature, athletes, politicians, celebrities, or even general characterizations of well-regarded societal roles. Finally, rituals constitute “collective activities” that are not necessarily essential to survival, but are nonetheless considered “socially

essential” within the cultural group. Rituals often take shape in the form of religious ceremonies, political procedures, or organizational activities (Hofstede 2001, 10). These cultural elements vary between societies, guiding the development of the norms and institutions operating within a given environment. This process can be further influenced by variations in environmental and economic development (Hofstede 2001).

2.1.1. Etics, Emics, and Universality

Social scientific research exploring cultural nuances often relies on comparison as a means of gathering and interpreting collected data. This process involves analysis of the emics and etics at play behind a given phenomenon. Emics refer to features of a given society that are specific to that culture, while etics refer to universally applicable traits. These characteristics may cover a broad range of cultural elements. Identification of etics can be further used as an analytical tool in characterizing the nature of these relationships. Universality is the term often used by social scientists to define these connections. The concept of universality can be broken down into three main types and two subtypes: simple, variform, and functional; as well as variform functional and systematic behavioral universal (Dickson 2003).

Simple universality refers to elements that are “constant throughout the world”—that is, cultural elements seen to exist in all societies (Dickson 2003, 732). Variform universality refers to principles that are upheld in a variety of societies, but are manifested in varying ways based on cultural standards. Lastly, functional universality occurs when the relationship between two cultural elements is the same within a given society as it is between differing societies. These main principles of universality can then be combined to two subtypes: variform functional universality describing consistent relationships existing at varying magnitudes across cultures; and systematic behavioral universality indicating structural and behavioral consistency between societies despite variations in activity sequencing (Dickson 2003).

2.2 Globalization

Of key importance to the international organization is the concept of globalization. Political scientist David Held defines globalization as the “widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life” (Naím 2009, 28). While international business and global trade have played critical roles in civilization throughout modern history, it is the most recent (post-1980) iteration of globalization that has enjoyed unprecedented efficacy in shortening the literal and figurative distance between individuals by

way of advancements in technology, transportation, and other means. Modern globalization extends beyond the capacity to link global economies to a more personal level, in both a private and professional context (Naím 2009). In this way, it can be said that globalization epitomizes modern economic development (Clark 2003).

This increased interconnectivity has a profound influence at the organizational level, both for the entity itself, as well as for the individuals operating within it. Recent socio-scientific research indicates that globalization's most profound impact is felt in the global collective understanding (Gormay 2004). In other words, industry knowledge and activities have become less localized, and more globalized. This transition carries several meanings for the organization. First, the concept of a localized best business practice has been practically eliminated—instead, industries have established global best practices to ensure that operations stay internationally relevant. Further, corporations consist of increasingly diverse employee and managerial bases, ownership, and board membership, exposing individual actors to opposing cultural backgrounds like never before (Czinkota 2005). Therefore, it can be said that the organization itself has become an increasingly globalized concept.

Organizations, organizational membership, and business practices have become increasingly international. However, this is not to say that the importance of national identities has diminished. In fact, these identities remain intact, but have become more complex during the globalization process. While some scholars contend that this process entails the “Americanization”¹ of global business, others argue that this process entails a mutual influence, with best practices, theory, market shares, and competition flowing back and forth between interacting parties (Naím 2009). This evolutionary process therefore generates a “new paradigm” of global business where standards of “learning, standardization, and innovation” are shared between corporate entities and the individuals operating within them (Czinkota 2005, 115).

2.2.1 Convergence and Divergence Theories

Key to the study of globalization are the notions of convergence and divergence theory. Proponents of convergence theory contend that, as the workplace becomes increasingly global, working patterns, organizational structures, and industry standards will become gradually more standardized and homogenous in nature, regardless of individual or corporate nationality.

¹ “Americanization”—the notion that globalization is a reflection of American influence on the international arena as its organizations expand internationally. As these corporate entities migrate to new contexts, the organizations they meet adopt American business practices (Naím 2009, 30; Hofstede 2001).

Conversely, divergence theory contends that globalization has the opposite effect on the organization and international working cultures. Rather than solidifying all global working traditions into one standard form, globalization causes a difference in national working standards to either stabilize or increase (Grenness 2012).

2.2.2 Workplace Diversity

As businesses become increasingly globalized, more and more individuals are choosing to migrate to other parts of the world in pursuit of enhanced professional opportunity. While the concept of diversity has long played a crucial role in American business practices, it is a relatively new concept for organizations in other corners of the globe. Therefore, it becomes necessary to establish a clear framework for understanding of this principle. Definitions of workplace diversity have traditionally relied three primary categories: narrow category descriptions such as age, race, or gender; broad category-based descriptions reflecting personal traits such as marital status, religion, or level of education; and descriptions based on conceptual rule, or variations in perceptions, perspective, and actions. Increased globalization has complicated the application of these definitions as demographic characteristics become increasingly blended over time. As a result, the concept of diversity has evolved to take on a more modern characterization of the global workforce, focusing primarily on the notion of inclusion. Diversity in the modern globalized arena can now be defined as the classification of an employee base into categories derived from both nationality or cultural background and factors that may limit and individual's opportunity for career advancement (Barak 2005).

2.3 Communication

In order to properly explore the communication patterns governing American and Norwegian workplace interactions, it is necessary to define both the varying elements of communication at play in human interaction and their implications for personal cultural background and the organizational context. LIST

2.3.1 Verbal Communication

Thomas E. Harris defines verbal communication as any means of delivering a message using words, be it by way of speech (oral) or writing. Oral communication refers to any spoken means of communication, while written communication consists of printed collateral². Written communication can be formal or informal in nature, and can often serves to solidify or formalize

² Letters, newspapers, internal memos in an organization, meeting minutes, emails, etc. (Harris 2008)

oral communications. In the organizational context, oversaturation of written communication can minimize its efficacy, contributing to the preference of some individuals towards oral communication in favor of written collateral (Harris 2008).

Whether verbal communication comes in oral or written form, language^{3*} provides the crux for its execution. Languages provide the framework for which participants in verbal communication can assign meaning to the interaction. Meaning is in turn derived from the language use itself in a socially constructed process wherein both parties deduce certain conclusions from the interaction. These meanings can be divided into two distinct categories: denotative and connotative meaning. Denotative meaning is derived when the message of a given communication is explicitly clear to all participants, while connotative meaning is determined through personal contextual interpretation. The latter can have particular implications for intercultural interactions, as certain terms, phrases, or concepts can come with varying meanings depending on how the recipient interprets them. For example, the commonly used acronym ASAP can be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on recipient cultural background, workplace context, or individual workplace prioritizations (Harris 2008). An understanding of the various uses of language and designations of meaning prevalent in American and Norwegian culture aids in the assessment of each culture's mental programming, rituals, and values, along with providing a basis for comparison to identify any incongruence in language use and meaning assessment that may contribute to workplace conflict.

2.3.2 Non-Verbal Communication

Nonverbal communication works in tandem with verbal communication to relay a given message, and often is highly connected to the context in which the communication occurs. Nonverbal indicators can serve to reinforce verbal messages (a thumbs up accompanying a verbal "yes"), substitute verbal messages (shaking one's head instead of saying "no"), accentuate a verbal message (speaking loudly for emphasis), contradict a verbal message (use of sarcasm), regulate a verbal interaction (use of gestures to direct conversation), and complement a verbal interaction (appearing confident while giving a presentation). These means of nonverbal communication may be voluntary or involuntary. In fact, nonverbal communication can be assigned meaning even if only one involved person deems it significant to the interaction (Harris 2008). Further, these means of nonverbal communication can carry differing meanings across

³ Languages are tools developed over time within cultures used to assign meaning to their social world and allow for expression of the collective understanding (Harris 2008).

cultural lines. For example, while some cultures may find it acceptable to display emotion or share personal information in the workplace, others may view this practice as unprofessional (Harris 2008).

2.3.3 Networks and Channels

If verbal and nonverbal communication provide the tools for which messages are relayed between interacting parties, networks and channels provide the means across which these messages are sent. Networks are established as “patterns, flows, and pathways of communication become regularized,” while channels consist of “accepted forms of restrictions that control” communication networks (Harris 2008, 177). These concepts work in tandem to relay messages between recipients by way of downward, upward, or horizontal communication. Downward communication occurs when messages are sent through a hierarchy, typically from a manager or other authority figure. Messages can vary between being filtered to provide only the most essential details to offering full transparency to the recipients. Upward communication is relayed from a lower level of a hierarchy to a higher one, such as in the instance of an employee reporting back to a manager. Lastly, horizontal communication relays information between team members, departments, or other groups as a means of “sharing information, conflict resolution, and building rapport” (Harris 2008, 215).

As with verbal and non-verbal communication, networks and channels experience variation across cultural lines. For example, in particularly hierarchical environments, downward communication is executed in a very rigid, nuanced way, with interested parties sharing information on a very selective basis. In such a situation, upward communication may also be either discouraged or in some sense hindered, as subordinates may fear negative consequences for relaying unfavorable messages to supervisors. In a less hierarchical environment, information may be shared more freely as a means of empowering employees (Harris 2008).

2.3.4 Symbolic Behavior

Symbolic behavior refers to the use of communication to construct a collective reality within a given society. Through communication, members of a group constantly organize and re-organize themselves in order to develop a shared sense of meaning. Symbolic behavior therefore both manifests itself and impacts its participants in a variety of ways. In the context of cultures and organizations, symbolic behavior serves as a powerful tool to bind people together in pursuit of a common goal and maintain societal and organizational cultures. Lastly, symbolic behavior

aids in individual assimilation to the dominant behavioral practice, or acculturation. This process is accomplished by way of continued socialization and adaptation to the in-group (Harris 2008).

2.3.4.1 Social Learning Theory

A working model for understanding symbolic behavior in practice can be found in the tenets of social learning theory. Social learning theory postulates that individual “actions are, in part, influenced by the environment” the actor operates within (Lian 2011, 100). In other words, individuals learn how to behave in a given context by observing and emulating the actions of others, a concept known as behavioral modeling. This process saves the individual from needing to acquire all necessary contextual information via personal experience, which often can lead to mistakes or other mishaps. The relevant environment can span anything from a family, and organization, or, in the context of this study, a national culture (Lian 2011).

2.3.5 Listening

Crucial to any communication process is the way in which involved parties receive messages. Listening provides the framework for how interpersonal messages are received across four main stages: sensing, where participants seek to fully understand the message; evaluating, wherein the recipient makes a decision regarding the legitimacy of the message; and responding, where the recipient provides feedback to the sender’s verbal and non-verbal communication. This process is heavily influenced by senders’ and receivers’ mental software—that is, their social and cultural background shape their frame of reference, influencing the way the message is received (Harris 2008).

When functioning optimally, listening can provide a means for conflict resolution, effective negotiations, and contribute to overall employee morale. However, external noise or internal noise have the potential to impede full message reception. External noise can include physical noise, or any other environmental factors that take recipients’ attention. The workplace in particular provides an environment rife with external noise, as tasks necessary to daily operations routinely require the careful attention of employees. Internal noise, or listener interference, serves as a further potential interfering factor to the listening process if the recipient does not assign relevance to the message (Harris 2008).

2.3.6 Cultural Dimensions of Communication

Verbal cues in the organizational arena often carry meaning directly related to cultural norms influencing the senders and receivers of messages. Prominent culturally bound dimensions of verbal communication can be synthesized into the following categories: “face” or harmony orientation; relationship versus task orientation; and direct versus indirect communications. “Face” refers to the “public self image that every member of a society wants to claim for his or herself” (Barak 2005, 199). The degree of “face” or harmony orientation therefore refers to way in which a culture defines reputation and morality. Collectivist⁴ societies tend to define these concepts in terms of group membership. In these societies, it is considered unacceptable to praise a single employee in front of his or her colleagues. Instead, the group should be rewarded. Conversely, more individualistic⁵ cultures emphasize interpersonal and group harmony. In such a system, individuals use their own self-image as a means of preserving positive relations amongst their peers. Further, actors in individualistic systems have distinct public and private self-identities, establishing clear boundaries between their professional and private lives (Barak 2005).

Further cultural variances in workplace communication exist in the form of relationship versus task orientation and direct versus indirect message delivery. Task versus relationship orientation refers to role of interpersonal relationships in professional communication. In a task-oriented society, communication focuses primarily on accomplishing an organizational objective, with relationship building used as a means of advancing these goals. Conversely, a relationship-oriented society places equal weight on establishing personal bonds between actors and advancing professional objectives. Lastly, direct versus indirect communication tactics reflect the extent to which a society employs semantics in relaying a negative message. In a society displaying indirect communication patterns, a negative message will be prefaced with a positive comment or be stated in an alternative method to soften the sender’s original meaning. Indirect communication tactics are often favored in societies displaying a low tolerance for conflict (Barak 2005).

2.4 Social Constructivist/Institutionalist Approach to Organizational Design

This thesis examines the relationship between culture and workplace interactions between Norwegian and American colleagues using a social constructivist, or institutionalist, approach to

⁴ See Chapter 2.8.2

⁵ See Chapter 2.8.2

organizational design and behavior. The institutional perspective towards organizational behavior contends that, rather than being a product of its formal design, the organization is a product of the interactions of actors operating within its bounds. As these actors encounter both one another and organizational tasks or challenges, the organization develops a unique behavioral pattern that sets it apart from other entities. These individual actors mutually influence one another by acting according to their individual mental programming, and reacting to the actions of others, or “user theory”⁶ determined by their background. As these parties interact further, certain behavior patterns become prevalent within the organization, establishing a dominant organizational culture over time (Selznick 2011). It is this phenomenon this thesis associates with the relationship between cultural background and workplace behavior—as actors from each culture come to the organizational area with their own mental programming or “user theory,” they shape the organizational behavior and eventual structure. It can thusly be assumed that managers from a given culture carry similarly socially constructed assumptions about their assigned roles.

2.5 Socially Constructed Managerial Roles

As previously indicated in Chapter 2.4, an institutional approach to organizational design dictates that organizational reality is socially constructed. In the context of management, individual leaders influence their working environment through their actions and impressions, both by way of their behaviors and their interpretation of the behaviors of others. In this way, it can be stated that “management is performative”—management extends beyond the title of an individual to what that individual does, and how it influences his or her subordinates (Cunliffe 2009, 11-12). This interaction results in the development of the organization’s social world heavily influenced by these individuals’ mental programming, as they bring their own biases, experiences, and backgrounds to the organizational arena. Therefore culture, as a socially constructed concept, serves to influence managerial behavior due to its profound imprint on individual’s personal frame of reference (Cunliffe 2009). In fact, many management scholars contend that culture signifies one of the most common comparative variables in international leadership studies (Grenness 2012).

⁶ Values, norms, and other socialized factors present in the individual’s culture (Raz 1999, 253).

2.6 Management and the Organization in Norway

The Norwegian model for organizational behavior and leadership presents a manifestation of the core values of equality, consensus seeking, and humility. Managers should appeal to these values in order to develop legitimacy within the organization. The value of equality, or 'likhet' in Norwegian, is considered the most important value to be embodied by organizations and their actors (Grenness 2012, 3). This concept is clearly visible in many aspects of Norwegian work life, particularly as it relates to the tax system, salaries, and recruiting practices. In fact, Norwegian organizations experience one of the lowest reported pay gaps between managers and subordinates, reflecting this notion of equality in practice. Further, Norway's workplace regulatory legislation⁷ is written in such a way so as to promote egalitarianism and fair treatment in both society and the workplace (Grennes 2012).

Further enacted both in Norwegian working culture and legislation is the notion that organizations are meant to be collaborative in nature. This concept represents a core tenet of Norwegian labor principles, as organizations are said to operate within a three-part collaborative system consisting of the government, employers, and their employees. This cooperative scheme is crystallized in Norway's employee protection legislation, ensuring that each party is giving equal status and protection in the eyes of the law (Karlsen 2006). This notion is further manifested at the organizational level in the notion that a manager should serve as a coach rather than a commander⁸ (Grenness 2012). This concept takes root in part in the concept of equality and collaboration, but also in the notion that both managers and subordinates should fully trust in one another's competence to perform work (Grenness 2012). Therefore, Norwegian managers exhibit one of the highest tendencies to seek employee consensus in decision-making processes, as they feel confident in their ability to make critical decisions regarding their work. As a result, Norwegian organizations and managers rely heavily on the "social capital" available within the business, showing greater concern for the well being of their workers than the need to adhere to rules or procedures (Grenness 2012; Smith 2003).

Equally important to the concepts of equality and collaboration is that of humility in the Norwegian workplace. This notion is based on a core principle of Norwegian society called *janteloven*, which preaches modesty and equality amongst one's fellow men (Smith 2003, 494). Norwegians are therefore taught from an early age to uphold the notion that no individual is

⁷ In Norwegian: arbeidsmiljøloven (Grenness 2012)

⁸ "Coaching fremfor styring" (Grenness 2012, 15)

better than the others in society, and that no individual should think him or herself superior to others. Bragging or behaving in a way which may cause an individual to stand out are particularly frowned upon. In the workplace, Norwegian managers are expected to view and treat subordinates as equals (Avant 1993). Further, in the Norwegian organizations engage in legitimacy-creating behavior, appealing to the values of equality, collaboration, and humility by engaging with subordinates on a personal level and seeking consensus in decision-making processes (Grenness 2012).

2.7 Management and the Organization in the United States

While a Norwegian manager may employ so-called “soft” managerial tactics to create legitimacy within the organization, American managers are significantly more motivated by results and achievement (Grenness 2012). The American organizational and managerial style can be characterized as being results-driven, status oriented, and adherent to formal structures. Key to this system is the drive to achieve and measure performance results. Under this system, managers are expected to show ambition and initiative in their daily activities—to be a sort of “hero” that is “decisive, assertive, and aggressive” (Hofstede Institute, 2015; Dickson 2003, 745). This glorification of the managerial role creates a level of distance between managers and subordinates. In fact, the title of “manager” in the United States is often viewed as a “status symbol,” carrying great expectations for achievement of organizational goals and generating positive results (Cunliffe 2009, 13). This emphasis on management as a status to be achieved results in a constant drive for improvement, and an even stronger emphasis on mobility both within the organization and one’s career (Dickson 2003). Therefore, individual actors within an American organization often feel both an internal desire and external pressure to always strive to achieve more. Lastly, American organizations place a great emphasis on formal structure, particularly as it relates to organizational hierarchy (Grey 2013).

The combination of management’s high status and this emphasis on structure causes a tendency for American organizations to operate on a very hierarchical level, with greatest deference given to the highest levels of management. As there is limited legislation in the United States to restrict the measures taken by organizations and managers, individual corporate entities enjoy a great deal of freedom in terms of practical enactment of organizational hierarchy. In this way, it can be stated that managers enjoy more rights within the organization than subordinates, who may become relatively powerless in the face of tyrannical leaders (Slater 2001). Paradoxically,

American managers and workers tend to value strategic thinking in professional decision making scenarios. Therefore, workers value the opportunity to exercise independent thought, which in some cases may cause them to become adverse to corporate rules and regulations or hierarchical rule (Dickson 2003).

2.8 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Sociologist Geert Hofstede has spent many years researching the nuances of cultural interactions in the workplace. After several rounds of studying interactions between a diverse range of employees at IBM, Hofstede conducted a multi-stage statistical analysis of reported cultural features that he synthesized into five main cultural dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Masculinity vs. Femininity, and Long vs. Short-Term Orientation (Hofstede 2001). Similar analyses are conducted on a rolling basis, with individual countries being scored against the relevant index for each cultural dimension. The United States and Norway are among the countries where data is regularly collected (Hofstede Institute, 2015).

2.8.1 Power Distance (PDI)

Hofstede defines Power Distance as the level of inequality present between individuals depending on their place in a given social hierarchy. The level of inequality is determined further by the degree to which those in power can influence those possessing less, and vice versa. This phenomenon can be manifested in the form of physical characteristics, social status, wealth, power, and laws. The level priority granted to these factors varies across cultural lines, with individuals constantly seeking to lower their perceived level of inequality in comparison to other. This process can occur through efforts to maintain existing levels of power or obtain more of it. Hofstede notes that increased power is often equated to increased personal satisfaction, to the point where individuals may even become addicted to the achieving and maintenance of a perceived level of power. To measure power distance, Hofstede conducted a statistical analysis of workers' experiences of job-related fear and feelings of autonomy. From this information, he developed a scale referred to as the Power Distance Index (PDI), where cultures scoring higher on the index display a higher level of power distance, and cultures displaying a lower power distance score lower on the index (Hofstede 2001).

2.8.1.1 Power Distance (PDI) in the Workplace

In the organizational context, the distribution of power is essential to its operation, as it is a valuable tool for maintaining control. While a formal organizational structure often serves to

delegate roles and responsibilities, the practical workings of this hierarchical system are heavily influenced on social factors, particularly the level of power distance present in the organization or the culture it operates within. In instances where employees represent a varying range of cultural backgrounds, the level of power distance in their home cultures may also influence they way in which they operate within the organizational structure, as well as the way in which they respond to their colleagues within this framework (Hofstede 2001).

2.8.1.2 PDI Scores—United States of America and Norway

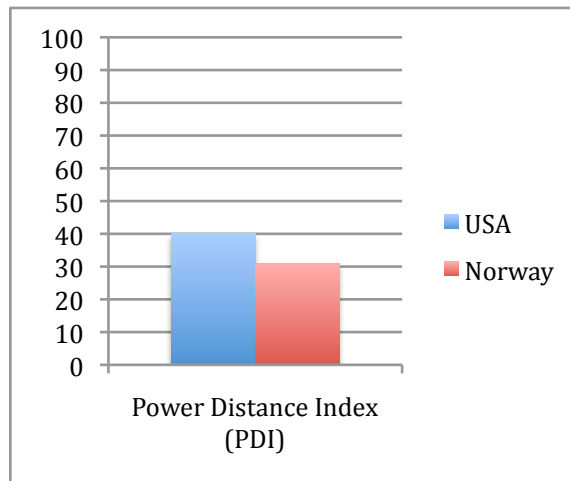


Figure 1: Power Distance Index (PDI)⁹

United States of America

The United States of America scores a 40 on the PDI, which is considered a relatively low power distance score. A score of 40 indicates that hierarchies are established as frameworks for maintaining order within organizations, with managers and employees expecting a degree of dialogue and corporation in the decision-making process. This notion can be seen as reflective of the United State’s “liberty and justice for all” creed, indicating a value system in which all individuals should theoretically have equal value (Hofstede Institute 2015).

Norway

Norway scores a 31 on the PDI, indicating a power distance level a bit lower than that of the United States. A score of 31 on the PDI indicates that Norwegian culture values independent work, viewing organizational structure or hierarchy as a guideline, rather than a rigid system to be explicitly followed. This score further indicates that managers are assumed to take on a

⁹ (Hofstede Institute, 2015).

“coaching” role, where he or she provides instruction or advice to subordinates, but does not exert direct control. In turn, employees expect to have an input on organizational decision-making processes and do not appreciate being micromanaged. Key to this workplace PDI is the notion that the manager trusts his employees to be competent, and serves as a guide rather than an authority figure. In such a workplace, manager-employee relationships are relatively informal and communication is extremely participative (Hofstede Institute, 2015).

2.8.2 Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV)

Hofstede defines the Individualism vs. Collectivism dimension as the balance of personal and group interests in a society and the way in which this balance impacts individual actors’ behavior. This concept takes root in the notion that the way in which individuals connect with others varies between cultures. In measuring individualism vs. collectivism, Hofstede examined whether personal identity in a given culture is shaped based upon own initiative or by group membership. His findings were then synthesized and measured according to a scale Hofstede calls the Individuality Variance (IDV), where cultures scoring high on the IDV were considered highly individualistic, and cultures scoring lower on the IDV were seen as more collectivist in nature (Hofstede 2001).

2.8.2.1 Individualism and Collectivism in the Workplace

The level of individualism present in a given society translates directly into the workplace. In a more collectivist society, organizational operations depend more on input from participants than in an individualistic culture. In such a context, decision-making is expected to be balanced and conducted on a mutual basis. Employees in a collectivist organization are viewed as members of a group, much like a family. Consequently, managers in a collectivist organizational context are much less likely to dismiss an employee based on poor performance—rather, the employee would be assigned a new task deemed more appropriate to his or her skill level. Lastly, obedience is viewed as a moral duty within a collectivist society. Therefore, individuals often view adherence to organizational rules and regulations as a means of expressing loyalty to the organization (Hofstede 2001).

Conversely, employees operating within an individualistic context are driven primarily by their own best interest. Work tasks are therefore tied closely to personal incentives, and competition may be heightened as each employee seeks to further his or her own goals. While collectivist societies may view the organization as a type of “family,” an individualistic perspective views

the manager-subordinate relationship as a “business transaction” conducted within a “labor market” (Hofstede 2001, 237). This relationship is in no way personal, and both parties use the other to achieve his or her own ends. Similarly, individual employees use obedience to organizational rules and regulations strategically—that is, they know that obedience is in their best interest. There is no moral connection to this behavior. As employees in individualistic societies are highly motivated by own goals and achievement, their occupation in itself is tightly connected to personal choice and strategy. Therefore, workers in individualistic societies often display heightened emotional connections to their careers, but necessarily to their employers themselves (Hofstede 2001).

2.8.2.2. IDV Scores—United States of America and Norway

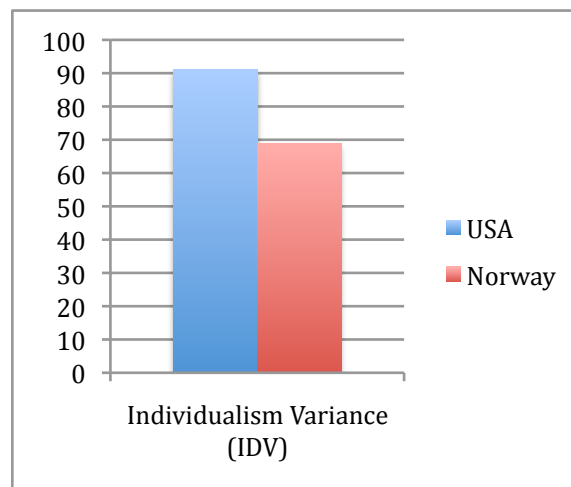


Figure 2: Individualism Variance (IDV)¹⁰

United States of America

The United States of America has an IDV score of 91, one of the highest measured scores. The value system in the United States is highly interconnected with the notion of personal freedom, with its values of “liberty and justice for all” heavily embedded in the American constitution, laws, and cultural values (Hofstede Institute 2015). American society emphasizes the notion that individuals should take care of themselves and their families, with minimum assistance from outside sources. This notion translates to the workplace in that “employees are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative” (Hof Inst. 2015). In an organization, individuals are rewarded on the job based on their merits or achievements. Individualism is considered a top societal

¹⁰ (Hofstede Institute 2015)

value in the United States, and is often highlighted as a much more desirable alternative to collectivist tendencies, which often are viewed in a negative light. This emphasis on individual achievement and self-motivation often results in high levels of competitiveness¹¹ in society as a whole, particularly in the workplace (Hofstede Institute 2015).

Norway

Norway has an IDV score of 69, indicating that Norwegian culture is intrinsically individualistic, albeit not to the extreme level displayed by American culture. A score of 69 indicates that Norwegian society values the development of an individual sense of self, with great value placed on personal opinion and the expression thereof. Further, workplace and personal life are carefully balanced, with great emphasis placed on individuals' right to privacy. Workplace relationships, particularly those between managers and subordinates, are viewed as a contract to be maintained and respected throughout the working relationship. At the same time, managers are expected to treat employees as individuals, with great emphasis placed on the need for mutual feedback in working towards shared organizational goals (Hofstede Institute 2015).

2.8.3 Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

Hofstede notes that uncertainty is a basic fact of life. Societies therefore must rely on various socially constructed artifacts to cope with this phenomenon. Uncertainty avoidance, therefore, refers to the extent to which a society can tolerate ambiguity. A society possessing a very rigid authority system, freely expressing sentiments of prejudice or racism, or tending towards extreme traditionalism reflects a very low threshold for uncertainty. Ambiguity in these cultures represents a source of anxiety to be mitigated via attempts at societal control. Conversely, a more open society indicates a greater tolerance for uncertainty. Hofstede's studies synthesize these factors and measure them against the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) (Hofstede 2001).

2.8.3.1 Uncertainty Avoidance in the Workplace

In the organizational context, uncertainty is managed through the enactment of rules and rituals. These implements provide a sense of order and predictability, often in the form of procedures, policies, or other bureaucratic measures. Employees operating within a country exhibiting a greater tendency towards uncertainty avoidance are more likely to feel more comfortable with the presence of heightened rules and regulations, while employees in an organization with a

¹¹ US' IDV score of 91 is often seen as confounding the country's relatively low PDI score, as high levels of self motivation may be considered intrinsically linked to an individual's desire to increase his or her individual level of power within the society (Hofstede Institute 2015)

lesser degree of uncertainty avoidance are more likely to engage in “renegade championing,” or praising those who break the rules to achieve organizational goals (Hofstede 2001).

2.8.3.2 UAI Scores—United States of America and Norway

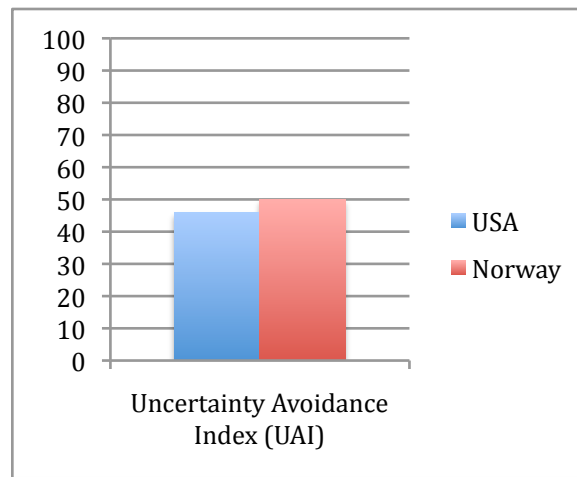


Figure 3: Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

United States of America

The United States of America scores a 46 on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index, indicating an average level of uncertainty anxiety and acceptance. A score of 46 indicates a strong emphasis on free speech, innovation, and independence. Hofstede notes that Americans typically do not like to be bound by excessive rules and regulations, and tend to be emotionally reserved (Hofstede Institute 2015).

Norway

Norway scores a 50 on the UAI, indicating no true preference towards uncertainty avoidance. This score may suggest a combination of adherence to rules and regulations, as well as encouragement of individual thought and innovation (Hofstede Institute 2015).

2.8.4 Masculinity Index (MAS)

The masculinity index refers to the way in which societies use systemized behavioral norms to manage gender duality. Feminine behavior is often defined as being relational in nature, with a strong focus on helping others and maintaining the physical environment. Typical feminine adjectives include words like “tender” or “caring.” Conversely, masculine behavior is generally associated with career or financial motivation. Individuals exhibiting masculine traits are often described as “tough,” “assertive,” or “competitive.” Cultures exhibiting and valuing more

masculine behaviors, therefore, are described as being masculine in nature, while societies embodying more feminine values can be characterized as feminine cultures (Hofstede 2001).

2.8.4.1 Masculinity Index Expressed in the Workplace

The core way in which a culture exhibits its degree of masculinity or femininity in the workplace can be seen in the way in which work is prioritized in relation to private life. In a masculine-oriented culture, individuals are said to “live to work,” while in a more feminine culture, employees “work to live” (Hofstede 2001, 312). Therefore, a masculine society prioritizes work and career over private matters, while a femininely oriented culture emphasizes the value of work-life balance. This distinction is further manifested in masculine societies’ emphasis on pay, job security, job content, and recognition. Feminine societies, conversely, value building professional relationships and maintenance of harmony and physical comfort in the workplace. This dichotomy is further reflected in the management paradigms of masculine and feminine cultures, where managers in a masculine setting are viewed as “heroes” who should be “aggressive”¹² and “decisive” (Hofstede 2001, 313). Further, business is considered a matter of “survival of the fittest,” with employees at all levels competing for recognition from managers throughout the corporate hierarchy (Hofstede 2001, 313). Feminine cultures, on the other hand, view managers as an employee of equal worth to all others. Managers should operate intuitively rather than decisively, as employees in feminine cultures expect to be consulted on decision-making processes. Therefore, feminine societies view business operations as a cooperative venture rather than a competitive one. This emphasis also endows more femininely oriented societies with a greater tolerance for conflict, as dialogue represents a core value of their business practices. Conversely, masculine cultures display a high level of discomfort in the event of conflict due to the competitiveness inherent in their organizational culture (Hofstede 2001).

¹² Aggression is only positively valued in a masculine society (Hofstede 2001)

2.8.4.2 MAS Scores—United States of America and Norway

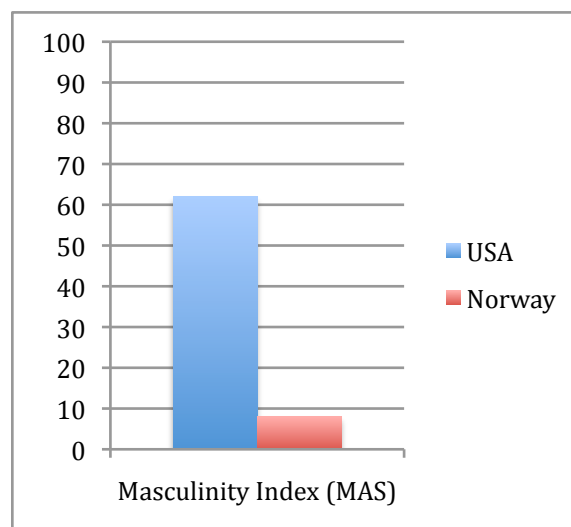


Figure 4: Masculinity Index (MAS)

United States of America

The United States has a MAS score of 62, indicating that it is a masculine society. This feature is particularly manifests itself in the high levels of competitiveness inherent in American culture.¹³ High competitiveness is further expressed in Americans’ desire to display their success, whether through their career or material displays of financial prowess. In this way, employees in the United States are said to “live to work,” as work and career are prioritized highly in order to achieve success. This drive further fuels the culture’s competitive spirit, with great emphasis placed on making others aware of personal achievements (Hofstede Institute 2015).

Norway

Norway scores an 8 on the MAS index, making it the second most feminine culture in Hofstede’s study (Sweden is the first). A score of 8 indicates a high emphasis on cooperation, consensus, and harmony in the workplace. The notion of ‘trying to be the best’ is neither idealized nor rewarded in Norwegian society. Managers in Norwegian workplaces are expected to encourage and guide their subordinates, who in turn expect to be included in organizational planning processes (Hofstede Institute, 2015).

¹³ This feature is enhanced by the US’ extremely high IDV score (Hofstede, 2001).

2.8.5 Long Versus Short-Term Orientation (LTO)

Long versus short-term orientation refers to the way in which a culture relates to its past while simultaneously addressing current and future challenges. Hofstede's dimensions synthesize data collected from the various participant countries and code them into what he calls the LTO score (Hofstede 2001). Cultures with a high LTO score see value in fiscal responsibility, stressing education and adaptability as tools for safeguarding the society against future challenges. Conversely, societies with a lower LTO score are very respectful of tradition and somewhat wary of embracing shifting values and trends (Hofstede Institute, 2015).

2.8.5.1 LTO Scores—United States of America and Norway

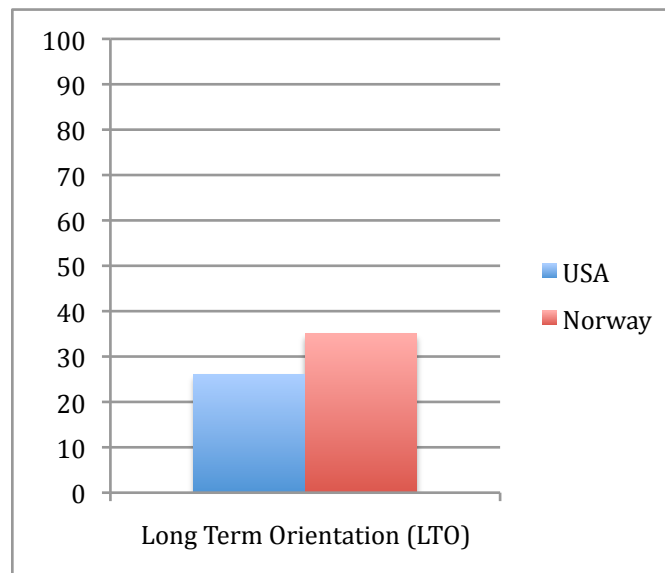


Figure 5: Long Term Orientation (LTO)

United States of America

The United States of America scores a 26 on the LTO scale, representing a relatively low degree of long-term orientation. A score of 26 indicates a degree of skepticism to new information, with recipients taking time to analyze messages prior to accepting the legitimacy of their contents. Further, this low LTO value indicates that business success is measured on a short-term basis, with quarterly financial figures often providing the barometer for financial stability within an organization (Hofstede Institute 2015).

Norway

Norway scores a 35 on the LTO, which is considerably low, yet still a bit higher than the American score. This LTO score indicates a somewhat greater degree of long-term orientation

amongst Norwegians, but still a level of skepticism to new information similar to that indicated for the Americans. A score of 35 suggests a high emphasis on the importance of truths and the role of tradition, while simultaneously pointing to a low tendency to save for the future and a desire to achieve quick results both in and outside the workplace (Hofstede Institute 2015).

2.9. Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Varying workplace standards between cultures can, in some instances, breed conflict or misunderstanding in the workplace. The extent to which this occurs or can be prevented can be determined by a variety of cultural adjustment factors (Lin 2012).

2.9.1. Black's Model for Cultural Adjustment

J. Stewart Black's research on cross-cultural adaptation synthesizes the varying factors contributing to positive intercultural workplace interactions into a three-part model for cultural adjustment (Black 1991). Cultural adjustment can be defined as the mental process an individual engages in to feel comfortable in a new culture/foreign organization, as well as the individual's ability to understand and meet the expectations of this new environment (Lin 2012). Black's model breaks this process down into three phases of adjustment: general adjustment, interaction adjustment, and work adjustment. General adjustment refers to the elements impacting an individual's daily existence; in other words, the environmental factors he or she must adapt to. These can range from food eaten, modes of transportation, housing, or the office environment itself (Black 1999; Lin 2012). Interaction adjustment involves the level of ease experienced in interaction with members of the opposite culture, whether in home or work life. This form of adjustment can prove particularly challenging due to varying cultural norms, especially in cases where the culture of the organization and the individual have widely varying standards. Lastly, work adjustment refers to the extent to which an individual employee manages to adapt to his or her position, roles and responsibilities, and workplace environment. This factor is heavily influenced by the level of success achieved in the other two adjustment phases (Lin 2012). In the case of Americans and Norwegians with managers or employers of the opposite culture, these adjustment factors become particularly relevant in terms of individual employee's success in understanding and adapting to the varying working norms and practice present in each culture.

2.9.2 Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to an individual's ability to understand and interpret communication efforts from individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Cultural

Intelligence consists of four sub-categories: Meta-cognitive CQ, Cognitive CQ, and Motivational CQ. Meta-cognitive Cultural Intelligence involves the high-order mental processes allowing individuals to recognize differences between their culture and others. A high level of meta-cognitive CQ grants an individual with a greater ease in interpreting communications from individuals of varying cultures. Further in this process is cognitive cultural intelligence. Cognitive CQ refers to the level of knowledge an individual has about the “norms, practices, and conventions” of other cultures (Lin 2012, 543). The more particular details known about a given culture, the greater the chance an individual has for understanding the verbal and non-verbal messages received in that culture’s working environment. Next, motivational cultural intelligence deals with an individual’s willingness to learn about the foreign culture and adapt thusly to its workplace or other standards. Motivational CQ carries the greatest weight for successful international workplace interactions, as individuals with a stronger desire to adapt to the dominant culture are considered to be much less likely to become disenchanted with their assignments. Lastly, Behavior cultural intelligence involves individuals’ ability to behave in a culturally appropriate manner in a variety of contexts—in other words, it involves whether or not the individual can “walk the walk” as well as “talk the talk” (Lin 2012, 543). If individuals varying backgrounds manage to recognize and understand these differences, along with possess and act in such a way that corresponds with this understanding, they can maximize the efficacy of their workplace interactions (Lin 2012).

2.9.3 Socialization within the Organization

Equally important to an individual’s propensity towards in-country adjustment is the extent to which he or she can be socialized into a new organization. Black identifies three stages for becoming acculturated into socially constructed organizational structures and practices. First, individuals can engage in anticipatory socialization. This process involves any preparatory efforts made at the individual level, as well as the setting of expectations regarding the new workplace. Next comes the encounter stage, where the individual first enters the new organization. During this phase, the individual becomes competent in his or her daily tasks, and begins to master the working relationships present within the organization. Lastly, the individual engages in role management, where here or she becomes 100% integrated into the new organization, gradually adopting its values and norms organically over time (Black 1991).

2.9.5 Sense-Making in the Adjustment Process

Important to the discussion of cross-cultural adaptation is the notion of sense-making in the adjustment process. Sense-making becomes particularly relevant in intercultural workplace interactions. Sense-making has to do with the way in which an individual copes with his or her new surroundings or workplace culture. Key to this process is the engaging of individual mental programming or user theories to form a basis for understanding the new professional context. When the events occurring within the new environment do not match these patterns, the outcome or given scenario generates an unexpected outcome, resulting in cognitive dissonance or confusion on the behalf of the actor. As he or she adjusts his mental software to fit the new environment, he or she then develops a new frame of referenced tailored to that specific scenario. This dissonance and adjustment process is constantly occurring, as previous frames of references will always fall short of the current situation (Black 1991).

2.9.6 Translator Role of Management in the Sense-Making Process

As ambassadors of the organization to their subordinates, managers serve as translators of organizational goals and norms in that they enact company policies and procedures within their business units (Røvik 1998). In the multicultural workplace, the varying “user theories” of diversely represented managers and subordinates meet. Disagreements regarding business decision making or misunderstandings regarding cultural standards of professionalism can often result in conflict. These conflicts can become particularly detrimental to the organization if time spent resolving them impedes productivity or profit in some way (Gormoy 2004). However, managers can anticipate this clash in advance, and taking the necessary measures to prevent it from impeding organizational efficacy. Crucial to this process is the recognition of the human factors influencing the organization—the socially constructed realities generated by its participants, particularly as they relate to acculturated understandings of the workplace (Jacobsen 2008). In so doing, managers can then identify both potential areas for social misunderstanding due to cultural differences and enact measures to impede these conflicts from stalling organizational productivity (Ford 2008).

2.10 Cultural Awareness Training

Cultural tensions within an organization may be mitigated by implementing a cultural awareness-training program. Such a program may be intended for individuals moving overseas in connection to their position, or as a general tool to use within an organization boasting a relatively diverse employee base. Generally, two varieties of cultural awareness training may be

employed: either culture specific or culture general training. Culture specific training provides a deep insight into a given culture, covering its history, customs, language, food, and any other key aspects deemed necessary for navigating daily life and work. Culture general training, however, is more focused on the individual's response to new cultures, and equipping him or her with the skills necessary to successfully interact with a wide variety of colleagues of other backgrounds (Hofstede 2001). Awareness training involves engaging participants' own perceptions of the workplace, encouraging them to be aware of the way in which their own background effects their interpretation of the world around them and subsequent behavior. The goal of this process is to encourage the acknowledgement of individual cultural biases, as well as generate awareness of the socially constructed impressions carried by other organizational actors. The next phase of the training process involves imparting knowledge regarding the relevant cultural groups. This process teaches participants valuable information regarding the symbols, norms, rituals, artifacts, and key figures of the relevant culture. This knowledge can then be enacted by participants to enhance relations with individuals of the opposing background (Hofstede 2001).

2.11 Diversity Management in the Inclusive Workplace

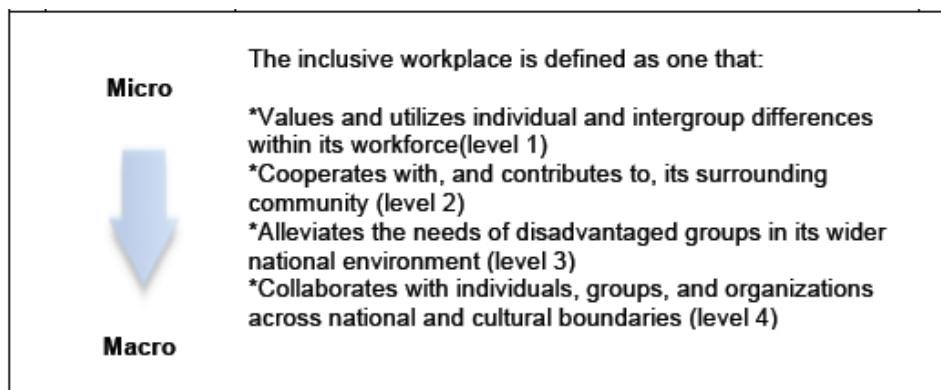


Figure 6: The Inclusive Workplace¹⁴

The inclusive workplace refers the notion that an organization should engage with its environment on both a micro and macro level to first promote healthy interpersonal relationships within its own structure. Once this process has occurred, the organization should slowly move beyond its own bounds to improve intercultural relations in the community at large. The organization's top managers are held responsible for driving policies promoting inclusion in the workplace by various means. These measures can include engaging with consultants or establishing an internal department aimed at establishing cultural awareness through workshops

¹⁴ (Barack 2005, 225)

or other means. With the support of top management, these parties can work with employees to establish cultural understanding and inclusion in the workplace. Regardless of logistics, the inclusive workplace gives ultimate responsibility for employee education and accountability to the managers, who are charged with ensuring the corporate culture promotes principles of inclusion. Managers are considered the most appropriate champions of inclusion, as they have the opportunity to engage with the organization to generate understanding of the particular challenges it faces, as well as gain understanding at the macro level by having an oversight of the activities of other organizations, the industry, and the global community (Barak 2005).

2.12 Summary of Theoretical Principles

This thesis seeks to examine the relationship between cultural background and manager-employee interactions between American and Norwegian colleagues. To successfully explore these topics, a theoretical framework has been established with the intention of laying a thorough groundwork on the notions of culture, globalization, management, and cultural awareness and adjustment processes.

3. Research Methodology

This thesis seeks to explore and explain the influence of cultural background and communication patterns on manager-employee relationships between Norwegian and American workers. In exploration of this phenomenon, this study has employed a qualitative research design strategy that shall be further outlined in this chapter. First, the chosen research methodology and design philosophy shall be identified, followed by a summarization of the semi-structured informant interview process. Further, the selected methods of data reduction and analysis shall be highlighted. Lastly, this chapter shall describe the means of securing the study's reliability and validity prior concluding with a description of the identified areas of potential weakness in tandem with a presentation of preliminary conclusions.

3.1 Qualitative Methodological Approach

This research study employs qualitative research methods to gather data regarding Norwegian and American workers and their impressions of one another in the workplace. Qualitative research methods have been deemed most appropriate to this research project due to their efficacy in describing an observed phenomenon. This approach has been selected in place of quantitative methods that aim to measure it by way of numerical calculations or statistical analysis. Impressions of other cultural norms and communication patterns in the workplace are subjective in nature, tightly bound by the way in which individual actors experience the world (Blaikie 2010, 204-205). The phenomenon of personal experience in the workplace is, in other words, socially constructed and cannot necessarily be explained by objective facts. To accommodate these parameters, this study's exploration of social artifacts such as personal cultural background, communication patterns, and workplace interactions is best served by an exploratory study employing a purely qualitative framework.

3.2 Selected Research Design Strategy

This thesis shall employ an abductive research design strategy aimed at delineating a clear, nuanced plan for project execution and maintaining control (Blaikie 2010, 10, 15). Abductive research design seeks to produce an explanation or understanding for an observed social science phenomenon by examining the many nuances of individual experience in a given social arena. In the context of this study, workplace interactions between American and Norwegian managers and employees shall be explored to generate a deeper understanding of the relationship between

cultural background and the way in which these groups communicate and interact with one another. These observations are then analyzed in terms of existing theoretical principles to produce a conclusion regarding these studied phenomena. (Blaikie 2010, 89).

3.3 Data Collection Process

Data for this thesis has been collected by running semi-structured informant interviews. Often associated with abductive research design, informant interviews offer a decidedly personal insight into a given social phenomenon (Blaikie 2010, 108). This study enacts the interview process as a means of exploring the personal experiences of carefully selected individuals belonging to the selected research demographic. It is these impressions that shall serve as this study's main source of raw data (Andersen 2006).

3.3.1 Source Definition

This study incorporates data pulled from both primary and tertiary sources. Primary sources involve any data derived and analyzed directly by the researcher conducting the study (Blaikie 2010, 160). This study has generated qualitative data through active of selected informants. The responses generated by these respondents, as well as this study's subsequent analysis, constitute the primary sources gleaned in the conducting of this study.

In addition, tertiary sources have been used as the basis for this study's theoretical assumptions. Tertiary sources include data obtained and analyzed by a third party (Blaikie 2010, 160). In this context, existing theories and earlier research surrounding the relationship between culture, communication, and management provide the groundwork for the informant interviews, as the basis of this study lies upon the assumption that these principles are testable and can be generalized to outside contexts.

3.3.2 Sample Collection Process

In order to gather the qualitative data necessary to this study, a combined judgmental and snowball sampling technique has been employed. This thesis seeks to gain the personal insight of individuals fitting into either of the following two categories: Americans working in Norwegian-owned companies or who otherwise have experience working with Norwegian managers; and Norwegians working in American-owned companies or who otherwise have experience working with American managers. While these demographic groups display very distinctive characteristics, the numbers of their representatives are quite large. To identify and

collect data regarding all members of each population would require extensive time and resources that extend beyond the means of this study, as it is impossible to collect data on each member of this extensive population. Therefore, this study has employed primarily judgmental or purposeful non-probability sampling techniques in order to gather data on the desired population groups, with engagement in snowball sampling in cases where further respondents were required (Blaikie 2010, 178-9).

Judgmental or purposeful non-probability sampling is often employed in cases where it may not be financially or logistically realistic to identify and study members an entire population. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of available information on the sample population or lack of resources to collect this information and its subsequent data. To overcome this challenge, the researcher identifies a target study demographic, strategically selecting research subjects based on their representativeness of this group (or groups). In other words, the researcher makes a ‘judgment call’ of sorts in selecting respondents to ensure that they best represent the population her or she desires to assess (Blaikie 2010, 178). This study has engaged judgmental non-probability sampling to strategically selected informants belonging to two target demographic groups: Norwegians with experience working in American organizations, and Americans with experience working in Norwegian organizations. As this study focuses on the specific and distinct work cultures and communications styles, it is crucial that respondents fit neatly into each category so as to obtain the desired data. Any individuals outside these categories were therefore deemed irrelevant to the study (Blaikie 2010, 179).

To collect sample data, the researcher’s own professional, academic, and personal network was pooled to find respondents who fit the target study demographics. In instances where this network did not produce enough respondents to fit the relevant sample groups, snowball or reference sampling was engaged by obtaining contact referrals from existing informants (Blaikie 2010, 170). The final sample group included three Norwegians and three Americans with professional experience in organizations of both Norwegian and American origin.¹⁵

The researcher acknowledges the significance of sample size and quality to qualitative research design, as a varied respondent pool allows for much more nuanced data on the study subject (Andersen 2006, 289). Therefore, an equal representation of Norwegian and American respondents was purposefully sought out in an effort to maintain a balanced comparison of

¹⁵ See Appendix B: Participant Matrix

respondent data, as well as to preserve consistency in design (Golfshami 2003, 599). While the researcher further acknowledges the notion that an increased sample size further contributes to the reliability of collected data, this study ultimately has relied on a sample size of six respondents. This size has been selected due to the structure of the interview process. The use of semi-structured interviewing methods in the data collection process has been purposefully enacted with the aim of generating the most authentic response possible from the informants. While this process may produce a greater quality of data, extensive preparatory and analytic measures are necessary to ensure that the desired information is gleaned from the interview session. These methods require an increased level of time in comparison with more structured interview tactics. Therefore, a sample size of six has been deemed the most logistically realistic in achieving the qualitative of data desired by this study (Wengraf 2001).

In discussing this study's sampling technique, it is important to distinguish between the chosen sampling method and other techniques commonly employed in qualitative research. This sampling methodology is not to be confused with convenience sampling. While the desired study population has been clearly defined at the outset of the study, the respondents are not self-selected. Further, this sampling strategy is not to be confused with quota sampling. While this study a relatively small sample size, informants have not been assigned to study groups randomly, but rather intentionally as a part of the judgmental non-probability sampling technique (Blaikie 2010).

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Informant Interviews

Data for this thesis has been collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with the selected informants. Semi-structured interviews involve an interview session in which the researcher has a clear agenda for discussion, but employs an interview guide as a prompt for conversation rather than a strict parameter. Therefore, this technique takes on a much more relaxed tone than a more structured interview, relying more heavily on the respondent to produce an organic “narrative of [his or her] own experience” with the studied subject matter. However, this is not to say that the semi-structured interview is an overly simple or “easy” means of gathering data—quite to the contrary. Employment of semi-structured interviewing techniques requires a greater degree of preparatory work compared to their more formalized counterparts, and even more efforts are necessary in the data reduction and analysis process (Wengraf 2001, 5).

This thesis has employed the informant interview due to its efficacy in exploring the social mechanisms of culture and personal interpretation (Andersen 2006). The conversational nature of the semi-structured interview provides a decided advantage in the context of this study, as it allows for a more relaxed interview environment. This technique has therefore been selected mindfully in hopes of promoting respondent candor in relaying their experiences with Norwegian and American workplaces (Wengraf 2001, 5). In many cases, the respondents in this study have a close personal, professional, or other relationship with the colleagues or managers under discussion. Therefore, the semi-structured interview style has the potential to reveal impressions or opinions that may not necessarily come to light in a more formal interview setting, as participants may feel more relaxed due to the conversational tone of the session. This level of openness aims to mitigate inhibitions regarding sensitive topics¹⁶ or even negative assumptions regarding the interview process itself¹⁷ (Wengraf 2001)

3.3.3.1 Interview Guide, Preparation, and Structure

In preparation for the interview sessions, a basic set of questions was prepared beforehand with the research problem statements in mind. This measure was taken with the intent of establishing a foundation for maintaining the interview session's focus on the research topics (Andersen 2006, 286). Completing these preparatory steps is particularly significant to semi-structured interviews, as the conversational tone of the session entails a greater likelihood of losing focus on the outline research objectives than a more structured interview program. The more successful implementation of this interviewing strategy therefore depends on an extensive knowledge base and high level of discipline on the part of the researcher, as the conversation must be managed properly in order to produce the desired results (Wengraf 2001, 5).

While preparatory work is essential to the execution of a semi-structured interview, the session itself is treated like a conversation—a spontaneous social interaction where no strict rules or bounds apply. A rigid interview guide is not always the best alternative for this type of interaction, as the social nature of this method depends upon the preservation of a degree of spontaneity in the conversation. Therefore, the interviewer relies on the interview guide as a sort of “road map” for conversation rather than a strict guideline. In cases where the researcher is particularly confident in the relevant subject matter, a list of themes for discussion may be in favor of an interview guide (Clifford 2010, 106). In the context of this study, semi-structured

¹⁶ Such as a current or past work relationship, as was the case for most informants.

¹⁷ In some cases, the word “interview” may evoke negative emotion, such as in association with a job interview or performance review (Wengraf 2001).

interview preparations were made in an effort to grant the interviewer with the freedom to run each interview on a case-by-case basis, pursuing the topics he or she deems most relevant to the study while still maintaining subject matter focus (Andersen 2006). To ensure optimal focus on the research questions, an interview guide and set of topics were prepared prior to the sessions. The interview questions¹⁸ were written in a decidedly open manner, leaving room for a natural flow of conversation while still focusing the interviewer's attention to the main research topics. A set of probes¹⁹ was then produced as a means of aiding the interviewing in eliciting further information from informants, as well as to further maintain direction in the semi-structured interview process (Clifford 2010; Wengraf 2001).

3.3.3.2 Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were conducted over a four-week span in face-to-face sessions lasting 30 to 45 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English as a means of ensuring consistency in data collection methods across all six sessions (Golfshami 2003). Interview sessions began with an overview of topics to be discussed, including a review of the interview guide. These measures were taken as a means of establishing subject matter clarity for the rest of the session. This process also granted each interviewee the opportunity to ask clarifying questions beforehand, as well as to engage their thought process in regards to the subject matter (Andersen 2006, 290). Upon introducing the interview subject matter, the interviewer confirmed respondents' consent to both participate in the study, as well as for the session to be recorded²⁰.

Upon commencing the recordings, each informant was advised of the condition of anonymity governing this study. This briefing included a reiteration of the voluntary nature of the study, as well as a statement confirming that no formation shall be released regarding informants' name, age, gender or employer (Marshall 2010). The interviewer then included a disclaimer that the thesis must explain that participants were pulled from the researcher's own network, but the nature of the connections would not be disclosed to further protect their privacy. This statement was then closed by advising each informant that all raw data files would remain confidential. This statement was included as a means of further solidifying the condition of anonymity (Marshall 2010; Clifford 2010).

¹⁸ See Appendix A

¹⁹ See Appendix A

²⁰ Reasons for recording the session were twofold: to enable the interviewer to participate more freely in the interview process without taking copious notes; and to preserve the original verbiage of the conversation. See also Chapter 3.5, Comments on Methodological Reliability and Validity

Once these initial measures had been taken, the recorded interview session was underway, employing the interview guide as a springboard for discussion rather than a script for the dialogue. Further questioning and subject matter were then derived from the response generated by the informants, allowing the interview to take on the desired natural flow of conversation (Wengraf 2001, 5). In instances where a lull in conversation occurred, a topic became exhausted, or the discussion strayed to irrelevant subject matter, the interview guide was employed in tandem with probes to re-focus the session on the research topics (Andersen 2006). Probes were further employed as a means of eliciting further information in association with anecdotes or statements appearing particularly relevant to the research questions (Wengraf 2001).

Throughout the interview process, measures were taken to maintain the interviewer's level accessibility, legitimacy, and trust with the informant. Measures of securing this element of the conversation included use of humor to put subjects at ease, employment of subject matter knowledge to enhance interviewer credibility, and statements of neutrality to encourage further openness (Andersen 2006, 288). This process was aided by the existing relationship* between the interviewer and interviewee in some instances. In such cases, the interviewer relied on shared experiences, humor, and knowledge to establish legitimacy in the interview session. Engaging these measures promoted a more open tone of conversation aimed at generating the most authentic response possible from the respondents. Lastly, a more relaxed tone served to maintain a friendly, professional tone on the side of the interviewer, rather than taking on the role of taskmaster to keep the conversation on subject (Wengraf 2001).

3.3.3.3 Condition of Anonymity

As indicated in Section 3.3.3.2, this study's condition of anonymity plays a key role in its data collection process. This factor has been carefully considered with respect to the notion that ethical research must be conducted with "respect for persons" in mind. "Respect for persons" refers to the notion that a researcher shall not, in any circumstance, use his or her participants solely as a means of fulfilling his own investigatory purposes. In this process, the researcher also carries a responsibility for protecting the interests of his or her informants. Their privacy, anonymity, and right to choose their level of participation must be respected through all phases of the study (Marshall 2010). Further, measures must be taken to ensure that subjects cannot receive negative consequences for their participation in the study (Clifford 2010). It is with these principles in mind that all identifying details connected to this study's informants have been

removed from this thesis, with the exception of information necessary in justifying their relevance to the target study demographics (Blaikie 2010; Marshall 2010). In many cases, the respondents have an ongoing connection to the organizations, managers, and incidents discussed in the interview process. Therefore, the condition of anonymity was considered especially important to this study, particularly in instances where informants' views carry the potential to be negatively interpreted by a current or former manager or colleague. Protecting informants' professional interests in this manner thusly serves to uphold the ethical notion of "respect for persons."

3.3.3.4 Comments on Neutrality and Professionalism

Of equal importance to this study's condition of anonymity is its focus on maintaining neutrality throughout the research process, particularly in the interview sessions. This objective may be accomplished by upholding a professional tone throughout the conversation (Andersen 2006). Further, the interviewer must maintain a neutral perspective in a semi-structured interview so as to properly highlight the respondent's opinion (Wengraf 2001). Consistent efforts were therefore made to maintain a neutral, professional point of view throughout the interview sessions. However, this was admittedly a challenge due to the researcher's own lack of experience as an interviewer, the conversational approach of the semi-structured interview, and the existing personal connection with many of respondents.

3.4 Data Reduction and Analysis

Upon collection of informant interview data, it becomes necessary to run a data reduction and analysis process. Data reduction involves the synthesis of raw data into categories for analysis (Blaikie 2010, 208; Charmaz 2006, 43). This study has employed a three-step data reduction process, beginning with coding participants' personal information for anonymity, transcribing the data, and engaging in initial and focused coding to generate categories for analysis. Following this process, an axial coding process was employed to translate the initial and focused codes into presentable results. These findings shall be reviewed in Chapter Four.

3.4.1 Coding Respondents for Anonymity

As indicated in Chapter 3.3.3.3, this study has been conducted under the condition of anonymity for its participants. This measure has been taken in the interest of protecting the personal and professional interests of the informants, as well as to protect their privacy (Clifford 2010). Therefore, extreme care has been taken to ensure that no identifying details regarding study

participants shall be expressed in the letter of this thesis. Each participant was assigned a code consisting of either the letter N for Norwegian or A for American, along with a number from one to three. For example: N1 for Norwegian 1 or A2 for American 2. Participants were then listed in the Participant Matrix with a brief, generalized description of their background:

Participant Matrix	
Informant Code	Background
N1	Norwegian working for a medium-sized, American-owned company. Has a background in aviation and oil and gas. Experience working for both Norwegian and American owned companies with managers of both backgrounds. Spent some years living in the US.
N2	Norwegian working for an American-owned company with international concerns. Has several years experience in aviation and oil and gas. Has has both American and Norwegian employers.
N3	Norwegian working for a medium-sized company with international concerns. Has a background in finance and energy/oil and gas. Experience working for both Norwegian and American-owned companies.
A1	American working for a Norwegian-owned company. Experience working for a North-American owned company operating in Norway, and has had managers of both Norwegian and American backgrounds.
A2	American with several years' experience working for Norwegian companies, as well as experience working in the US prior to coming to Norway.
A3	American working for a Norwegian-owned company with international interests. Has a background in shipping/logistics and healthcare.

Coding Legend	
N	Norwegian
A	American

Appendix B: Participant Matrix

These coded depictions of the participants' background serves to illustrate informants' relevance to the study—however, it is important to note that no information has been listed regarding name, age, gender, employer, and in relevant cases, nature relationship to the researcher. Raw data containing this highly sensitive personal information has been saved in a confidential document that may only be accessed by the researcher (Clifford 2010).

3.4.2 Transcribing Interview Data

Upon coding participant information for anonymity, the interview recordings were transcribed in preparation for coding and analysis. Crucial to the transcription process is the preservation of as much detail as possible from the initial interaction. As the interview itself is a conversation

involving nonverbal as well as verbal indicators, it is not possible for a recording to provide a completely accurate representation of the session itself. Therefore, the researcher prepared notes and debriefings following each interview in an attempt to preserve the original nature of the interaction, such as body language, voice inflection, and other factors in the transcription process (Wengraf 2001). To further preserve details of the initial session, transcripts were taken very shortly after interview completion (Clifford 2010). Transcripts were logged in a spreadsheet indicating the relevant participant and date of interview²¹. This document included a space for important notes regarding nonverbal communications or other key elements in the interview session that may inform the analytical process (Wengraf 2001). As the transcripts provide the raw data for this study, it is important to note that the documents themselves will not be disclosed in this thesis, and have been stored in a confidential folder in order to maintain this study's condition of participant anonymity (Clifford 2010).

In taking transcripts of this study's interview sessions, great care was taken to remain mindful of the relationship between the words spoken, and any nonverbal cues that may have been present during the interview process (Wengraf 2001). Particular attention has been paid to participants' use of language, tone of voice, and timing of statements, as each of these factors provides insight into the informants' perspective (Charmaz 2006, 45). These conversational elements were noted in the "notes" column of each transcript. Details such as these were noted in order to preserve transcript accuracy, as the quality of subsequent coding and analytical processes is dependent on the level of detail present in of the transcripts (Wengraf 2001).

3.4.3 Coding Interview Data

Once interview data was successfully transcribed, a coding process was engaged to prepare the data for further analysis. This process engages three phases: initial coding, focused coding, and axial coding. Initial coding provides the first step of the coding process where data is examined to determine the subject of discussion, what respondents are implying, whose point of view the data is generated from, and identifying any clear theoretical categories that may already be present. The initial coding process allows for the summarizing of the transcripts into generalized categories, as transcript data is summarized either line by line or according to significant incident (Charmaz 2006, 47). This process was conducted by filling in the first note column in the transcript document with initial codes to summarize each line of speech in the transcript.

²¹ See Appendix C: Transcript Template

The initial coding process has been engaged as a means of preserving researcher neutrality in data analysis. To accomplish this goal, the researcher endeavored to maintain a degree of openness as to what the data will reveal, preserve the initial thoughts expressed during the interview, keep codes short and to the point, move quickly through the data, and to compare data elements to other data elements only and not own assumptions or theory (Charmaz 2006, 40). This process ensured that this phase of coding reflected purely upon the respondents' perspectives, controlling for researcher bias early in the process. Further advantages to the use of initial coding measures include the generation of data relevance, providing a basis for clear data categories, and maintenance of researcher neutrality. Initial coding, therefore, serves as a means of providing a more efficient mode of discovering underlying elements influencing respondent data during subsequent data coding and analysis phases (Charmaz 2006, 54).

Following initial coding measures, focused coding was engaged in order to condense these codes into more generalized categories (Charmaz 2006, 57). As in the initial coding phase, focused coding was conducted actively, with the researcher maintaining a close relationship to the data alone rather than drawing in own assumptions at this stage. As the codes generated during initial coding were synthesized into broader categories, the researcher paid particular attention to any "identifying moments," or points in the data that seem to illuminate key pieces of information. These data points aided in generation of further key themes for further analysis (Charmaz 2006, 59-60). During the focused coding phase, codes noted in the first notes column of the transcripts were summarized and then listed as generalized themes in the second notes column*. (footnote referring to template)

Once initial codes were synthesized into focused codes, the data was then taken through an axial coding process. This process links the general categories established with focused codes to the sub-categories suggested by the initial codes, serving to pull the data "together again in a coherent whole" (Charmaz 2006, 62). This process allows for the connection of texts to the concepts explored in the study, as well as linking socially constructed factors such as personal background, environment, and intention to the words spoken during the interview process. In other words, axial coding allows for generation of broader data categories and subcategories to be used in answering the study's research questions (Charmaz 2006, 62-3). These codes were recorded in a separate document to the transcript spreadsheet, the results of which shall be presented as the results of this study in Chapter 4.

3.5 Comments on Methodological Reliability and Validity

In the context of social science research, reliability and validity often function in tandem—in fact, in such cases, a study cannot be deemed valid if it is not first found to be reliable. Proper establishment of reliability and validity serves to legitimize study results for its intended audience (Golfshami 2003). Therefore, careful measures have been taken as a means of preserving the reliability and validity of this study.

A study's reliability can be described as the extent to which its conditions are consistent and repeatable. Such conditions are often measured in terms of the degree to which the same measurement occurs on a repeated basis, the stability of said measurement over time, and the similarity of measurements within a given time period. To ensure consistency of results, this thesis has employed a variety of measures, including maintaining continuity in the data collection process, preserving the condition of anonymity, and efforts to curb the influence of researcher bias in data analysis (Golfshami 2003, 598). These measures occurred as follows:

Efforts to ensure consistency in data collection methods (Golfshami 599):

- All interviews conducted in English
- Sample included equal representation of each target demographic group—that is, three Americans and three Norwegians
- Each interview was recorded to preserve the verbal component of the interaction and give the researcher the opportunity to interact freely within the interview context (Clifford 2010, 110).
- Consistent use of common interview guide and theoretical probes during interview sessions
- Researcher kept thorough post-interview notes and conducted debriefings to preserve details regarding nonverbal element of interaction (Clifford 2010, 111) as a means of preserving the initial interaction.
- Careful transcription techniques were employed following each interview to ensure that data was recorded in the most accurate manner possible (Wengraf 2001, 21).

Methods of ensuring consistency in answers received from respondents (Golfshami 2003):

- Each respondent was given the same theoretical debriefing prior to the interview to clarify subject matter for discussion (Andersen 2006, 290).

- Conversation was guided according to consistent themes present in the interview guide, along with probing techniques to maintain subject matter focus (Andersen 2006, 290).

Measures to preserve the condition of anonymity:

- Participants advised of condition of anonymity prior to and during the recorded interview session (Clifford 2010, 111).

Efforts to curb the influence of researcher bias in data collection and analysis (Andersen 2006):

- Use of language, nonverbal communication to maintain a relaxed tone of conversation. In some cases, the researcher employed this process as a means of maintaining the focus of conversation on the views of the informants. These measures were particularly relevant in cases where informants expressed caution when expressing a view that may be seen as “negative” towards the American working culture in an effort to avoid offending the researcher. In such instances, statements regarding researcher neutrality were repeated to encourage further openness.
- Engaged in initial coding process to prevent projection of researcher’s theoretical assumptions onto the raw data prior to analysis (Charmaz 2006, 54).

Expanding upon the establishment of a study’s reliability, research validity is examined by assessing the extent to which the study measures its intended subject matter, and the degree to which the results may be generalized to outside contexts (Golfshami 2003; Yin 2013). As this thesis employs qualitative research methods, validity shall be explored in terms of construct and external validity, where construct validity refers to the solidity of research questions and means of measuring the desired study object, and external validity refers to the extent to which the methods and results may be generalized to outside contexts (Yin 2013). Measures employed to verify external and construct validity were as follows:

Efforts made to insure the study measures the intended subject matter:

- Measures were taken to safeguard researcher neutrality in the data collection and analysis process, particularly in the initial and focused coding phases (Charmaz 2006).
- Open interview format employed based upon common set of guided questions and theoretical probes to maintain focus of conversation (Andersen 2006, 290).

Peer review of research methodologies:

- A peer review conducted by a fellow scholar within the Social Science faculty at Universitetet i Stavanger was conducted as a means of assessing the construct validity of this study's research methodology (Golfshami 2003).

These combined measures were conducted as a means of establishing this study's reliability and validity. In keeping with this thesis' social constructivist theoretical perspective, these efforts were made with consideration of the idea that reality is constantly changing, regardless of measures taken to ensure efficacy of measurements taken (Golfshami 2003). This notion may prevent challenges to the research design to be discussed further in Chapter 3.6.

3.6 Potential Challenges and Limitations to the Research Design

While careful consideration has been made to ensure the quality of this research design, a few key challenges and limitations have been identified during the research process:

- Limited number of respondents: an increased informant pool may serve to provide more nuanced results. This was challenging in the context of this project due to the employment of semi-structured interviews as a data collection method combined with the six-month timeframe allotted for the study.
- Only one data collection method has been used. Conducting a first round interview or survey, or running a qualitative data collection method in tandem with the interviews could serve to triangulate the data, thus improving the study's validity.
- Researcher neutrality/bias: as one of the studied cultures corresponds with the researcher's own background, the danger of contamination due to ethnocentrism cannot be ruled out (Hofstede 2001). Further, the existing connection between the researcher and some informants may lead to challenges maintaining the desired level of neutrality and professionalism.
- Interviews were conducted in English, which is not the native language for half of the informants. This may result in true messages being lost in translation.
- Condition of anonymity was not formalized by way of a form for consent. This threatens the study's reliability and validity.

4. Presentation of Findings

This chapter shall provide preliminary responses to the main research questions based upon the results generated during the semi-structured interview process. Results have been synthesized into the following categories: Norwegian and American communication styles; cultural background and the business environment; cultural background and management style; the influence of cultural background on workplace interactions; and identified skills and measures to be taken by managers to optimize these interactions.

4.1 American and Norwegian Workplace Cultures

Analysis of the raw data obtained in the informant interview process revealed several core traits of Norwegian and American workplace cultures. The information collected has been synthesized into four dimensions: Top-Down vs. Flat Hierarchy, Formal vs. Informal Structure, Competitive vs. Collaborative Environment, and Work First vs. Family First:

<u>Workplace Culture</u>	
American	Norwegian
<p>Top-Down Hierarchy Larger distance between managers and employees ("chain of command"), employee value assigned based on position in hierarchy.</p>	<p>Flat Hierarchy Lesser distance between managers and employees, equal value given to all regardless of position in the hierarchy.</p>
<p>Formal Structure Regimented structure, strict adherence to procedure/protocol, high pressure to perform at top levels.</p>	<p>Informal Structure More open structure, autonomy of thought for employees valued by both managers and employees, emphasis placed on result achieved rather how it was achieved, employees encouraged to do their best.</p>
<p>Competitive Workplace is individualistic*-employees and managers look out mainly for their own interests. Employees often feel unsafe in their jobs due to high levels of competition. Employees are afraid of negative consequences of making mistakes, asking for help.</p>	<p>Collaborative Workplace has a collectivist approach*-Employees and managers work together to reach organizational goals. Colleagues take care of one another. Employees value feeling safe in their jobs, and feel safe enough to ask managers for help or admit to making mistakes.</p>
<p>Work First Expected to sacrifice personal life to reach company goals.</p>	<p>Family First Expected to balance personal life and work as the individual sees fit.</p>

Figure 7: Workplace Culture

The four dimensions of Norwegian and American workplace culture shall be discussed further in the next paragraphs of this chapter.

4.1.1 Top-Down vs. Flat Hierarchy

The observed distinction between the top-down workplace hierarchy in the American workplace and the more flat social hierarchy in Norwegian organizations was considered by all six informants to be the most significant difference between the two cultures. In fact, the specific phrases “top-down” and “flat” were used to describing the two business cultures in four out of the six interviews, a figure representing roughly 67% of the respondents.

<i>Workplace Culture</i>	
American	Norwegian
Top-Down Hierarchy	Flat Hierarchy
<i>"The power distance in US is great compared to a Norwegian system, it's much more linear in a Norwegian system."-A1</i>	<i>"In Norwegian companies, it's more like a flat structure. You can easily speak [to everyone] at the same kind of same level." - N2</i>
<i>" I think it's more rigid in [the US]...where you are on the organizational chart means a lot more." - N3</i>	<i>"In Norway...everyone is on an equal level, I mean obviously you have hierarchies but I believe that it is much more flat than it is in the US."-A2</i>

American workplaces were described as displaying a greater distance in the organizational hierarchy between managers and employees, meaning that value in these systems was assigned to individuals based upon their position in the organizational chart. The higher an individual's role was on the chart, the greater the value to the organization, and therefore the greater level of respect given by fellow employees, particularly managers. Further, organizational activities were described as running through a “chain of command,” meaning that individual actors did not have the authority to make decisions independently in most cases, and that ultimate decision making processes were generated from the top of the organizational pyramid. This concept will be discussed in more detail in the following Chapter 4.1.2.

In contrast to the American workplace's social hierarchy, the Norwegian system was described as having a “flat” social structure, with individual actors viewed as having equal value to the organization regardless of their position in the formal corporate hierarchy. This principle was reflected in the relatively open way in which employees related to one another.* While the necessity of a formal organizational hierarchy was acknowledged as being necessary to business operations, respondents reported a very minimal transference of this structure to the organization's interpersonal cultural.

4.1.2 Formal vs. Informal Practices

In parallel with the contrasting levels of social hierarchy displayed in each working culture, informants reported a variation in the level of structural formality between Norwegian and American organizational operations. This dimension of workplace culture manifested itself in three key ways: the degree of rigidity in technical operations; the level of pressure exerted upon employees to perform; and the level of personal autonomy assigned to individual employees.

Workplace Culture	
American	Norwegian
Formal Structure	Informal Structure
<i>"[The American structure] is more direct and it has more of a militant way of [operating]..." - N1</i>	<i>"The Norwegian [workplace] gives you... time to ... play with your own imagination on how to [complete a task]"-N1</i>
<i>"[The American way] is more institutionalized...you know the protocols and procedures that you have to go through and there's not much room for... discussion..." - A1</i>	<i>"If you're insecure about what you're doing, just compare the two [and]...you've got a Norwegian manager, you have to kind of to do it, just fix it in your way, and you're left behind needing to figure out." - N1</i>
<i>"The American way, it's more of monkey-see monkey-do, if they're being told to it this way, they might not question why, they just do it, even though they feel it's not correct, and you might end up with...not the best solution for the company..." - N2</i>	<i>"I don't always feel like the company really has control, and the managers have no idea what we're doing." - A3</i>

American workplaces were described by the informants as employing formal structures in the execution of their organizational activities. Words such as “institutionalized,” “regimented,” and even “militant” were commonly used to describe these processes. Informants of both backgrounds experienced American workplaces as quite reliant on the rigid implementation of corporate policies and procedures in completing daily tasks. This adherence to formal protocol was experienced as being absolute, and to be implemented without question by employees below the management level. Creative input or resistance were not encouraged, and most informants suggested that an individual actor could expect negative consequences should these measures be engaged. Informants responded to this level of regimentation in varying ways. A portion of them indicated that such a high level of structure was unfavorable, as it exerted too much control on individual employees. Others felt that it provided a certain degree of order and predictability that served to maximize the efficacy of organizational operations. Interestingly, these responses varied on cultural lines, as Americans respondents were more likely to speak favorably about a more regimented system. The Norwegians, however, were more likely to dismiss the formalized system as too restrictive of their free agency in the workplace.

In the discussion of the systematic nature observed in American organizations, many informants suggested that the enactment of strict procedures and protocols was linked to a high level of pressure to produce large volumes of work to meet organizational goals for company output. Mechanization of individual activities, it was argued, would aid in meeting these objectives in the most timely fashion possible, as well as maximize the volume of tangible good produced where applicable. Systemized processes were therefore considered essential in ensuring the organization meets high performance expectations.

Conversely, respondents experienced Norwegian workplaces as employing relatively informal structures, with autonomy of thought valued over operational regimentation, results prioritized over adherence to protocol, and quality of work emphasized over volume. The Norwegian environment was characterized by its emphasis on independent thinking skills in workplace activities. Informants reported a relatively high degree of freedom to perform tasks in the way they saw fit in the Norwegian system. This level of personal autonomy received reportedly high value in Norway as a mutual expectation from both managers and employees, as both parties trust one another to be competent in their roles. While achieving organizational objectives was reported as being equally important to the American working culture, the focus in Norwegian businesses was on the value of the result, and the notion that individual workers should do their best to come up with the relevant solutions on their own. While some informants relished in the relative openness of the Norwegian model, others expressed frustration at the lack of structure, citing a desire for more direction in how to complete daily tasks or suggesting that a greater degree of formalization may maximize organizational output.

In discussion of the level of formality displayed by each working culture, it is important to acknowledge the relationship between this aspect of the workplace and the distinction between a top-down and flat social hierarchy discussed in Chapter 4.1.1. These two dimensions are closely related in that the level of formality exerted in the workplace was observed to be a direct result of the degree of social stratification between employees. The regimented practices, high-pressure to perform, and low levels of personal autonomy described in the American system were considered by most informants to be a means of executing the organizational hierarchy. Conversely, the emphasis on achieving quality results over high volumes, and high levels of individual autonomy were viewed as reflecting the relatively flat social structures at play in the Norwegian workplace.

4.1.3 Competitive vs. Collaborative Environment

In addition to the varying levels of formality observed in Chapter 4.1.2, informants reported a greater degree of competition in the American workplace than in the Norwegian environment, which was observed as being more collaborative in nature.

Workplace Culture	
American	Norwegian
Competitive Environment	Collaborative Environment
<i>"[Americans are not afraid of] standing out there, just being noticeable, that matters. And I understand it, cause it's, there are so many others that are chasing the same bone. So you need to stand out so you can get that bone." - N1</i>	<i>"Norwegians [are] more team-oriented...If you're a team, there's not a single person to blame [if something goes wrong]" - N1</i>
<i>"Instead of sharing information [in the American workplace]...you keep it to yourself, because that makes you more valuable." - N2</i>	<i>"In a Norwegian company...you share. You share your knowledge, and you tell about your stupid mistakes, so other people won't do the same mistakes." - N2</i>
<i>"It's more competitive in the US. Definitely. And I think that goes back to the fact that you see your colleague receive praise for something, well, you automatically want that to be you as well. And I think...that works out better for an organization, because that means that the employee is going to be there for the organization in the sense that, they want to succeed, and therefore they want the organization to succeed...I think a little competition is good for anybody. - A1</i>	<i>"Norwegians...generally are more safe in their workplace environment. They can't be just, you know, let go tomorrow...Their jobs are more secure and they feel more secure. And that reflects in their, in they will do their best for their company, because they want their company to do well so they can continue to have a job. -A2</i>

The American working culture was described as being a great deal more competitive in nature, with employees and managers working mainly to secure their own professional interests rather than supporting those of their colleagues. As a result, individual actors were observed as being more likely to withhold information or lessons learned as a means of making themselves more valuable to the organization.

On the other hand, the Norwegian workplace was described as a collaborative environment where employees work together to solve organizational problems and complete tasks. Information is shared freely between colleagues as a means of ensuring that everyone is endowed with the necessary knowledge to perform at the best possible level, as well as to prevent mistakes. This level of openness was often attributed to higher levels of job security due to the Norwegian legal system, as well as the more egalitarian social hierarchies governing organizational interactions. To further this notion, Norwegian workplaces were observed to be more conducive to forming social bonds with fellow workers, with professional and personal relationships frequently overlapping.

4.1.4 Work First vs. Family First

A final contrasting dimension between Norwegian and American workplace cultures presented itself in the degree to which each system prioritized work life over personal life. This concept has been synthesized into the notion of “Work First” versus “Family First” prioritization.

<i>Workplace Culture</i>	
American	Norwegian
Work First	Family First
<i>"Typically, in an American company...is that you never leave before your boss...you need to show that you are working hard, and try your best all the time, you need to prove, because then you will get promoted."-N2</i>	<i>"I feel that I can do a good job even though I go home before my boss." - N2</i>
	<i>"I would definitely say that the work life-family life balance is way more prioritized here." - A1</i>

American workplaces were described as putting a high degree of emphasis on work performance. Employees were observed as needing to “prove” their worth to their managers by putting long hours into their jobs, and ensuring that they did not leave the office prior to their supervisor in an effort to demonstrate their dedication to the company. Conversely, Norwegian workplaces were observed to be more lenient in this regard. Employees in Norwegian environments were described as leaving at a set time at the end of the day, regardless of whether the boss was still in the office or not. Working long hours was not seen as an indicator of job dedication in Norwegian organizations. Rather, emphasis was placed on whether all work tasks had been completed, or if the workplace was under pressure due a deadline or other influencing factor. Further, the Norwegian system was revealed to provide a greater degree of paid personal, holiday, and illness related time off for employees, suggesting an equal emphasis on private as well as personal life.

4.1.5 Common Denominators—Ambition and Continuing Education

In addition to the previously discussed contrasting elements of the American and Norwegian workplace cultures, two key similarities emerged in how each working environment view continuing education and ambition:

<u>Similarities</u>
Continuing Education
<i>"[Both types of] companies that I've been working for...[have] had very good educational programs. I'm not sure if that's the general rule for an American company, but it's, it's actually comparable to Norway." - N2</i>
Level of Ambition
<i>"[The both have] ambition...But [the Norwegians] wouldn't walk over dead bodies to reach their ambitions, at least I've not been with any Norwegians that have, well some, but not in the general sense. But I've seen Americans be more "strive-y" and not caring about their colleagues just as long as they accomplish their goals." –N1</i>

Respondents from both backgrounds described an emphasis on career development in both cultures, albeit executed in differing ways in some cases. Both the American and Norwegian working environments were described as providing continuing education for individual employees, something seen as a value-added element to the workplace by both Norwegian and American informants. Further, both working cultures were experienced as displaying ambition at the personal level. However, American and Norwegian workers were described as executing this level of ambition in different ways, with American professionals appearing to pursue said aspirations in a more ruthlessly competitive manner.

4.2 American and Norwegian Leadership Models

Examination of the data revealed a series of observations regarding the management styles prominently engaged in each working culture. These characterizations have been synthesized into four dimensions: Authoritarian versus Egalitarian; Inaccessible versus Accessible; Commander versus Coach; and Assertive versus Humble.

<u>Management Style</u>	
American	Norwegian
Authoritarian Manager expects to have the last word. Expects those lower in the hierarchy to adhere to orders.	Egalitarian Employees are seen as having equal value and intelligence to managers. Manager expects them to think independently.
Inaccessible Managers only engage in dialogue with those at an equal or greater place in the hierarchy. Employees fear negative consequences for asking for help.	Accessible Manager engages in dialogue regardless of employee's level in the hierarchy. Manager is viewed as "down to earth." Employees feel comfortable approaching managers if they have questions or need assistance.
Commander Manager exerts authority and expects respect due to his title. Uses language, self-presentation to show his status. Sees employees as just a number, tool for achieving goals.	Coach Manager builds reputation and gains respect by building legitimacy with his staff. Manager leads by serving as a mentor. Invests in employees as people, wants them to enjoy their jobs
Assertive Manager is confident, assertive, and decisive.	Humble Manager is humble and should be well liked by his colleagues.

Figure 8: Management Style

4.2.1 Authoritarian vs. Egalitarian

As revealed in the discussion of organizational hierarchy outlined in Chapter 4.1.1, the difference in level of authoritarianism displayed by managers was the greatest observed distinction between American and Norwegian leaders.

<u>Management Style</u>	
American	Norwegian
Authoritarian	Egalitarian
<i>"The [American] leader is more top down." - N3</i>	<i>"Having a Norwegian boss... I know I can speak freely." -N2</i>
<i>"If somebody says something negative [to the manager], they're out! ...I had an experience in an American company where I had a discussion [with a top manager] and I was told directly, "I think you should find yourself a new job." - N2</i>	<i>"There was a period of a few weeks [when I started working for a Norwegian company] where I had to get used to being able to go and approach a supervisor without...having this fear of [negative consequences]." - A1</i>

American managers were described as relying heavily on their role in the organizational hierarchy, expecting ultimate decision making authority and obedience from their employees. Disagreement or attempts at dialogue were not viewed as tolerable in the American system, with specific incidents citing negative consequences for those who contradicted managerial authority. Conversely, Norwegian managers were described as operating in a relatively egalitarian manner, welcoming input from fellow workers regardless of their position in the hierarchy.

4.2.2 Inaccessible vs. Accessible

Concurrent with the authoritarian versus egalitarian dimension of managers, American and Norwegian leaders were experienced as displaying varying degrees of accessibility to their employees.

<u>Management Style</u>	
American	Norwegian
Inaccessible	Accessible
<i>" [When] I've had American managers... I'm not terrified, but I'm thinking more, oh no...I don't want to go ask for help, I'd rather figure it out myself" - N1</i>	<i>"Norwegians, looking from a higher manager down to a lower manager [would ask]: 'have you understood what your task is, have you understood what we're discussing, are we in line?' - N1</i>

<p><i>"When I worked at [an American company], all the upper management ate by themselves at a separate table, and did not even associate with the employees. - A1</i></p>	<p><i>"[A good relationship with the manager] gives you a better sense of purpose...Even if you may not feel that you're appreciated in your job, you still appreciated as an employee and as a person. And I think that reflects in your job performance and all goes back to it. I also think that it's good...for employees to see their supervisors eating with them and interacting with them...it says a lot for making the workplace a more comfortable environment." - A1</i></p>
<p><i>"In the US...the employees and employer are more antagonistic, they don't trust each other. They think they're going to screw each other over...I get the impression that [American Managers] just want to get what they need from their employees and will use them." - A2-move this quote to competition</i></p>	<p><i>Norwegians, looking from a higher manager down to a lower manager, I guess it would be, at least, have you understood what your task is, have you understood what we're discussing, are we in line - N1 – delete this</i></p>

American managers were described as being relatively closed to those below them in the organizational hierarchy, choosing to associate only with those at an equal or higher level in the corporate rankings. Further, informants reported a degree of hesitation in approaching American managers with questions or requests for assistance for fear of negative consequences or appearing in some way incompetent to their supervisor. Lastly, American managers were experienced as having very little personal regard for their employees—employees were tools to be engaged in meeting their organizational goals, rather than people with their own individual goals and aspirations.

In contrast to the American managerial model, Norwegian managers were experienced as being more accessible to their employees. Norwegian leaders were described as being more “down to earth” than their American counterparts, often speaking to their employees on a more personal level and eating lunch in the same area of the cafeteria. Informants reported a great degree of comfort in approaching Norwegian managers with questions or concerns, often finding that their supervisor was concerned with whether or not they understood the task at hand and were prepared to complete it. The notion of the manager’s level of investment in his employees shall be discussed further in Chapter 4.2.3.

4.2.3 Commander vs. Coach

A further distinction observed between American and Norwegian managers was the commander versus coaching dynamic:

<u>Management Style</u>	
American	Norwegian
Commander	Coach
<i>"The American leader...is like a general..." -N3</i>	<i>"[Norwegian managers] are more in the coach role..."-N3</i>
<i>"An American manager is just providing a task and this is how...this is what we want to be done, and follow this and this procedure...[if something goes wrong, a manager might say], 'well, obviously you need to fix that...because that needs to be resolved...and just fix it!' "-N1</i>	<i>"I've got a [Norwegian] manager which I find [to be] a guy I can always go ask for help. And due to the fact that he normally never provides the exact help that I want, but he provides me guidelines on where to go to [do it myself]." - N1</i>

In this dynamic, the American manager was described as being strict and regimented, like a general. Obedience from employees is expected at all times, and dialogue or questioning were not reported as being well accepted by American managers. Conversely, Norwegian managers were described as serving as a mentor to their employees, working together with them to solve problems and investing personally in their development.

4.2.4 Assertive vs. Humble

A final observed distinction in leadership tactics employed by American and Norwegian managers presented itself in the dynamic of Assertive versus Humble:

<u>Management Style</u>	
American	Norwegian
Assertive	Humble
<i>"Americans...tend to yell a little bit higher, they're more verbal." - N1</i>	<i>"[In Norway] you also have this janteloven, I think many leaders, they think through that...even though they're a leader, they don't want to step on anybody's feet."-N3</i>
<i>"[In] then the American way, you come in and you're already on top." -N3</i>	<i>"In Norway...people have to trust you and believe that you really are a good, trustworthy source of leadership. - N3</i>
<i>"The managers in North America seem to take more control and aren't afraid of telling their employees what to do." -A3</i>	<i>"[In Norway], you don't get [a title] by being the authority. You get it by being good at what you do, and you get it by being liked by your colleagues...If you're not liked by your colleagues, you're going to struggle being in that title or position" - N1</i>

American managers were observed to engage in assertive, decisive behavior in the workplace, while Norwegian managers were described as seeking to gain trust with their employees by building relationships with them. Further, American managers displayed a greater tendency to

behave aggressively or competitively, often asserting dominance by evoking their title. Norwegians, on the other hand, were less likely to use their managerial role as a means of asserting their power in the organization.

4.3 American and Norwegian Workplace Communication Styles

Data collection in the interview process generated a variety of observations regarding communication patterns employed by Americans and Norwegians in the workplace. These remarks have been synthesized into three main dimensions of Formalized vs. Direct to the Source, Task-Oriented vs. Relational, and Direction vs. Dialogue:

<i>Workplace Communication Style</i>	
American	Norwegian
Formalized	Informal
Task-Oriented	Relational
Direction	Dialogue

Figure 9: Communication Style

This section of the chapter shall further explore the nuances at play in these communication dimensions.

4.3.1 Formalized vs. Informal

The greatest distinction between American and Norwegian workplace communication patterns presented itself in the form of the degree of formality present in these interactions.

<i>Workplace Communication Style</i>	
American	Norwegian
Formalized Relies on procedures and protocol; communication is run through the organizational hierarchy; messages are presented in a formal manner.	Informal Communication is open between parties; same communication tactics employed regardless of position in hierarchy; content of the message is more important than the delivery.
<i>"[The] American [communication style] is more formal...you have to go through the 'chain of command.'" - A1</i>	<i>"[In the Norwegian system], you don't have to go through a whole process just to get a question answered or to have something approved. You can directly go and speak to the person and it can be taken care of in a matter of minutes." - A1</i>
<i>"The American loves reporting. Americans, they love reports. Graphs, charts, it's oh, give me a graph and I'm happy!...If you could put some nice colors to it as well, oh, it's perfect." - N2</i>	<i>"[The] Norwegian way of thinking is: get the message out, how it's being presented is not the most important thing; it's [the content]." - N2</i>

Respondents noted that lines of communication in American organization are to a great extent formalized, meaning that individual questions, evaluations, or decisions must be addressed

across a designated hierarchy prior to implementation. This often occurs by way of a series of middle managers that take the message further until it reaches a final decision-making authority figure, who then passes the verdict back down the hierarchy until it reaches its originator. This means of organizational communication can be linked to the top-down business culture and emphasis on the status of management in American workplaces indicated in Chapter 4.1.1 and 4.2.2, along with the regimented practices described in Chapter 4.1.2.

In contrast to the American “chain of command,” Norwegian business communications were observed to be more direct to the source. Rather than having to run a decision or question through several middle managers, the Norwegian model allows for direct access to the manager. An individual employee can therefore direct questions or thoughts directly to the decision-making authority and receive an immediate answer. This openness of communication can be linked with the flat structures described in Chapter 4.1.1, informal business practices reported in Chapter 4.1.2, and the notion of the approachable manager outlined in Chapter 4.2.2.

Lastly, frustration with the Americans’ formalized communication channels represented a common theme for both Norwegian and American respondents. Many felt that the formal communication channels often employed by American organizations prevented the free flow of information often needed for timely completion of tasks. Respondents of both backgrounds expressed a desire to communicate directly with their supervisors in the interest of saving time. Norwegians in particular felt that the degree of formalization in American communications wasted time in the completion of organizational objectives. For example: N2, the informant who cited the Americans’ affinity for reporting, recalled the following: *“I spent so much time reporting. And...it didn't add any value...you can do a few bullet points on a mail, and it will give you the same result.”*

Further, Norwegian informants expressed skepticism to the emphasis of formal presentation in American businesses, particularly as it relates to representation of data or other key pieces of organizational information. In Norwegian workplaces, it was noted, the content of the message is valued over the visual presentation, as it is the facts that will ultimately have meaning for the organization. This notion, along with the sentiments expressed regarding reporting, can be closely linked to the legitimacy-seeking behavior required of Norwegian managers indicated in Chapter 4.2.1. In much the same way that a manager must prove that she is competent in her

field in a Norwegian setting, producers of organizational communications must also establish legitimacy by ensuring that the content of their message is solidly derived.

4.3.2 Task-Oriented vs. Relational

A further dimension of workplace communications presented itself in the form of a task-oriented versus relational approach to addressing fellow employees:

<i>Workplace Communication Style</i>	
American	Norwegian
Task-Oriented	Relational
<i>"[The Americans are] more straight to the point...strictly business...The American style is not very open...they don't discuss personal things." – N3</i>	<i>"The Norwegians, they're more a little bit more down to earth...they talk a lot about things besides business like personal life." –N3</i>

Informants described American workplace communication as relatively task-oriented in nature, or focused primarily on business objectives rather than personal relationships within the organization. Americans were described as communicating in a very impersonal manner, employing personal questions at only a superficial level, often as a means of opening the conversation for discussion of a professional task. Inherent in this observation is the notion indicated in Chapter 4.1.3 and 4.2.3 that employees in the American system are not interested in forming personal bonds with their colleagues, but more so in how these associates can assist them in reaching their business objectives.

Norwegian business communications, on the other hand, were found to be more relational in nature. This observation indicates that Norwegian employees seek out relationships with one another beyond just the professional, viewing it as acceptable to have casual conversation and even laugh and joke with one another in the workplace. Establishing these bonds is considered a widely acceptable means of boosting employee morale. Implicit in these observations are the principles of collaboration and egalitarianism discussed in Chapter 4.1.3 and 4.2.1. Positive relationships and working conditions in the Norwegian context are used as a means of increasing employee morale and consequently, their motivation to perform.

4.3.3 Direction vs. Dialogue

A third identified dimension of workplace communication emerged in observations regarding the way in which managers speak to their employees in each workplace culture. American managers were described by all informants as more likely to direct the actions of to employees, while

Norwegian managers were described as engaging in dialogue with their subordinates in completing organizational tasks:

<u>Workplace Communication Style</u>	
American	Norwegian
Direction	Dialogue
<i>"[American managers] are more into kind of my word is 'the law'...'you're supposed to do what I'm saying, and not your way of doing it.'...I've seen American CEOs yelling to their colleagues saying that 'I'm the manager, and that's how you do it!' "</i> - N1	<i>"[In Norway}, you can discuss the annoying things with the boss and do something about it. You might not always win but at least you can discuss [the problem]..." -N2</i>
<i>"My [North American] boss was unforgiving, very rigid, and she spoke to me in a very demeaning way..." - A1</i>	<i>"[If something goes wrong], a Norwegian manager...could say 'uh, ok, we didn't manage, let's try to fix it and come to me and let's see how we can approach it and mend this' " - N1</i>

Much in line with the hierarchical structure outlined in Chapter 4.1.1 and the commander role of American managers described in Chapter 4.2.3, informants reported that American managers tend to employ an authoritative tone when interacting with their subordinates. Many informants, including those highlighted above, reported American managers as employing different communication tactics depending on the recipient's position in the company hierarchy. Direct subordinates received orders with the expectation that this instruction would be followed explicitly. Others reported experiences in which they felt their managers spoke to them in a condescending manner, using language and communication to assert their position in the organizational hierarchy, as well as their dominance over their subordinates. While all informants acknowledged that these were somewhat extreme cases, the overwhelming majority reported that American managers tended to use communication to solidify their position in the organization, and that a request from an American supervisor was, in fact, explicit direction with little room for negotiation.

Norwegian managers, on the other hand, were described as engaging in dialogue with their employees. In keeping with the flat organizational hierarchy and collaborative workplaces described in Chapter 4.1, Norwegian managers were reported as entering into dialogues with their employees, working together to find the best solution to organizational dilemmas or tasks rather than giving orders. This tactic was described as applying to all members of the organization, regardless of position in the hierarchy. Norwegian managers, therefore, use dialogue with as a means of solidifying the egalitarian principles inherent in the business culture, as well as engaging them in discussion as a means of building legitimacy and trust. This measure can be linked to the coaching behavior described in Chapter 4.2.

4.4 Workplace Interactions – Areas of Misunderstanding or Conflict

Interview data revealed a series of sources of misunderstanding or conflict in environments where Norwegians and Americans interact in the workplace. These findings have been categorized according to the nationality of the managers or organizations involved in the conflict:

<u>Areas of Misunderstanding or Conflict</u>
<i>Involving American Managers or Organizations</i>
American managers struggle to gain legitimacy with Norwegian employees; Norwegians feel that the American managers are too authoritarian.
Norwegian employees do not trust American managers who rely too much on rhetoric, presentation when they do not know whether they are credible.
Norwegian employees feel that American managers do not trust them to make intelligent decisions.
Norwegian employees become frustrated when American managers do not engage in dialogue with them.
American managers become frustrated when Norwegian employees do not take orders, and attempt to negotiate or provide input.

<u>Areas of Misunderstanding or Conflict</u>
<i>Involving Norwegian Managers</i>
American employees feel that Norwegian managers do not give enough instruction.
American workers experience misunderstandings or mistakenly offend managers when following the chain of command; workers used to a Norwegian system are faced with negative consequences when they do not follow the chain of command in an American setting.
Americans feel that their Norwegian colleagues have a low work ethic because they do not stay late, take a lot of sick leave.
American employees feel that Norwegian managers do not give them enough recognition for a job well done

These misunderstandings or conflicts can be attributed to variances in the cultural, managerial, and communicative processes observed in the interview sessions.

4.5 Informants' Reflections on Each Working Culture

Over the course of the interview sessions, a preference for one cultural model over the other emerged amongst several of the informants. Some preferred a more Norwegian organizational structure, while others highlighted the benefits of the American model. However, most informants spoke most favorable about the notion of blending the two systems together, especially in cases where the organization's employee base consists of individuals of both an American and Norwegian background.

Informants' Reflection on the Norwegian Model

Arguments in favor of the Norwegian working model were linked closely to interpersonal factors:

Informants' Thoughts on the Norwegian Model
<i>"I am Norwegian, so I would relate more to the Norwegian style than the American style" - A1</i>
<i>"If you compare those two, I prefer the Norwegian model...I think it's important that you go to a leader and say, I disagree in this, and that's OK" - N2</i>
<i>"The Norwegian style is more authentic. I react in a much more positive manner to the Norwegian style. But I think that's because they're being a bit more personable" - A1</i>

Interpersonal factors such as membership to the cultural in-group, openness of communication, and extent to which relational factors were considered in the workplace were the strongest justifications in favor of a Norwegian workplace model.

Informants' Reflections on the American Model

In contrast to views expressed on the Norwegian working culture, preference for or against the American model was expressed on mostly functional grounds:

Informants' Thoughts on the American Model
<i>"I don't see any advantages [to the American system]. I honestly don't. The American system might, in some cases, be more efficient because [a manager says] this is what we're gonna do, and that might be a good solution in that particular case, but not always so you can end up with not the best solution" - N2</i>
<i>"I prefer the American Model. I would like my manager to exert more control and to give me more direction and feedback or constructive criticism."-A3</i>

Interestingly, the directive nature of the American system provided the basis for preference either for or against it. Informants indicating disagreement with the American model frequently cited formalization and top-down communication as factors that may hinder an organization from achieving an optimal result, as these measures allow for only one prescribed means of reaching a goal. The underlying claim here is that dialogue is necessary to ensure that steps are taken to ensure that the best possible alternatives are engaged in reaching a stated goal. A further implicit element to this statement is the notion that teamwork is necessary to account for human error—that a system in which one person holds executive authority over a decision making process is inherently fallible because that individual is human, and therefore fallible himself.

Conversely, arguments in favor of the American system contend that the level of structure and decisiveness displayed by managers grants employees with a clear vision of not only what is expected of them but also the steps they must take in order to reach these goals. Implicit in these sentiments is the notion that formal processes and protocol provide stability to the organization that ultimately serve to maximize the efficacy of its operations by guiding individual actors down a desired path.

Informants' Reflections on a Blended Model

While some respondents indicated a marked preference for one model over the other, a blended approach was considered by most participants to be admirable in a multicultural setting:

Informants' Thoughts on a Blended Model
"In Norway, some workplaces maybe use American leadership style...the work tasks are important factors...Sometimes, the leader should say THIS is what we do, maybe be a little directive...[the management style] is kind of adapted to that task situation" - N3
"It's a middle weight. You need to meet in the middle...If you tell people exactly how to do it, and what to do, some will get tired...but it's not that you wanna be all left alone not having any guidelines" - N1
"I think that the answer lies somewhere in the middle." - A1
"What makes [a blended model] good is diversity. And different ways of...thinking... everyone should bring their own way of thinking but also be open to other ideas...you have to collaborate and find the best of what everyone thinks." - A2

These statements reflect the notion that professional interaction in the international setting requires understanding and cooperation in order to succeed. Further, it acknowledges the fact that American and Norwegian managers and employees have different backgrounds and expectations, and that each party can stand to learn from the other. If both sides are willing to learn about one another and collaborate to achieve organizational goals, the working relationship and business operations can be made effective. This is especially so in the case of management.

4.6 Key Skills and Measures Identified for Managers

In discussing the varying areas of conflict affecting workplace relationships between Norwegian and American colleagues, several suggestions were made regarding how managers could adjust their leadership tactics to improve relations with employees of the opposite culture:

<u>Informants' Recommended Skills/Measures for Managers</u>
<u>American Managers</u>
Take a more relaxed approach to the chain of command, authoritarian style
Invest more in employees on a personal level
Encourage a better work-life balance
<u>Norwegian Managers</u>
Less dialogue, more structure
Give more praise and recognition when employees do well, and constructive criticism when do poorly
<u>All Managers</u>
Learn about the opposite culture before taking on a management role-know what to expect from your employees, and what they expect from you as a manager
Be willing to adapt to a new environment

These leadership strategies reflect the preference for a blended leadership model discussed in Chapter 4.5. These observations indicate that informants experience both positive and negative aspects of each working culture, as well as the notion that organizational awareness is key to managerial success.

5. Discussion and Analysis

Data gleaned from this study's semi-structured informant interviews revealed several impressions regarding the way in which Americans and Norwegians interact in the workplace. Informants identified a number of distinctions between the business culture, management, and communication styles employed by each group. These varying expectations for manager and employee behavior were earmarked as sources of conflict between Norwegian and American workers and their supervisors. The identified dichotomies can be described in terms of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, as well as the established management and organizational paradigms dominant in the United States and Norway. Conflicts arising from these nuances often occur due to contrasting elements of mental programming and interpretation of cognitive meaning that can be mitigated by an improved mutual understanding. This mutual understanding can be established and promoted by both endowing managers with the skills they need to navigate these relationships and enacting organization-wide measures to promote a more inclusive corporate culture.

5.1 Observed Variances Explored in Terms of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

The varying dimensions of management, business culture, and communication identified by respondents can be explained in terms of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Close examination of the results gleaned from the interview process has determined that the cultural dimensions of Power Distance (PDI), Individualism Index (IDV), Masculinity Index (MAS), and Long Term Orientation (LTO) are most relevant in exploring these relationships (Hofstede 2001).

5.1.1 Power Distance (PDI) and the Organizational Hierarchy

A common theme cited by respondents was the notion that American and Norwegian cultures displayed varying levels of power distance (PDI), where the American system displayed a greater disparity in perceived level of power amongst individuals at different levels of the organizational hierarchy (Hofstede 2001). This common assertion is particularly interesting due to the fact that the Hofstede Institute's measure of PDI in each country indicates a similar level of power distinction in each culture. As indicated in Chapter 2, the United States was found to have a PDI score of 40, while Norway scored a 31 on the Power Distance Index. While the United States' score is somewhat higher than the Norwegian value, the difference is not significant enough to support the observations of increased hierarchical tendencies in the American system. Rather, these figures suggest that both countries should emphasize egalitarian principles such as personal autonomy and equality, and that these values should translate to the

working environment in each culture. However, the informant data contradicts this assumption (Hofstede Institute, 2015). The disparity in top-down versus flat organizational hierarchies cannot be explained by PDI. Therefore, another influencing factor (or factors) must be driving this phenomenon.

5.1.2 The Individualism and Masculinity Indexes (IDV and MAS)

Interview data revealed a series of distinctions experienced in the relationship between Norwegians and Americans in the workplace. The dimensions of Top-Down versus Flat Hierarchy, Competitive versus Collaborative Environment, and Work First versus Family First prioritization can be linked to Hofstede's Individualism (IDS)* and Masculinity Scores (MAS). The United States' IDV score of 91 represents one of the highest measured values for this dimension. Further, its MAS score of 62 indicates that it is a distinctively masculine-oriented society, particularly when compared to Norway, which scores an 8, indicating a more femininely leaning culture (Hofstede Institute 2015).

5.1.2.1 The American Workplace Culture

The United State's combined MAS and IDV score indicates a strong cultural emphasis on goal fulfillment, high performance, and status. These trends lend to a tendency within the organization towards fierce competition amongst colleagues, with each striving to achieve success and outperform his or her fellow employees (Hofstede Institute 2015). This drive is reflected in informant observations regarding closed flow of information in American companies, as well as the tendency of American employees to make themselves noticeable in the organization. Refraining from sharing information to keep oneself competitive in the workplace serves to provide oneself with an advantage over his peers, affording the opportunity to demonstrate his competence to the supervisor at a later date. The influence of individualism and masculinity is further seen in the level of job security reported in the American organization. The high levels of competition indicate that employees view other top performers as a threat to their job, as their employer could potentially replace them if they become unhappy with their work. In addition to individual actors seeking to outperform one another, organizations may also feel a constant drive to pick the best employees, as they too wish to perform at the highest possible level.

Consistent with this drive to perform, a hierarchical system provides a framework for assigning value to individual actors within the organization (Dickson 2003). Stratifying the organization in this way establishes which employees are “the best,” thus providing levels of status for individuals to aspire to (Cunliffe 2009). Lastly, American workplaces’ prioritization of work life over family life reflects the culture’s emphasis on masculine values such as financial gain and high performance in their prioritization of professional life observed in Chapter Four. Workers in the American system were observed as putting work first, often staying later in the office than their Norwegian counterparts, and expecting to remain in the office longer than their supervisors as a means of demonstrating job dedication. These patterns can be linked to the high MAS and IDV score tendencies of demonstrating one’s professional prowess (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede Institute 2015).

5.1.2.1 The Norwegian Workplace Culture

Conversely, Norwegian workplaces were reported as displaying a flat organizational hierarchy, operating in a collaborative rather than competitive fashion, and emphasizing family life over work life prioritization. These tendencies are reflective of the country’s MAS and IDV scores. Norway’s IDV score of 69 reflects a strong emphasis on intellectual autonomy and equality, while it’s MAS score of 8 reflects a high value placed on harmony and cooperation (Hofstede Institute, 2015). The low levels of social stratification reported in the Norwegian workplace is indicative of a cultural emphasis on egalitarianism, placing equal value on each employee regardless of position in the hierarchy. This principle of egalitarianism further translates to the collaborative tendencies reported in Norwegian organizations. The open dialogue and sharing of information reported by informants indicates that employees in Norwegian organizations want to help one another do well, and do not feel a drive to outperform one another. These tendencies reflect the harmony advocated in feminine-oriented cultures, as well as an emphasis on mutual feedback and dialogue connected to individualistic societies (Hofstede Institute 2015).

Further, the relative sense of job security reported in Norwegian organizations reflects the notion that employees are not viewed as replaceable commodities, but members of a team. This trend further solidifies Norwegian workplace culture’s emphasis on mutual support amongst employees and equality, as employees are not working to outperform one another but instead share information, engage in dialogue, and support one another (Avant 1993). Lastly, Norwegian culture’s reported emphasis on family prioritization over professional prioritization reflects the society’s value on free time and privacy (Hofstede Institute 2015). The society’s

emphasis on “working to live” rather than “living to work” is reflective of the feminine societal values of preserving the environment (Hofstede 2001, 312).

5.1.3 Individualism, Masculinity, and Identified Dimensions of Management

Data collection for this thesis revealed a series of varying dynamics of managerial behavior in Norwegian and American workplaces. These dimensions included Authoritarianism versus Egalitarianism, Accessible versus Inaccessible, Commander versus Coach, and Assertive versus Humble.

5.1.3.1 American Managerial Behavior

Respondents reported managers in American workplaces as adhering strictly to organizational hierarchies, creating a high degree of distance between them and their employees. American managers were therefore described as unapproachable or inaccessible, rarely engaging in dialogue with their employees and expecting obedience to managerial directives. This observation reflects the United States’ combined high IDV and MAS scores. These scores indicate a tendency to establish dominance within the organization, and to set oneself apart from others. Managers in this system engage these principles to assert their position in the corporate hierarchy (Hofstede Institute, 2015). Additionally, informants described American managers as creating a great deal of physical separation between them and their employees, often choosing to associate or eat lunch only with colleagues at the same or a higher place in the organizational hierarchy. A further means of asserting dominance in the organization hierarchy, this practice reflects the notion that interpersonal relationships in the American are treated like a “business transaction,” devoid of emotional involvement (Hofstede 2001, 237). Therefore, American managers maintain professional boundaries with employees consistent with the organizational hierarchy, associating with them only for practical purposes.

Further reflection on American managers revealed the observation that an American manager is “like a general,” or acts as a commander within the organizational context. This notion is indicative of the masculine nature of American culture indicated by the MAS score of 62 (Hofstede Institute, 2015). Indeed, the military or military figures are viewed as a type of cultural hero in American culture, embodying cultural values of assertiveness, dominance, and masculinity (Hofstede 2001). Exhibiting these traits reflects the United States’ MAS value as it relates to managerial roles. This notion is further exhibited in the notion that American managers have been observed to be assertive in nature. Informants reported that American

managers displayed decisive behavior in the workplace. Much like the notion of the manager as a general, this dimension reflects the masculine values in American society that emphasize assertive or even aggressive behavior. Much like military figures, managers can be said to embody a sort of hero role in American society, as they represent the success, financial prowess, and decisiveness valued in that culture (Hofstede 2001). In this way, the title of manager can be regarded as a sort of status symbol in American society (Cunfliffe 2009).

This phenomenon can be further explained by the competitive nature of American culture as a high IDV society—if the title of manager is an aspirational one, employees will then compete to achieve this title themselves or to advance to a higher position in the organizational chart. In this way, the hero role of management serves to solidify the stratification within American organizations. Further, the reverence granted to managers as “heroes” in the American system serves to shed light on the fact that the most favorable descriptions of American managers came from American informants. As these values are consistent with the American mental programming, American informants regarded the American managers’ behavior as ideal for that position (Hofstede 2001).

5.1.3.1 Norwegian Managerial Behavior

In contrast to American managers, Norwegian managers were described as relating to their employees in the same manner regardless of position in the company hierarchy, accessible to their subordinates, serving as a coach and displaying humility in their behavior. The relatively egalitarian approach of Norwegian managers can first and foremost be attributed to the country’s low PDI score, suggesting a general aversion to social stratification. However, the strongest influencing factors can be seen in the MAS and IDV scores. As a low scoring MAS culture, Norwegian society can be described as seeking harmony and balance in organizational relationships. This variable corresponds with Norway’s IDV score, which indicates a preference for personal autonomy. The combination of these factors opens the Norwegian workplace and managers for dialogue with their subordinates, as well as a tendency to seek consensus with their colleagues (Hofstede 2010).

Dialogue and consensus-seeking lend the observed levels of accessibility displayed by Norwegian managers. Norwegian leaders were significantly more likely to engage in dialogue than their American counterparts. This distinction is reflected in the fact that Norway’s IDV score of 62 indicates a slightly more collective leaning than the 91 recorded for the United States

(Hofstede Institute, 2015). This discrepancy indicates a greater degree of personal bonds formed in the Norwegian workplace than in an American context (Hofstede 2001). While Norwegian culture displays an increased degree of collaborative behavior in comparison to the US, its IDV score is high enough to encourage feedback between managers and employees. Further, the low MAS score indicates a greater tendency to build personal relationships with one's colleagues (Hofstede Institute 2015). This can be seen in the observed tendency of Norwegian managers to engage in friendly conversation and eat lunch with their subordinates.

Further, Norwegian managers were reported to serve more of a coach than a commander role in the organization, taking a personal interest in the development of their employees and aiding them in problem-solving activities. This reflects the IDV-based notion that the manager sees employees as individuals with needs, skills, and the ability to contribute to workplace decision-making. Inherent in this notion is the trust in employees' intellectual and analytical capabilities and therefore feels comfortable engaging them in organization decision-making processes (Hofstede Institute 2015; Grenness 2012). This reflects Norway's MAS score in relation to the need for cooperation, and matches Norway's "coaching" model of organizational leadership (Grennes 2012).

Lastly, Norwegian managers were reported as being significantly more humble than American managers, establishing legitimacy within the organization before executing managerial authority. This legitimacy-seeking behavior was identified as the Norwegian manager's tendency to display humility in their roles. A successful manager in the Norwegian context was described as perceiving himself to be the equal of his employees, earning their respect by proving his or her competence in the workplace. These observations reflect a differing perception of the managerial role in Norway than in the US, where a leader is a type of "hero" embodying values of aggression and decisiveness. In Norway, managers are expected to embody societal values of equality and collaboration (Avant 1993, Hofstede 2001). Additionally, in a low MAS society that does not place a high value on high performance and recognition ("showing off"), managerial humility serves to solidify societal notions of equality (Hofstede Institute 2015; Avant 1993). The value of humility was further reported as reflected in Norwegian society through the *janteloven*, which stipulates that members of society should not perceive themselves as being of greater value or more knowledgeable than others (Smith 2003). This principle solidifies the observed legitimacy-seeking behavior essential to successful business leadership in

Norway wherein a leader cannot expect to receive respect based on his title alone, but must establish competence in his field to obtain the trust of his subordinates.

5.1.4 The Individualism Index, the Masculinity Index, and Identified Communication Patterns

Communication in American and Norwegian workplaces was observed as varying across dynamics of Formal versus Informal patterns, Task-Oriented versus Relational, and Direction versus Dialogue.

5.1.2.1 American Workplace Communication Patterns

The formality observed in American communications in terms of reporting and visual representations can also be described as a manifestation of the MAS and IDV competitive drive. Formalized reporting and other forms of collateral serve as both a means of advertising one's competency in the competitive arena and, in the case of reports, enacting the social order by systemizing organizational communications (Hofstede 2001). Further, interpersonal communications in the American workplace placed a reportedly strong emphasis on adhering to the established "chain of command" wherein individual actors must communicate through a designated process flow in the organizational hierarchy rather than directly to managers themselves. This level of stratification reflects the establishment of managerial dominance driven by the United States' high IDV score and moderately high MAS score (Hofstede Institute 2015). Further, the "chain of command" governing American organizational communications can be classified as a type of symbolic behavior institutionalized over time to maintain the established social order within the organization. This is reflected in the observed tendency of organizational messages to come down the "chain of command," as downward communication is used as a means of solidifying the organizational hierarchy. This symbolic behavior is understood within the American context as a representation of these social structures, and embodied naturally by those with a mental programming rooted in American IDV and MAS dynamics.

The use of downward communication to solidify the organizational hierarchy is further reflected in the observed tendency of American workplace communications to take shape in the form of direction rather than dialogue. Giving direction through a chain of command follows the established symbolic behavioral pattern to maintain the social order. As such, communication from lower levels in the hierarchy may not be well received in this system, reflecting a level of discomfort with upward communication. This phenomenon is reflected in informants'

observations indicating a lack of openness to feedback from subordinates, an expectation that individual workers should follow instruction explicitly, and that some managers even had a tendency to use a condescending tone with employees as a means of emphasizing their dominance (Harris 2008). This tendency reflects the United States' MAS and IDV scores, suggesting a lack of openness to feedback from lower levels in the hierarchy (Hofstede Institute 2015). As a somewhat high MAS country, American workplaces may exhibit a relatively low tolerance for conflict, serving to exacerbate the observed low tolerance for upward communication in the workplace (Hofstede 2001).

A final observation of the American communication patterns in the workplace revealed a tendency for these interactions to be more task oriented in nature. This is reflected in the country's IDV score, which indicates that workplace relationships are viewed as a "business transaction" focused primarily on goal fulfillment (Hofstede 2001, 237). In this way, communication serves a purely practical purpose, with little to no emphasis placed on the actual relationship between actors (Barak 2005). This impersonal tendency is reflected in the observation that actors' in the American workplace did not seem to care about one another, and stuck strictly to business when engaging in communicative efforts, a trend consistent with the country's MAS score (Hofstede Institute, 2015).

5.1.2.2 Norwegian Workplace Communication Patterns

The Norwegian workplace, on the other hand, was observed as displaying a much more relational tone of communications, a trend indicative of the country's MAS score emphasizing the creation of personal bonds to enhance the workplace environment. Further, a more personable tone of communication is conducive to the observed level of collaboration in the Norwegian workplace, a product of the country's combined low MAS score and balanced IDV score (Hofstede 2015). This combined score supports the low reported stratification within the organization, suggesting that an emphasis on strengthening personal bonds as a means of enhancing organizational productivity (Barak 2005). The notion of relational communication is further reflected in the observed use of dialogue in organizational interactions. The reported openness in the Norwegian organization reflects the country's IDV and MAS scores, which support the emphasis on dialogue and teamwork in the organizational arena (Hofstede Institute 2015). This tendency towards dialogue over direction indicates a preference for horizontal communication in the organization, as well as a healthy tolerance for upward communication (Harris 2008). Norway's low MAS score supports this desire for harmony and collaboration in

the workplace, as well as the low reported levels of stratification and formalization in the workplace (Hofstede Institute 2015). Further, the country's MAS supports the observed emphasis on content of organizational messages over presentation, as the low MAS indicates an absence of the need to perform or "show off" displayed in higher MAS cultures such as the United States (Hofstede 2001).

5.1.5 Long Term Orientation and Perceived Levels of Formality

Informants in the interview process identified levels of formality employed in the organization as a key distinction between American and Norwegian workplaces. This distinction has been previously attributed to variations across the IDV and MAS indexes. However, certain aspects of this distinction may be linked to variances in LTO scores:

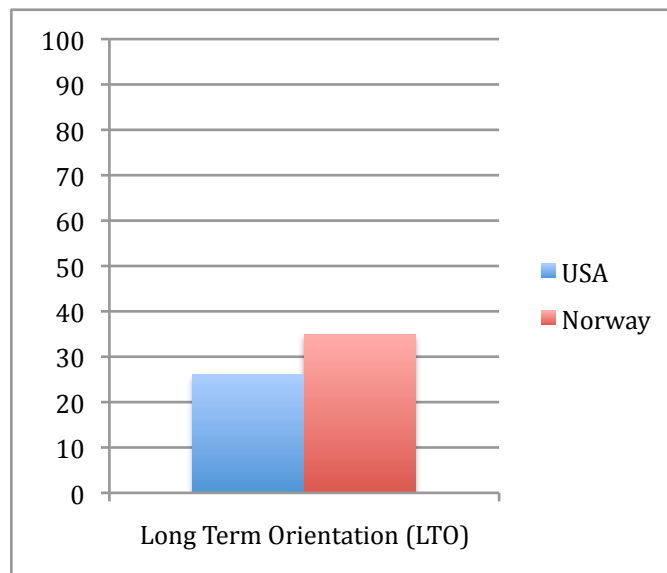


Figure 5, Long Term Orientation (LTO)

The United States scores a relatively low 26 on the Long Term Orientation Scale, while Norway scores a 36 (Hofstede Institute 2015). While these scores both indicate a relatively low propensity for future orientation, the varying grades may help to explain the United States' reported tendency towards adherence to regimented procedures and protocol. The American score of 26 indicates an extreme proclivity for seeking instant gratification. This tendency, combined with the high MAS score indicating a strong drive to both perform and demonstrate achievement, presents an interesting dynamic driving the American workplace. The reported strict adherence to procedures, systems, and maintaining efficiency in the American system may be due to the combine effect of a high drive to perform and achieve optimal results, as well as the desire to see these results immediately. This dynamic can be seen in the use of quarterly reporting as a measure of organizational success in the US—top managers expect to see heighten

returns achieved over a short period of time (Hofstede Institute 2015). This combination of the aggressive drive to perform and the need for instant gratification may therefore serve to further explain the regimented structures and communication channels observed in the American workplace (Hofstede 2001).

5.1.6 Shared Traits and Commonalities

While a several distinctions were reported between Norwegian and American workplaces, similarities were reported in terms of both societies' emphasis on personal ambition and career development. This can be explained by the relatively the low PDI scores received by both countries, as well as the fact that both countries have IDV scores indicating a degree of emphasis on personal autonomy. The culmination of these factors indicates a belief in upward societal mobility, as well as value placed on personal and professional development (Hofstede Institute 2015). Interestingly, the United States' extremely high IDV and increased MAS score indicate a higher level of competition and performance aggression, which helps to explain the observed tendency of ambition in American systems to be expressed in a more "cutthroat" manner (Hofstede 2001). While the execution of ambition may vary in this way, the underlying principles driving it may serve as a source of common understanding between actors of the two cultures if they can manage to relate to one another on the grounds of low PDI.

5.2 Mutual Impressions, Misunderstandings, and Conflict

Reported sources of conflict and misunderstanding between American and Norwegian colleagues and managers can be explained as being due to variations in mental programming occurring in each culture. These reported dimensions of cultural variance illustrate varying expectations in the professional arena (Hofstede 2001). These varying expectations result may result in conflict or misunderstanding when cognitive meaning is assigned in incongruent ways due to these variations in expectations (Harris 2008). For example, consider the following anecdote relayed during the interview process:

"It was my first day [at an American company] and I was told to do something by one of my superiors, and I had a question, ...[so] I went and asked her directly...One of my colleagues came back later and ... informed me that I am not to go directly to [that manager] if I had any questions, but I was to go through the chain of command, and she proceeded to lay out the chain of command for me....[later, at a Norwegian company], it took a while for me to get used to that I could go and talk to someone who was even my superior's superior and, I didn't need to go through a chain of command and ask for permission..."-A1

This incident describes negative consequences received for not following the “chain of command” in an American organization. In this instance, the respondent’s mental programming was attuned to a more collaborative model based on previous experience working in Norway. As a result, the respondent attempts to engage in horizontal communication to obtain further information regarding an assigned task (Harris 2008). This effort was met with negative consequences due to a variation in collective mental programming in the American and Norwegian organization due to the MAS and IDV variance in American and Norwegians cultures.

5.3 Measures, Skills, and Tools Necessary for Successful Management in the Norwegian-American Workplace

The informant interview process generated several insights regarding cultural distinctions between the workplace, management, and business communications in the United States and Norway. From these observations came some recommendations for successful managerial tactics in professional contexts with blended nationalities rooted in principles of cultural awareness and intelligence and workplace inclusions.

5.3.1 Cultural Awareness and Adjustment

One of the key recommendations identified during the interview process was that managers should know their organization and their employees. Awareness of the environment and the expectations of those acting within it is essential for managerial success. This process can be achieved if managers are culturally aware or engage heightened levels of cultural awareness. While some individuals may express a greater natural propensity towards cultural awareness, this trait is one that can be learned and adjusted to over time (Black 1991). This is particularly so in cases where managers spend an increased time with colleagues of the opposite culture, leading to increased levels of interaction adjustment as they gain hands-on experience with the expectations of the other culture in the workplace (Lin 2012). As highlighted in the interview process, successful navigation of Norwegian-American workplace relations can be achieved by spending increased time in the opposite environment, such as in the following scenario involving an American manager in an organization with mostly Norwegian employees:

“[The American manager] went out a little bit too hard in the beginning with doing the American approach. And maybe he's gotten a bit more culturally adapted after a while [to be a better manager].” – N3

In this scenario, the American manager experienced resistance to his leadership tactics due to inconsistencies in mental programming about the managerial role between himself and his Norwegian subordinates (Hofstede 2001). In the beginning, he employed the high IDV and MAS oriented tactics of asserting his position in the organizational hierarchy rather than seeking legitimacy with his staff as expected in the low MAS Norwegian workplace culture (Hofstede Institute 2015). With increased exposure to the Norwegian workplace, the manager gained a better understanding of the mental programs at play in the Norwegian organization, and was able to adjust his behavior in such a way so as to better meet those expectations through this interaction adjustment process (Black 1991). This process is not possible without engaging a degree of awareness of one's surroundings.

5.3.2 Cultural Intelligence (CQ) for Managers

Essential to the engagement of cultural awareness is the application of cultural intelligence to leadership processes. While variations in Meta-Cognitive or high level cultural intelligence are unavoidable, it is possible for managers to develop their overall cultural intelligence (CQ) as a means of optimizing their leadership skills in the multicultural workplace (Lin 2012). In engaging the principles of cultural awareness outlined in Chapter 5.3.1, managers can gain valuable insights regarding the opposite culture that allow them to adapt their behavior over time, thus improving their overall Cognitive CQ (Black 1991). American and Norwegian managers can gain further benefit by seeking to understand the varying MAS and IDV levels present in their cultures, as well as understanding the underlying principles of equality reflected in the low PDI score in each culture. Finding commonalities can aid in mitigating misunderstandings caused by the internal noise generated by the variations in mental programming present in the two cultures (Dickson 2003; Harris 2008). This mutual understanding can serve to motivate managers to understand their employees and potentially adapt their leadership tactics as done by the manager cited in Chapter 5.3.2.

A manager's willingness to adapt, or Motivational CQ, is a key source of success in navigating American-Norwegian workplace relationships. If a manager is willing to both be educated on the nuances between the cultures, as well as adjust his behavior to meet the expectations of his colleagues, he can maximize his chances for success. This notion is reflected in the reflection of many informants that managers should work to meet their employees halfway—that a combined management strategy is necessary in improving these relationships. If, for example, an American manager is willing to take measures to understand why his Norwegian employees do

not respond well to authoritarian leadership tactics, he may be more likely to adjust his behavior according to this expectation, engaging Behavioral CQ to translate understanding to action. Without the motivation to do so, the manager's behavior will not change, and the working relationship will not improve (Lin 2012).

5.3.3 Enacting the Inclusive Workplace

Informants polled in the interview process indicated that an ideal manager is one that accounts for cultural differences by engaging in principles of cultural awareness and adaptation in the workplace. Further, a good manager was characterized as seeing the value employees of varying backgrounds may bring to the organization. These principles can be enacted by way of an organizational recipe known as the Inclusive Workplace (Røvik 1998). The Inclusive Workplace calls organizations to value diversity amongst their employee base, and encourage company-wide understanding and acceptance of cultural variations (Barak 2005). Managers serve as translators in this process to implement principles of inclusion. Regardless of personal background, a manager in a workplace where employees of a Norwegian or American background meet can employ principles of cultural awareness and intelligence to enact this organizational recipe (Røvik 1998). This process should be hands-on, with managers taking responsibility for understanding the particular conflicts plaguing their organization and applying strategic measures to mitigate them (Ford 2008). Managers can then apply this information to educate both themselves and their employees to produce understanding and inclusion. These measures can take shape in a variety of ways, such as through the enactment of cultural awareness training programs or teambuilding activities (Barak 2005). In Norwegian-American workplaces, these educational measures can serve as tools to teach workers about the differences between them, such as the MAS and IDV variances (Hofstede 2001). These measures can be enacted at the corporate level to prepare managers for an overseas assignment, or a local manager can enact these measures at the micro level to improve relations within his own organization (Barak 2005).

The combined effect of these efforts can serve to create a blended and inclusive workplace model wherein Norwegian and American managers and employees both understand and value one another's perspective. This contributes to the reported greater degree of organizational efficacy reported against blended leadership styles, as it allows for a greater degree of synergy between all parties (Barak 2005). In enacting a diversified management model, managers and

employees can socially construct a new workplace model as principles of inclusion become more institutionalized within the organization (Selznick 2011).

6. Concluding Remarks

The ever-present trend of globalization connects our world in unprecedented ways, uniting individual actors in the professional world like never before. To stay competitive in the global market, it is important for organizations to be mindful of the potential for conflict that arises when individuals from varying cultural backgrounds meet in the professional arena.

The aim of this thesis has been to explore the relationships between cultural background, workplace behavior, communication patterns, and management styles as they relate to manager-employee relations between Norwegians and Americans. This thesis has sought to uncover the nuances between the two cultures by examining informant interview data regarding these concepts to identify the measures to be enacted by managers to enhance these relationships. However, this process was not without its challenges. Working with broad concepts such as the organization, management, and communication patterns is no small undertaking for a master's research project to be completed within a six-month timeframe. A comprehensive analysis of the relationship between these concepts may therefore be better served by a doctorate research study.

A further challenge presented itself in this study's relatively small sample size: six respondents with three representing each culture does not lend to the most representative sample data. This challenge, coupled with the employment of semi-structured interviews to the data collection process, renders it difficult to determine whether the data obtained is representative of the total population of Americans and Norwegians working in American and Norwegian-owned organizations. Further, these loose parameters may serve to exacerbate the challenges associated with the broad range of study topics. This study could therefore serve as a springboard for future case studies of a specific American or Norwegian-owned organization and its employees, wherein recommendations are tailored specifically to the managerial base of that corporate entity.

This thesis concludes that Norwegian-American manager-employee relations are influenced by varying levels of individualism, masculinity, and long-term orientation present in each society. These contrasting cultural dimensions impact the way in which Norwegians and Americans relate to one another, enact leadership, and communicate in the workplace. While these differences may lead to conflict, they are not insurmountable in the presence of culturally inclusive management tactics. Understanding the variations between the two societies is crucial in adjusting managerial strategies to match the expectations of the employee base and neutralize

the potential for conflict. Managers in the Norwegian-American workplace have therefore a responsibility to develop their levels of cultural awareness and intelligence in order to pave the way for inclusion of both American and Norwegian workplace values within the organization.

7. Literature / Works Consulted

- Andersen, S. (2006). Aktiv informantintervjuing. *Norsk statsvitenskapelig tidsskrift*, 22, 278-298.
- Avant, G. R., & Knutsen, K. P. (1993). Understanding cultural differences: Janteloven and social conformity in Norway. *Et Cetera: A Review of General Semantics*, 50(4), 449-460.
- Barak, M. E. M. (2013). *Managing diversity: Toward a globally inclusive workplace*. Sage Publications.
- Bergmann, H. & Shimoni, B. (2006). Managing in a Changing World: From Multiculturalism to Hybridization--The Production of Hybrid Management Cultures in Israel, Thailand, and Mexico. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 20, 76-89.
- Black, J. S., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. *Academy of management review*, 16(2), 291-317.
- Blaikie, N. (2010). *Designing social research: The logic of anticipation* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational researcher*, 18(1), 32-42.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). Coding in Grounded Theory Practice. In *Constructing grounded theory*. Sage.
- Clark, T., & Knowles, L. (2003). Global Myopia: Globalization Theory in International Business. *Journal of International Management*, 9, 361-372.
- Clifford, N., French, S., & Valentine, G. (Eds.). (2010). *Key methods in geography*. Sage.
- Countries – Geert Hofstede. (2015). Retrieved May 25, 2015, from <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>.

Cuniffe, A. L. (2009). Management, Managerialism, and Managers. In *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Management*. Los Angeles, New Dehli, Singapore, Washington DC: Sage Publications.

Czinkota, M., Ronkainen, I. (2005). A Forecast of Globalization, International Business, and Trade: Report from a Delphi Study. *Journal of World Business*, 40, 111-123.

Dickson, M., Den Hartog, D., & Mitchelson, J. (2003). Research on Leadership in a Cross-Cultural Context: Making Progress, and Raising New Questions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 729-768.

Featherstone, M. (1991). Global culture. *Global Culture*.

Ford, J.D., Ford, L.W., & D'Amelio, A. (2008). Resistance To Change: The Rest Of The Story. *Academy of Management Review*, 362-377.

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-606. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol8/iss4/6>

Gomory, R., & Baumol, W. (2004). Globalization: Prospects, Promise, and Problems. *Journal of Policy Modeling*, 26, 425-438.

Grenness, T. (2012). På jakt etter en norsk ledelsesmodell.

Grey, C. (2013). *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About Studying Organizations*. (3rd. ed). LONDON: Sage.

Harris, T. & Nelson, M. (2008). *Applied Organizational Communication Theory and Practice in a Global Environment*. (3rd ed.). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hofstede, Geert H.. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. Geert Hofstede (Ed.). Sage.

- Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G. (2015). Geert Hofstede. Retrieved May 25, 2015, from <http://geerthofstede.eu/research--vsm>.
- Immigrants By Reason for Immigration, 1 January 2014. (2014, September 4). Retrieved May 28, 2015, from <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/innvgrunn>
- Jacobsen, D.I. (2004). Endringsprosessen--tid, oversettelse og motstand. In *Organisasjonsendringer og endringsledelse*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Karlsen, J.E. & Lindøe, P.H. (2006). The Nordic OSH Model at a Turning Point?" *Policy and Practice in Health and Safety*, (4), 17-30.
- Lian, H (2011). Does Power Distance Exacerbate or Mitigate the Effect of Abusive Supervision? It Depends on the Outcome. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(1),107-123.
- Lin, Y., Chen, A.S., Song, Y. (2012). Does your intelligence help to survive in a foreign jungle? The effects of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence on cross-cultural adjustment. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36, 541-552.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage publications.
- Massey, D. S. (2003, June). Patterns and processes of international migration in the 21st century. In *Conference on African Migration in Comparative Perspective, Johannesburg, South Africa* (Vol. 4, No. 7).
- Munck, R. (2012). Migration, Development and Work in the Global Order: A New Perspective. *Journal of Latino-Latin American Studies (JOLLAS)*, 4(1), 42-56.
- Naím, M. (2009). *Foreign Policy*, (171), 28-31.
- Norwegian-Americans. (2015). Retrieved May 28, 2015, from http://www.norway.org/News_and_events/Embassy/Norwegian-American-Organizations/Norwegian_Americans/#.VWd7Bic-cfo

- Population and Population Changes, Q1 2015. (19 May 2015). Retrieved 28 May 2015. From <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/folkendrkv>
- Raz, A. (1999). "The Hybridization of Organizational Culture in Tokyo Disneyland." *Studies in Cultures, Organizations, and Societies*, (5), 235-264.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Sage.
- Røvik, K.A. (1998). Når populære organisasjonsoppskrifter skal tas i bruk. In *Moderne organisasjoner: trender i organisasjonstenkningen ved tusenårsskiftet*. Oslo/Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Selznick, P. (2011). *Leadership in administration: A sociological interpretation*. Quid Pro Books.
- Slater, J. (2011). Lessons from the Public Sector: Suggestions and a Caution. *Marquette Law Review*, (94), 917-945.
- Smith, P. B., Andersen, J. A., Ekelund, B., Graversen, G., & Ropo, A. (2003). In search of Nordic management styles. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 19(4), 491-507.
- Stalker, P. (1994). *The work of strangers: a survey of international labour migration*. International Labour Organization.
- Stening, B.W., & Hammer, M.R. (1992). Cultural Baggage and the Adaption of Expatriate American and Japanese Managers. *Management International Review*, 32 (1), 77-89.
- Wallerstein, I. (1997). Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System. In *Global Culture* (pp.31-36). London: Sage Publications.
- Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured methods*. Sage.

What About Norway? – Geert Hofstede. (2015). Retrieved May 25, 2015, from <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>.

What About the United States? – Geert Hofstede. (2015). Retrieved May 25, 2015, from <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>.

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage publications.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Interview Guide and Probes

Interview Guide

Research Areas:

Define the interpersonal communication patterns at play across cultural lines:

1. How do you experience the interpersonal communication patterns displayed by both Norwegian and foreign leaders in your workplace?
 - 1.2 How would you characterize these communication styles?
 - 1.3 How would you say these communication styles influence leadership style?

Define the relationship between cultural background and communication style:

2. How would you characterize the average communication style in each culture:
 - 2.1 Norwegian?
 - 2.2 American?
 - 2.3 What are the main similarities between the two?
 - 2.4 The main differences?
 - 2.5 What experiences or observations inform your answers to questions 2.1-2.4?

Explore and understand how cultural communication patterns influence workplace interactions:

3. How do these communication patterns influence workplace interactions?
 - 3.1 What experiences or observations prompt your answer to question 3?
 - 3.2 In what area do you feel these communications have the greatest impact? Why?
4. How do these communication patterns set the foundation for distinct working styles in each culture?
 - 4.1 How would you characterize the working style present in Norwegian culture?
 - 4.2 In American culture?
5. To what extent would you say these working patterns create distinct leadership styles in each culture?
 - 5.1 How would you characterize the general Norwegian leadership culture?
 - 5.2 How would you characterize the general American leadership culture?
 - 5.3 What experiences and observations inform these characterizations?
6. How do you feel the communication efforts of managers with a foreign (American/Norwegian) background are received compared with those of the same background as you?
 - 6.1 What do you notice as being different? The same?
 - 6.2 How do you personally respond to each communication style?
 - 6.3 What experiences or observations inform your answers to questions 6, 6.1 and 6.2?
7. How do you feel that differences in cultural communication patterns can lead to workplace conflict?
 - 7.1 What experiences or observations prompt your answer to question 7?
 - 7.2 What, if anything, do you feel could prevent any conflicts experienced?

7.2.1 How could these measures help ease conflicts?

8. What do you feel are the best features of each communication style as it relates to the workplace:

8.1 Norwegian?

8.1.1 Why?

8.2 American?

8.2.1 Why?

Probes/Topics for Discussion

- Power Distance (PDI)
- Masculinity Index (MAS)
- Individualism Index (IDV)
- Examples of a good manager
- Inclusion
- Which workplace culture do you prefer?
- What is the best and worst feature of each workplace culture?

Appendix B: Participant Matrix

Participant Matrix	
<i>Informant Code</i>	<i>Background</i>
N1	Norwegian working for a medium-sized, American-owned company. Has a background in aviation and oil and gas. Experience working for both Norwegian and American owned companies with managers of both backgrounds. Spent some years living in the US.
N2	Norwegian working for an American-owned company with international concerns. Has several years experience in aviation and oil and gas. Has has both American and Norwegian employers.
N3	Norwegian working for a medium-sized company with international concerns. Has a background in finance and energy/oil and gas. Experience working for both Norwegian and American-owned companies.
A1	American working for a Norwegian-owned company. Experience working for a North-American owned company operating in Norway, and has had managers of both Norwegian and American backgrounds.
A2	American with several years' experience working for Norwegian companies, as well as experience working in the US prior to coming to Norway.
A3	American working for a Norwegian-owned company with international interests. Has a background in shipping/logistics and healthcare.

Coding Legend	
N	Norwegian
A	American

Appendix C: Transcript Template

Informant ID				
<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Initial Coding Notes</i>	<i>Focused Coding Notes</i>	<i>Transcript</i>	<i>Transcript Notes</i>